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Updated Guidance for Childcare Providers

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Note: This document incorporates source documents from U.S. CDC, Maine CDC, and Maine's COVID-19 Response websites, and aligns with Maine DOE guidance.

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**.

There has been a significant increase of COVID-19 cases in 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.

Maine CDC has provided additional resources for childcare providers:

[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?](#)

COVID-19 Vaccination

Maine residents age 12+ are strongly 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>

The majority of children enrolled in childcare are not yet age eligible for a vaccine. OCFS continues to encourage the vaccination of staff members and implementing recommended practices as contained in this guidance, to prevent the spread of COVID -19.

On September 22, 2021, the U.S. CDC recommended that some individuals who received the Pfizer vaccine get a booster dose. People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting, which includes childcare settings, may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks.

Mask Use

As recommended by the Maine CDC, it is strongly encouraged for child care programs who are not currently masking to implement the use of face coverings for staff and children age 2 and up. Although it is not required, face coverings are recommended indoors regardless of vaccination status.

- 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 should not be worn at rest time, meal time, or during swimming activities.

Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

In addition to masking, the recommended practices below for staff and families assist in the prevention of 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 [and requirements regarding quarantine](#).
- Determine, in conjunction with the Maine CDC and your 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.

Quarantine and isolation requirements for child care

Quarantine

- For someone who had close contact (not fully vaccinated): Stay home for 10 days after your last contact with someone who has COVID-19, then monitor for symptoms for 4 more days. A negative test result does not change the quarantine requirement.
- For fully vaccinated close contacts: Get a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after exposure and wear a face covering in indoor public spaces for 14 days (or until you receive negative test results). You do not need to quarantine.
- Check your temperature twice a day and monitor for symptoms.

Isolation

- For someone who tested positive for COVID-19: Stay home until you meet the criteria for release from isolation.
- For symptomatic individuals: Stay home for 10 days from the start of symptoms with the exception of seeking medical care and testing. Call before going to see a healthcare provider and let them know you are symptomatic.

For additional information concerning quarantine and isolation in child care, see [CDC Recommendations for Childcare Facilities with COVID-19 Positive Staff or Children](#)

For questions concerning DOE guidance for quarantine and isolation, visit the [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\) for Positive COVID-19 Cases in Schools](#).

Department Supplied Rapid Antigen (Ag) Test

Currently, BinaxNOW remains an available option within child care facilities for use for screening asymptomatic employees who have been identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 positive case. Additional Antigen test options will become available as the Department expands the rapid testing capability.

If you are interested, you should complete the following steps:

1. Complete the Application for the CLIA Waiver: (detailed instructions are on page 6/16 of the guidance document linked below): <https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/CLIA/Downloads/HowObtainCertificateofWaiver.pdf>
2. Identify the staff member who will administer the testing, and have this staff member complete the BinaxNOW Online training: <https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>
3. Apply for the BinaxNOW Ag Cards using the Maine DHHS online application form: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=q6g_QX0gYkubzeoajy-GTseHDczroMNHqsaKj3vr645UNjFHU0NRR01UR0k5OTdBWEdaVk5DVjZFW54u
4. Register for the REDCap reporting system to report results from tests done in your facility: https://redcap.link/MECDC_POC_Registration

As a reminder, for more detailed instructions please reference the guidance document linked below:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/documents/Binax-Guidance.pdf>

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.

Additional Resources

Guidance for Child Care Programs

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](#).

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](#)
- [Children and COVID-19](#)
- [Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

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](#)
- [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](#)
- [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](#)

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 \(COVID-19\)](#)

Reference Material:

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](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-031971)

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6949e3>

Davies, N.G., Klepac, P., Liu, Y. et al. Age-Dependent Effects in the Transmission and Control of COVID-19 Epidemics. Nat Med 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0962>