

Updated Guidance for Childcare Providers

RELEASE DATE: May 21, 2021

Note: This document incorporates source documents from U.S. CDC, Maine CDC, and Maine's COVID-19 Response websites, aligns with Maine DOE guidance and complies with Executive Order 39 FY 20/21.

Updates can be found on the [OCFS COVID Response Page](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services recognizes the vitally important role of childcare providers for Maine's children, their parents, and employers. The Department has **updated** this guidance document to provide clear guidelines in order to ensure the health and safety of staff and children. This guidance is applicable both to providers that have continued to operate and those that closed temporarily and are re-opening. Providers should follow these guidelines, as well as continuing to monitor US and Maine CDC guidance. The recommendations regarding COVID-19, including the prevention of transmission, continue to evolve as experts learn more about the virus. As a result, this document and the guidance contained within it are subject to change. Please note the areas of guidance in this document that have changed are identified by the section header **highlighted in yellow**, as well as the specific guidance updates/changes identified in **red**.

COVID-19 continues to be prevalent throughout Maine and timely notification to CDC and Children's Licensing is important in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Please notify local health officials (Maine CDC: 1-800-821-5821), staff, your Child Care Licensing Specialist, and families as soon as possible of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Maine residents age 12+ are encouraged to make an appointment at a vaccination site as soon as possible. COVID -19 vaccination sites in Maine can be found at: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/vaccination-sites>

Mask Use

In accordance with [Executive Order 39 FY 20/21](#), effective May 24, 2021, the following guidance applies to child care settings.

- Masks or face coverings are not required when outdoors for all children and adults.
- Staff members, adults, and children age 5 and up must wear masks or face covering indoors. Children ages 2-4 are encouraged to wear face coverings unless deemed developmentally inappropriate.

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- Masks should NOT be worn by children under age 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing. Cloth face coverings should not be put on babies and children under age 2 because of the danger of suffocation.
- Masks do not need to be worn at rest time, meal time, or during swimming activities.

Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

The actions put in place by your child care program and taken by the staff and families will help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Using many of the following prevention strategies at the same time can lower the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in your child care program.

- Stay home when sick.
- Continue [daily screening procedures](#) for children, staff and parents.
- When possible, in multi-site child care programs limit staff working at more than one site.
- [Wash hands frequently](#).
- Develop a [schedule](#) for increased frequency of routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
- Avoid shared objects when possible.
- Limit the use of communal spaces, or ensure proper disinfection in between groups.
- Stagger use of outdoor play areas when possible and disinfect between use.
- Limit mixing between groups such that there is minimal or no interaction between groups or cohorts.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations or offer virtual events.
- Ensure [State of Maine travel guidance](#) is being followed by staff and families.
- [Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Actions to take when someone has COVID-19

- Isolate the sick child or staff member if they are present at the program.
- Notify the Maine CDC and your Child Care Licensing Specialist.
- Identify close contacts and notify families of potential exposure.
- Determine in conjunction with the Maine CDC and you Child Care Licensing Specialist if a full or partial closure of the program is necessary.
- Clean and disinfect all child care space according to [CDC guidance](#).

For more information regarding COVID – 19

- If you're looking for general information about COVID-19, call 211, text your zip code to 898-211, or email info@211maine.org.
- The following U.S CDC guidance outlines strategies that child care programs can use to maintain healthy environments and operations, lower the risk of COVID-19 spread in their programs, prepare for when someone is sick with COVID-19, and support coping and resilience. [Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID -19](#)

Additional Resources

Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open

Please review the US CDC guidance for [Childcare Providers](#). You may also find this guidance from US CDC helpful: [Prepare your Small Business and Employees for the Effects of COVID-19](#).

Additional guidance related to COVID-19 more generally is available from the [US CDC](#) and the [Maine Department of Health and Human Services](#).

CDC has provided additional resources for providers who remain open:

[CDC Recommendations for Childcare Facilities with COVID-19 Positive Staff or Children](#)

[CDC Infographic on Childcare: Who can be in my facility?](#)

[CDC Infographic on Childcare: What if a child or staff member tests positive?](#)

Testing Resources - <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine/keepmainehealthy/testing>

Contact Tracing: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/contact-tracing.shtml>

Quarantine and Isolation information: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/covid.shtml>

COVID-19 Basics

- [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Latest COVID-19 Information](#)
- [Managing Stress and Coping](#)
- [People at Increased Risk](#)
- [Children and COVID-19](#)
- [Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [What to do if a Student Becomes Sick at School or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis Flowchart](#)

For Child Care Providers and Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

- [Quick Guide: Help Protect Your Family Child Care Home from COVID-19 pdf icon\[2 MB, 1 Page\]](#)
- [Quick Guide: Help Protect Your Child Care Center from COVID-19 pdf icon\[1 MB, 2 Pages\]](#)
- [COVID-19 Child Care Symptom Screening Flowchart pdf icon\[56 KB, 1 Page\]](#)
- [What to Do if a Child Becomes Sick or Receives a New COVID-19 Diagnosis in your Child Care Program Flowchart pdf icon\[55 KB, 1 Page\]](#)
- [What to Do if a Child Becomes Sick or Receives a New COVID-19 Diagnosis At Your Family Child Care Home](#)

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- [My Child is Showing Signs of COVID-19 in Child Care: What Should I Do? Quick Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers pdf icon\[1.4 MB, 1 Page\]](#)
- [A Child is Showing Signs of COVID-19 in my Child Care Program: What Should I Do? Quick Guide for Providers pdf icon\[4.9 MB, 1 Page\]](#)
- [Ventilation in Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
- [Guidance for Schools and Child Care Centers](#)
- [Guidance for Direct Service Providers, Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians, and People with Developmental and Behavioral Disorders](#)
- [Guidance for Direct Service Providers](#)
- [Guidance for Handlers of Service and Therapy Animals](#)
- [Limitations and Considerations for COVID-19 Symptom Screening in K-12 Schools](#)
- [Considerations for Outdoor Learning Gardens and Community Gardens](#)
- [Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, and Caring for Newborns](#)

For Businesses and Workplaces

- [Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- [HIPAA and COVID-19](#)
- [OSHA Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)
- [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Coronavirus and COVID-19](#)

Everyday Steps to Slow the Spread

- [Cleaning and Disinfection](#)
- [Community Mitigation](#)
- [COVID-19 Prevention](#)
- [Use of Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- [Handwashing Information](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)

COVID-19 Fact Sheets, Posters, and Videos

- [CDC Communication Resources](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Communication Toolkit](#)

Sources:

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

United States Environmental Protection Agency:

List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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CDC's COVID-19 Data Tracker: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#demographics> and COVID-NET US COVID-19 Hospitalization Data.

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Gilliam WS, Malik AA, Shafiq M, et al. COVID-19 transmission in US Child Care Programs. *Pediatrics* 2020. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2020-031971

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