



Reopening Guidance for Child Care

Public Health Considerations for reopening child care during the COVID-19 pandemic

The purpose of this tool is to assist directors and administrators in making reopening decisions regarding child care programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Should you consider reopening?

- Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?
- Are you ready to protect children and employees at [higher risk](#) for severe illness?
- Are you able to screen children and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

- Promote [healthy hygiene practices](#) such as [hand washing](#) and [employees wearing a cloth face covering](#), as feasible.
- Intensify [cleaning, sanitization, disinfection](#), and ventilation.
- Encourage [social distancing](#) through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible. For family child care, monitor distance between children not playing together and maintain distance between children during nap time.
- Adjust activities and procedures to limit sharing of items such as toys, belongings, supplies, and equipment.
- Train all employees on health and safety protocols.

Is ongoing monitoring in place?

- Develop and implement procedures to check for [signs and symptoms](#) of children and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible.
- If feasible, implement enhanced screening including temperature checks and symptom monitoring for children and employees who have recently been present in areas of high transmission.
- Encourage anyone who is sick to [stay home](#).
- Plan for the possibility of children or employees experiencing symptoms or becoming sick.
- Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.



- Monitor child and employee absences and have a pool of trained substitutes as well as flexible leave policies and practices. For family child care, if feasible, have a plan for a substitute caregiver if provider or a family member in the home gets sick.
- Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area. (See <https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/>)

OKLAHOMA COVID-19 Child Care Providers Guidance

No matter the rate of infection in a community, every child care program should have a plan in place to protect staff, children, and their families from the spread of COVID-19.

Require sick children and staff to stay home

- Communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- Communicate to staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with facility management if or when they start to feel sick.
- Establish procedures to ensure children and staff who come to the child care center sick or become sick while at your facility are sent home as soon as possible.
- Keep sick children and staff separate from well children and staff until they can be sent home.
- Sick staff members should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation.

Have a plan if someone is or becomes sick

- Plan to have an isolation room or area (such as a cot in a corner of the classroom) that can be used to isolate a sick child.
- Be ready to follow CDC guidance on how to disinfect your building or facility if someone is sick.
- If a sick child has been isolated in your facility, clean and disinfect surfaces in your isolation room or area after the sick child has gone home.

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Immediately notify your local child care licensing specialist. If a facility has trouble reaching the local specialist, contact Child Care Services within the Department of Human Services state offices for assistance: 405-521-3561 or toll free: 1-844-834-8314.
- Wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.
- Cleaning staff should disinfect all areas (offices, bathrooms, playground, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.



- If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Return to Work

- Employees who test positive for the virus or have a member of their household test positive will be required to be isolated and prohibited from returning to the child care program until meeting the CDC requirements for being around others.
 - Individuals who believe or know they had COVID-19, and have had symptoms, may not be around others until all the following conditions have been met:
 - 3 days with no fever
 - Symptoms improved
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared
 - Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, but have had no symptoms, may not be around others until **10 days** have passed since being tested.
 - Individuals who have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 may not be around others until **14 days** after exposure.

Child care programs open during the COVID-19 pandemic should address these additional considerations

- Implement [social distancing strategies](#).
- Serve each child individual meals and snacks to avoid the sharing of utensils. Do not serve family style meals.
- Intensify [cleaning and disinfection efforts](#).
- Modify [drop off and pick up procedures](#).
- Implement [screening procedures upon arrival](#).
- Maintain an adequate ratio of staff to children to ensure safety.
 - Plan ahead and recruit those with child care experience to ensure you have a roster of substitute caregivers who can fill in if your staff members are sick or stay home to care for sick family members.
- When feasible, staff members and older children should [wear face coverings](#) within the facility. Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.



Social Distancing Strategies

Work with your local health officials to determine a set of strategies appropriate for your community's situation. Continue using preparedness strategies and consider the following social distancing strategies:

- Limit persons accessing an operation as best as possible to operation staff; persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, state child care licensing staff, and Department of Human Services' Family and Protective Services staff; professionals providing services to children; children enrolled at the operation; and parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the operation.
- If possible, child care classes should include the same group each day, and the same child care providers should remain with the same group each day. If your child care program remains open, consider creating a separate classroom or group for the children of healthcare workers and other first responders. If your program is unable to create a separate classroom, consider serving only the children of healthcare workers and first responders.
- Cancel or postpone special events such as festivals, holiday events, and special performances.
- Consider whether to alter or halt daily group activities that may promote transmission.
 - Keep each group of children in a separate room.
 - Limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as art, music, and exercising.
 - If possible, at nap time, ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart. Consider placing children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
- Consider staggering arrival and drop off times and/or have child care providers come outside the facility to pick up the children as they arrive. Your plan for curb side drop off and pick up should limit direct contact between parents and staff.

As the COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, child care providers should stay in communication with a local licensing specialist for guidance.

