

# CHILD CARE GUIDANCE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Updated March 24, 2021

This guidance is intended for licensed child care centers, regulated child development homes, before- and after school care, and temporary child care settings supporting essential workforce. This guidance is updated, when necessary, in response to CDC guidelines. For the most up to date CDC child care guidance, please go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>.



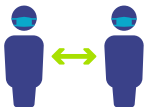
## FACE COVERINGS

- ▶ Adults are required to wear face coverings, if medically appropriate.
- ▶ All children two years of age and older should be encouraged to wear a face covering when able to do so correctly and safely except when eating or sleeping.
- ▶ People who have trouble breathing and people unable to remove the mask without assistance should not wear cloth face coverings.
- ▶ Please see the [IDPH guidance on quarantine](#) based on the use of masks and face coverings.
- ▶ For guidance on how to best choose a mask and keep masks clean, please see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>
- ▶ Masks should be stored in a space designated for each child that is separate from others when not being worn (e.g., in individually labeled containers or bags, personal lockers, or cubbies).



## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS

- ▶ Wearing masks may be difficult for young children with certain disabilities (for example, visual or hearing impairments) or for those with sensory, cognitive, or behavioral issues.
- ▶ Therapists, early intervention specialists, and others should be allowed into your facility to provide important services to children with special health needs.
- ▶ If space allows, limit the interaction of the specialist to only the child(ren) they need to see.



## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- ▶ Stagger use and restrict the number of people allowed in communal spaces at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart.
- ▶ Consider hosting smaller classes in larger rooms if feasible. Space seating at

least 6 feet apart when feasible. Seating should be facing the same way and staggered to the extent possible so children are not sitting immediately in front of each other.

- Room capacity should be based on the ability to physically distance within the room.
- ▶ If feasible, provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.
- ▶ Ensure that children and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff as much as possible. Limit mixing between groups if possible.



## HYGIENE

- ▶ Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, paper towels, tissues, no-touch/foot pedal trash cans, and hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- ▶ Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect (e.g., plush toys). Clean bedding that touches a child's skin weekly or before use by another child.
- ▶ Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each child their own art supplies) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.



## FOOD

- ▶ Provide individually plated meals.
- ▶ If feasible, use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes).



## CLEANING

- ▶ Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, grab bars, hand railings, bathroom stalls, tables) at least daily or between each use as much as possible.
- ▶ Use of shared objects (e.g., toys) should be limited when possible, or if shared use is required, thoroughly clean objects between each use.
- ▶ Outdoor spaces reduce risk of spreading COVID-19, but still require preventive behaviors such as wearing a mask, handwashing/hand sanitizing, and cohorting.
- ▶ Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Target use of disinfectants on outdoor hard surfaces and objects frequently touched by multiple children and staff (for example, handrails, benches).



## ILLNESS SCREENING

For specific information, see:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/61/covid19/resources/WhenToQuarantine%2012042020.pdf>

- ▶ If feasible, conduct daily health checks (i.e., temperature screening and symptom checking) or ask families and staff to conduct self-checks.
- ▶ Ensure that staff and children are not admitted to a child care setting when they are ill. Staff should stay home if someone in their home is ill. Children should also stay home if their parent is ill. If a child's parent is ill, send the child home, and have the parent call their primary healthcare provider or take the Test Iowa assessment.
- ▶ Sick children should be separated until they are able to go home. Staff who are ill should go home immediately.
- ▶ Symptomatic children and staff should be tested.
  - Children and staff should be instructed to contact their healthcare provider to pursue testing. Children older than 1 year of age may access testing through Test Iowa.



## ISOLATION

- ▶ Children and staff ill with COVID-19 symptoms should be isolated in accordance with the guidance below.
  - Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 should be isolated in accordance with the following guidance:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>



## QUARANTINE

For quarantine guidance, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

*Note: Quarantine is NOT recommended for the exposed close contact, if the close contact was diagnosed with COVID-19 infection during the previous three month time period, as long as close contact remains asymptomatic (i.e., has not developed symptoms of a new illness).*

*People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are NOT required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms.*



## TRAVEL

- ▶ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>.
- ▶ To clean and disinfect buses, vans, or other vehicles, see [guidance for bus transit operators](#).
- ▶ Encourage families to review and follow [CDC guidance on how to protect yourself when using transportation](#).

- ▶ Please see the CDC webpage for additional information about traveling during COVID-19. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>



## FACILITIES

- ▶ Ensure ventilation and water systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors.
- ▶ Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children or staff using the facility.
- ▶ Child-safe fans may be used to increase effectiveness of open windows, when applicable. For more information see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html>
- ▶ Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, and decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
- ▶ Drinking fountains should be cleaned and disinfected, but encourage children and staff to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains. Install touchless water bottle refilling stations, if possible.



## ILLNESS REPORTING

Follow the steps outlined in this document:

- ▶ [COVID-19 Case Reporting and Outbreak Responsibilities for Child Care Centers & Homes](#)

or Copy this link: [https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/IDPH\\_DHS\\_COVID-19\\_Public%20Case\\_Reporting.pdf?081120201609](https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/IDPH_DHS_COVID-19_Public%20Case_Reporting.pdf?081120201609)

## NEW INFOGRAPHICS

- + **Quick Guide: Help Protect Your Child Care Center from COVID-19**  
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/322883-B\\_COVID-19\\_ChildcareGuidance\\_CENTER\\_infographic\\_v3.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/322883-B_COVID-19_ChildcareGuidance_CENTER_infographic_v3.pdf)
- + **Quick Guide: Help Protect Your Family Child Care Home from COVID-19**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/Quick-Guide-Child-Care-Guidance-Home-print.pdf>

