

# MARYLAND TOGETHER: MARYLAND'S RECOVERY PLAN FOR CHILD CARE

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND THE PATH FORWARD



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## III. GUIDANCE FOR OPERATING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS (adapted from the CDC's Interim Guidance for Child Care Programs<sup>2</sup>)

### SAFETY ACTIONS

#### Promote healthy hygiene practices

- Teach and reinforce washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.
- Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings among all staff and children when feasible as described in the MSDE/MDH guidance, based on CDC guidance. Face coverings are most essential at times when social distancing is not possible. Staff should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to all staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
- Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), and tissues.
- Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.

#### Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation

- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) multiple times per day and shared objects between use.
- Avoid use of items (for example, soft or plush toys, electronic devices, toys, books, other games, and learning aids) that are not easily cleaned and sanitized or disinfected.
- Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, and other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (for example, allowing pollens in or exacerbating asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.

#### Ensure social distancing

- Ensure that classes include the same group of children each day, and that the same child care providers remain with the same group each day and from week to week.
- Prohibit mixing between groups.
- Eliminate field trips, inter-group events, and extracurricular activities
- Restrict nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving multiple groups at the same time.
- Space out seating and bedding (head-to-toe positioning) to six feet apart if possible.
- Close communal use spaces, such as common break rooms for staff, multi-purpose rooms, game rooms or

<sup>2</sup> Interim Guidance for Child Care Programs <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6883734-CDC-Business-Plans.html>

dining halls, if possible; if this is not possible, stagger use and implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting in between uses.

- If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, serve meals in classrooms instead. Put each child's meal on a plate, to limit the use of shared serving utensils.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible. Do not permit parents into the facility.

### **Limit sharing**

- Keep each child's belongings separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas or taken home each day and cleaned.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment etc. assigned to a single camper) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, other games, and learning aids if unable to clean and sanitize/disinfect.
- Prevent risk of transmitting COVID-19 by avoiding close, prolonged contact (such as shaking or holding hands, hugging, or kissing)

### **Train all staff**

- Train all staff in the above safety actions. Consider conducting the training virtually, or, if in-person, ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Provide on-going training for new information, as well as refresher courses.
- Required training should be taken for programs to remain in compliance with licensing regulations so programs do not fall behind in the annual requirements.
- Provide on-going training for new information, as well as refresher courses.

## **MONITORING AND PREPARING**

### **Screen for signs and symptoms**

- Screen children upon arrival, if possible. Establish routine, daily symptom screening and temperature checks on arrival, for both staff and children. Information on daily health check screenings for children are provided in the MSDE/MDH guidance, based on CDC guidance.
- Implement temperature checks and symptom screening safely, and respectfully, and with measures in place to ensure confidentiality as well as in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations. Keep a log of results. Confidentiality should be maintained.
- Employers and child care directors should use examples of screening methods in the MSDE/MDH guidance, based on CDC guidance.
- Encourage staff to stay home if they are sick (even mildly) and encourage parents to keep sick children home.

### **Plan for when a staff member, child, or visitor becomes sick**

- Identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms during hours of operation, and ensure that children are not left without adult supervision.

# Resources

Alliance for Early Success: Coronavirus

<http://www.earlysuccess.org/resources/coronavirus>

American Academy of Pediatrics Resources Related to 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for administrators of K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Frequently Asked Questions on Childcare programs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

Child Care Aware: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.childcareaware.org/coronavirus-landing-page/>

Early Childhood Development Action Network: Early Childhood Focused COVID-19 Resources

<https://mailchi.mp/ecdan/covid19>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center Resources for Part C and Part B, Section 619 Programs Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

<https://ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/coronavirus.asp>

Governor Hogan COVID-19 Pandemic: Orders and Guidance

<https://governor.maryland.gov/covid-19-pandemic-orders-and-guidance/>

The Hunt Institute COVID-19 Resources & Policy Considerations

<http://www.hunt-institute.org/covid-19-resources/state-child-care-actions-covid-19/>

Maryland Department Health (MDH) related to COVID-19

<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Resources for Schools and Child Care

<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/school-resources>

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Early Childhood website

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Early Childhood FAQs and Guidance for Child Care Providers during COVID-19 <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs>

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Early Childhood Maryland Child

<https://marylandchild.org/>

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Early Childhood Maryland Families Engage website  
<https://marylandfamiliesengage.org/>

Maryland Strong Roadmap to Recovery  
[https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MD\\_Strong.pdf](https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MD_Strong.pdf)

Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education  
<http://marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Documents/MSDERecoveryPlan.pdf>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Child Care is Essential and Needs Emergency Support to Survive  
[http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/naeyc\\_covid-19\\_closures\\_and\\_child\\_care.pdf](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/naeyc_covid-19_closures_and_child_care.pdf)