



## Childcare Overview

As per [Pennsylvania's Phased Reopening Plan](#):

- Child Care facilities, except for employees of life-sustaining businesses, will be closed during the “Red” phase.
- When switching to the “Yellow” phase of reopening, Child Care facilities will be open when complying with state and CDC guidelines.
- During the “Green” phase of reopening, childcare facilities will remain open while complying with guidance.

To find childcare services in Chester County, visit [www.findchildcare.pa.gov](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov).

The CDC's [guidance for open Child Care facilities](#) provides tips for services including family child care programs, also known as home-based child care, Pre-K programs at private and public schools, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, private child care centers, temporary child care centers operated by municipalities for the children of essential service providers (i.e. first responders, healthcare workers, transit workers, etc.), and child care centers that partner with healthcare facilities to support healthcare workers who need child care.

*These materials and any related updates are provided and intended for general public informational purposes and guidance. While intended to be timely and accurate, please note that federal and state regulations and directives are changing often. To that extent, please continue to monitor this site for any significant modifications and developments.*

## Employer Tips and Guidelines

- Employers should consider developing a team of professionals to monitor and implement new COVID-19 transmission risk mitigation strategies as they become available.
- No matter the level of transmission 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.
- Plan ahead to ensure adequate supplies to support hand hygiene behaviors and routine cleaning of objects and surfaces.
- Consistently monitor employee wellness and do not let anyone symptomatic report to work. Revisit your leave or sick program to allow for this time off.
- Employees who monitor their temperature at home should update their supervisor if they have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and stay home.
- Encourage staff to take [everyday preventive actions](#) to prevent the spread of respiratory illness:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

- Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
  - Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies or children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.
- 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.
- Develop plans to cover classes in the event of increased staff absences. Consider coordinating with other local care programs or reaching out to substitutes.
- Implement social distancing by remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance from others when possible.
- Plan to limit nonessential visitors and postpone or cancel use of classroom volunteers.
- 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.
  - Keep each group of children in a separate room, and limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as art, music and exercising.
- Consider creating a separate classroom or group for 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.
- At nap time, ensure that children are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart. Consider placing children head to toe.
- If possible, arrange for administrative staff to telework from their homes.
- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility so that children can clean their hands before they enter. Keep hand sanitizer out of children's reach and supervise use. If possible, place sign-in stations outside, and provide sanitary wipes for cleaning pens between each use.
- Screen children upon arrival, if possible. Persons who have a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above or other signs of illness should not be admitted to the facility. Screening methods include:
  - Ask parents to take their child's temperature before arriving or upon arrival)
  - Standing behind a physical barrier while checking temperature, if you can't stay 6 feet away
  - Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), if you cannot stay 6 feet away
- Toys that can be put in the mouth should be cleaned and sanitized. Other hard surfaces, including diaper changing stations, doorknobs and floors can be disinfected.
- Facilities should develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting.
- All cleaning materials should be kept out of reach of children. Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products.
- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used.

- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air dry. You may also clean in a mechanical dishwasher. Be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child's mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.
- Do not share toys with other groups of infants or toddlers, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
- Use bedding that can be washed. Keep each child's bedding separate, and consider storing in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags.
- It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious infants and toddlers, and they often need to be held. To the extent possible, when washing, feeding, or holding very young children, child care providers can protect themselves by wearing an over-large, button-down, long-sleeved shirt and by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other updo.
- Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine. Infants, toddlers, and their providers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand in the child care center or home-based child care.
- Child care providers should wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles prepared at home or prepared in the facility. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used for bottle-feeding should be thoroughly cleaned after each use.
- Assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
  - After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.
- Place posters describing handwashing steps near sinks. Developmentally appropriate posters in multiple languages are available from CDC.
- If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, serve meals in classrooms instead. If meals are typically served family style, plate each child's meal to serve it so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.
- Food preparation should not be done by the same staff who diaper children.
- Sinks used for food preparation should not be used for any other purposes.
- If you have staff members or teachers age 65 or older, or with serious underlying health conditions, encourage them to talk to their healthcare providers to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home.
- Information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that many children have mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. If you have children with underlying health conditions, talk to their parents about their risk. Follow children's care plans for underlying health conditions such as an asthma action plan.
- If you have children with disabilities, talk to their parents about how their children can continue to receive the support they need.

## **How Employees Can Protect Themselves**

- Self-monitor your temperature every morning. Employees who have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should stay home and notify their supervisor.
- Child care providers should wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions.
- Caregivers should ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Caregivers should wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.
- When diapering a child, wash your hands and wash the child's hands before you begin, and wear gloves. Follow safe diaper changing procedures. After diapering, wash your hands (even if you were wearing gloves) and disinfect the diapering area.

## If an Employee Tests Positive

The following can apply to children and employees:

- If the individual receives a positive test notification while at the facility, follow established Human Resources policy. If the individual receives a positive test notification while NOT at the facility, the individual should follow established Human Resources policy, stay home and self-isolate in accordance with Chester County Health Department guidance.
- Close off areas visited by the positive individual. Refer to the [CDC's general cleaning & disinfecting guidance](#) and [guidance in facilities where someone is sick](#).
- Determine who had contact with the positive individual during the time the individual had symptoms as well as 48 hours prior to symptoms. Notify employees who were in close contact with the confirmed individual while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  - People who had close contact must self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with the positive individual.
  - "Close contact" is defined as having contact for more than 15 minutes, at a distance of 6 feet or less, with a positive individual.
- Individuals may discontinue home isolation and return to the facility under the following conditions:
  - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since your fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medication
  - AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
  - AND At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- After returning to the facility, individuals should:
  - Wear a facemask at all times while at the facility until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
  - Be restricted from contact with individuals at a higher risk (e.g., older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness).
  - Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
  - Self-monitor for symptoms. Seek immediate re-evaluation from occupational health/primary care provider and do not work if symptoms recur or worsen.

- The Chester County Health Department will be notified of all confirmed cases through established disease reporting protocols and will follow-up with the individual appropriately. Contact the Chester County Health Department at 610-344-6225.

### **Support for Customers and Clients**

- Parents should monitor their children at home for signs of illness and should take their child's temperature before arriving at the care facility. Children should stay home if they show symptoms of illness or have a fever.
- Consider staggering arrival and drop-off times and have child care providers come outside the facility to pick up the children as they arrive. Plans for curbside drop-off and pick-up should limit direct contact between parents and staff members. Designate a parent to be the drop-off/pick-up contact to walk children to their classroom, and at the end of the day, walk their children back to their cars.
  - Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the children every day.