

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Early Care and Education/ Child Care Programs

A Mitigation Checklist for Providers and Caregivers

Mitigation efforts refer to methods that make it harder for COVID-19 to spread. This checklist, which should be used along with the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) updated Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs](#), is designed to help your Early Care and Education (ECE) and child care programs reduce the spread of COVID-19 among children, staff, direct service providers, and families. All types of ECE and child care programs (child care centers, home-based and family child care, Head Start, pre-kindergarten, after-school, and summer programs) can use this checklist, which is divided into sections based on different prevention strategies. For more information and resources, please visit the links found at the end of each section.

Directions: This checklist can be completed by any staff person providing child care but is best used if completed by the person(s) with decision-making authority, such as an administrator or director. If you are not the director or other person(s) in charge, ask if they will complete this checklist with you so your staff/team can decide together what potential changes need to be made. Please note that this checklist does not provide a score but serves as a self-evaluation tool. Upon completion, the program administrator or director should contact the appropriate child care consultant or CCR&R to strengthen COVID-19 practices. Child Care Aware of America is also offering technical assistance (TA) and a suite of relevant resources. To request TA, please [click here](#).

Pre-Checklist Screening:

Program Information	
Date of Completion:	
Completed By:	
Person(s) in Charge (Administrator/Director): Staff Person (Support Staff or Classroom Lead):	
Program Name:	
Program County, State:	
Type of child care Program:	a. Home-based or family child care b. Child care center c. Head-Start/Early Head-Start d. Other: _____
Ages of Children Served: (Select all that apply)	a. Less than 1 year of age b. From age 1 up to age 2 c. From age 2 up to age 4 d. From age 4 up to age 5 e. School-aged children
Total number of enrolled children: Center/Building capacity :	

Section 4: Classes/Cohorts and Ventilation

Average number of attending children: <i>(Calculate average over a 4-week period)</i>	
Total number of available classrooms/child-occupied spaces: Total number of in-use classrooms/child-occupied spaces: Service capacity of your child care facility: <i>(Capacity facility is licensed for)</i>	
Staff Information	
Total Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-Time Staff: • Part-Time Staff: • Administrative/Office Staff: • Other/Support Staff: 	FT: _____ PT: _____ A/O: _____ Other: _____
Do staff travel between programs/sister-programs or buildings? <i>(If Yes, please describe how often)</i>	
Program Points of Contact (POC) <i>For child care homes and similar smaller ECE spaces, please list as most appropriate.</i>	
COVID-19 Coordinator	Name: _____
	Email: _____
	Phone Number: _____
Facility Maintenance	Name: _____
	Email: _____
	Phone Number: _____
Local Public Health Agency OR <i>child care Consultant</i>	Name: _____
	Email: _____
	Phone Number: _____
State Public Health Agency (<i>Regional Specialist</i>)	Name: _____
	Email: _____
	Phone Number: _____
Community Information	
Are you familiar with using local/state COVID-19 websites to find regularly updated information?	a. Yes b. No
Does your ECE program direct families and staff to a COVID-19 testing facility? <i>(If yes, please provide facility information)</i>	
Additional Information:	

Section 4: Classes/Cohorts and Ventilation

- a. Are children divided into groups or cohorts in which they interact with the same peers and caregiver(s) when community transmission is *medium* or *high*?

Yes No Unsure NA

- b. Are close-contact activities (e.g. art, music) and playground schedules staggered to limit mixing of classes/cohorts?

Yes No Unsure NA

- c. Are there written procedures for increasing the distance of sleeping cots, mats, and cribs as much as possible during nap time?

Yes No Unsure

- d. If community transmission is medium or high, are program staff encouraged to have activities outside as weather permits?

Yes No Unsure

- e. Has airflow been improved by opening windows, doors, circulation vents, or by using portable air cleaners with HEPA filters?

Yes No Unsure

- f. For chest/breastfeeding parents and guardians, are there spaces physically distant (e.g. at least 6 feet apart) to allow for safe infant nursing areas?

Yes No Unsure NA

- g. Are there written procedures for van-share or bus-ride programs to maximize physical distancing during transport?

Yes No Unsure

Resources & Guidance:

1. [CDC's quick guide](#) to protect your child care center from COVID-19: Visual map to help create a safer child care center space.
2. [Drop Off/Pick Up](#) resources by Caring for Our Children (CFOC).
3. Check to see if your [local health department](#) or state health department has developed protocols for operating child care centers safely during COVID-19.
4. [Resources on school bus safety](#) for riders and drivers.
5. CDC's [Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs](#)

Appendix: Key Terms and Definitions

Emergency Operations Plan (EOC) – A plan that is developed in collaboration with regulatory agencies and state/local public health departments to describe prevention strategies for public health emergencies such as Covid-19. This plan should:

- describe steps to take when a child or staff member has been exposed to someone with Covid-19, has symptoms of Covid-19, or tests positive Covid-19.
- document policy or protocol differences for people who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 versus those who are not fully vaccinated.
- consider the range of needs among staff, children, and families, including children’s developmental needs, children with disabilities, children with healthcare needs, and children experiencing homelessness.

Close contact – Any level of contact of less than six (6) feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

EPA Approved Sanitizer – Alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol.

Child Care Health Consultant – An official of the local public health department that works with child care centers and family care homes to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate strategies to achieve high quality, safe, and healthy child care environments by focusing on topics that include, childhood immunizations, childhood nutrition, risk reduction, emergency preparedness, and dental health.

Regional Child Care Health Specialist – An official of the state health department that serves as the primary area (region-specific) child care health consultant.

Cohort – Keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout an entire day. This strategy is often used to avoid mixing different groups to limit the spread of COVID-19 and potentially isolation or quarantine resulting from a confirmed or suspected case.