

Child Care During the Covid-19 Outbreak

Many parents continue to need child care for young children and school-age children. The Governor closed all Washington schools through the end of the school year to prevent the coronavirus from spreading.

Parents who are able to keep their children home should do so, but this is not always possible. Child care is important for our medical workers, first responders and others working during this public health emergency.

Open child care facilities need to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus. The following guidance will help child care facilities, early learning providers, and schools offering care, to maintain health and safety standards and social distancing orders.

General guidance

We will not allow children, staff, parents and guardians on-site if they:

- Are showing signs of COVID-19.
- Have been in close contact with someone who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- Small groups should take turns with drop-off and pick-up times. This will help with social distancing outside the facility or in front of the facility.
- Upon arriving please go to the bathroom, and wash yours and your child's hands.
- Parents should use their own pen when signing in.
- Make sure you are obtaining social distancing while waiting.
- We suggest families have the same adult drop off and pick up the child each day.

Health Screening at Entry

We will be checking for signs of being sick for all staff and children at entry each day.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) suggests using any of these screening methods:

1. Social Distancing: After arriving and washing hands, please enter the gym. At drop-off and pick-up times with the child's family, keep at least a 6-foot distance.
2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Do health screening and temperature checks while wearing PPE.

Parents/Guardians and staff will be asked the following:

- A fever of 100.4°F or higher or a sense of having a fever?
- A cough that you cannot connect to another health problem?
- Shortness of breath that you cannot connect to another health problem?
- A sore throat that you cannot connect to another health problem?

- Muscle aches that you cannot connect to another health problem or to another activity such as physical exercise?
- Does anyone in your household have any of the above signs right now?
- Has your child been close with anyone suspected or confirmed with COVID-19?
- Has your child had any medication to reduce a fever before coming to care?

Child care rules still do not allow providers to care for children who have other signs of being sick such as diarrhea and vomiting.

If the answer to any of the above questions is “yes” we will not be able to care for your child that day. Refer to “Returning to a child care facility after suspected COVID-19 symptoms” below.

If the answer to all of the above questions is “no”, check the child for signs of being sick, such as flushed cheeks, tiredness, and extreme fussiness. Keep a distance of at least 6 feet of space.

Temperature Check

Upon entering the gym, you will stop at the health screening station, and have your child’s temperature taken as well as asked a series of questions. We will be using an infrared thermometer to maintain our social distancing. We will clean the thermometer and disinfect it with alcohol after each use. Staff will be using proper hand hygiene, gloves and wearing a mask.

Social Distancing

Classrooms will have reduced group sizes to no more than 10 children and adults total. *For example, one adult and nine children or two adults and eight children.* Classrooms will be open throughout the day. We will not combine groups at opening and closing, and will be keeping staff the same within each group. All staff will be required to wear masks.

We have put in place social distancing within groups. We have created space between children and reduce the amount of time children are close with each other. The ability to do this will depend on the age of the children.

Practical tips to maintain social distancing:

- Limit the number of children in each program space. Classroom sizes will have no more than 8 children.
- Increase the distance between children during table work.
- Plan activities that do not need close physical contact.
- Limit item sharing. If children share items, remind them not to touch their faces and wash their hands after using these items. Younger children should have their own set of items to avoid sharing.
- Items that cannot easily be cleaned and disinfected, including sand or water tables, and stuffed animals will be removed.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance and reduce time standing in lines.

- Go outside more and open windows often.
- Increase space between cribs and nap mats to 6 feet if you can.
- Adjust the HVAC system or open windows to allow for more fresh air to enter the program space.
- Do not bring separate groups together for any reason.

Outside Play

Outdoor play will be done in staggered shifts. Each class will have their own equipment (such as balls and toys), all items will be cleaned and sanitized after each use. Children will wash hands after outdoor play time.

Meals and Snack Time

Meals and snacks will be delivered to the classroom to prevent a large group gathering. Children will be spaced as far apart as we can at the tables. The tables will be cleaned and sanitized before and after eating. Teachers will be handling utensils; our kitchen staff will be serving food to reduce spread of germs. Toothbrushing will not be done at this time.

Infant and Toddler Care

Infants and toddlers need to be held. To protect themselves, child care providers who care for infants and toddlers will bring extra clothes daily, and wear their long hair up or tied back. Change outer clothing if body fluids from the child get on it. Change the child's clothing if body fluids get on it. Place the soiled clothing in a plastic bag until it is washed. A thin blanket will be used while holding an infant to serve as a barrier. Our staff will wash their hands and anywhere else the child touched them (such as their neck or arm) after holding a child.

Hygiene Practices

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Require handwashing per child care rules. Children and adults should wash hands when they arrive at the child care, enter the classroom, before meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, after nose blowing or sneezing, and before leaving to go home. Help young children to make sure they are doing it right.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand gel with at least 60% alcohol and preferably fragrance-free. Hand sanitizer will be available for staff and parents.
- Children, families, and staff should not touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. Clean hands with soap and water or hand gel (if soap and water are not readily available).

Cloth Face Coverings

CDC issued **new recommendations** that wearing homemade cloth face coverings may help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Staff members will be required to wear

masks. Children over the age of 3 may wear a mask if the parent prefers the child wear one, they must provide the mask. To decide if cloth face coverings are possible, consider:

- Cloth face coverings may reduce the risk of someone who may be infected but is not showing signs from spreading the disease to others.
- All social distancing guidance for child care facilities must still be followed, even if cloth face coverings are worn.
- When wearing cloth face coverings, keep hands away from the face and do not touch them. Closely watch children wearing cloth face coverings at all times.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed with soap and dried between uses.
- For safety, children under the age of 2 should not wear cloth face coverings.
- Face coverings are not for anyone who cannot take it off themselves.

To learn more about cloth face coverings, see the [CDC Recommendations for the use of cloth face coverings](#) and [Washington State Department of Health Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings](#).

What to do if children, staff, or parents develop signs of COVID-19

If a child or staff member develops signs of COVID-19, such as a fever of 100.4 or higher, cough or shortness of breath while at the facility, the child or staff will be separated from the group, and parents or emergency contact will be called for immediate pick up. The person with symptoms should follow [DOH guidance for what to do if you have symptoms for COVID-19 and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19](#). If signs persist or get worse, call a health care provider for more guidance. Tell the employee or child's parent or caregiver to inform the facility right away if the person is diagnosed with COVID-19.

If a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, all members of the infected child's or adult's group is a close contact and should self-quarantine for 14 days. Refer to ["What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)?"](#)

Returning to a child care facility after suspected signs of COVID-19

A staff member or child who has signs of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 can return to the child care facility when:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery – defined as no fever without the use of medications and improvement in respiratory signs like cough and shortness of breath;

AND

- At least 7 days have passed since signs first showed up.

If a person believes they have had close contact to someone with COVID-19, but they are not sick, they should watch their health for signs of fever, cough, and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day they were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. They should not go to work, child care, school, or public places for 14 days.

Cleaning and disinfecting procedures

Extra cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting will be done throughout the day. We will follow licensing guidance, but increased the cleaning to 4x a day.

- Cleaning removes germs, dirt, food, body fluids, and other material. Cleaning increases the benefit of sanitizing or disinfecting.
- Sanitizing reduces germs on surfaces to levels that are safe.
- Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces of a clean object.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates sanitizer and disinfectant chemicals. If you sanitize or disinfect without cleaning first, it will reduce how well these chemicals work and may leave more germs on the object.

Current **guidance for cleaning and disinfection for COVID-19** from the CDC states that disinfectants should be registered by the EPA for use against the novel coronavirus. A notebook of cleaning, disinfectant and sanitation products can be viewed, please ask the front desk to view the binder.

If you use a bleach and water mixture for disinfection, mix it at a concentration of 4 teaspoons of 6% bleach per quart of cool water or 5 tablespoons 6% bleach (1/3 cup) per gallon of cool water (1000 ppm). Thoroughly clean surfaces with soap and water and remove the soap with water before applying the bleach solution. Keep the surface wet for at least one minute. Use this higher concentration if a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 has been in the child care. You may also use it at the end of each day when children have left on high touch surfaces. Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting will be done 4x a day, along with before opening and after closing.

Always follow the disinfectant instructions on the label:

- **Use disinfectants in a ventilated space. Heavy use of disinfectant products should be done when children are not present and the facility can air out before children return.**
- Use the proper concentration of disinfectant.
- Keep the disinfectant on the surface for the required wet contact time.
- Follow the product label warnings and instructions for PPE such as gloves, eye protection, and ventilation.
- Keep all chemicals out of reach of children.
- Child care facilities must have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical used in the facility.

Clean and sanitize toys, equipment, and surfaces in the rooms. Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces like doorknobs, faucet handles, check-in counters, and restrooms. Use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards and electronics. Wash hands after you clean. Reduce the spread of germs in the program space by removing toys that are not easily cleaned such as stuffed animals and pillows. Rotate toys that are out at any one time, so they can be cleaned and sanitized.

If groups of children are moving from one area to another in shifts, finish cleaning before the new group enters this area. Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces each night after children leave.

Carpets

Vacuum daily when children are not present. HEPA filter equipped vacuums will help remove dust and particles. Follow child care rules for how often you should shampoo the carpet. Use a blanket or towel on carpeted floors under infants or young toddlers.

Ventilation

There is no special cleaning or disinfection for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Ventilation is important to have good indoor air quality. Offer more outside time, open windows often, and adjust the HVAC system to allow more fresh air to enter the program space.

Shared Hands-On Teaching Materials

Clean and sanitize hands-on materials often and after each use. You cannot clean and sanitize some things like playdough, so do not use or label separate containers for each child. Take away water tables, sensory tables, stuffed animals, dress up clothes, and other items that are not cleaned easily. Limit shared teaching materials to those you can easily clean and sanitize or disinfect. Use separate bins of toys for each infant or toddler as they tend to put toys in their mouths. Children's books and other paper-based materials are not high risk for spreading the virus. COVID-19 Resources for Schools and Child Care.