

Section 7: Staff Resilience & Support

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 :	

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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:	

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- a. Is there a plan for open communication, training, and support for staff as they adapt to changes and difficult circumstances, and are staff invited to offer input in decisions about new processes and procedures?
- Yes No Unsure
- b. Are stress reduction strategies shared with staff such as [mindfulness](#), social support, deep breathing, and spending time in nature or outside?
- Yes No Unsure
- c. Has the administrator contacted your [local Child Care Resource & Referral agency](#) to find out if there are any professional development or in-services offerings for staff related to self-care?
- Yes No Unsure
- d. Are staff encouraged to talk about their concerns and feelings with people they trust?
- Yes No Unsure
- e. Is there a plan for all staff meetings and/or trainings to be within updated guidelines of local, state, or other national health agencies and/or organizations (i.e. virtual trainings/meetings, socially distant in-person meetings)?
- Yes No Unsure
- f. Are mental health support services readily available to staff and their families, such as through an Employee Assistance Program? Note: Communications should be accessible to persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
- Yes No Unsure
- g. Are facts regularly shared with staff about COVID-19 from trusted sources such as your [local/state health department](#) or [CDC](#) to reduce the spread of misinformation and ease fear?
- Yes No Unsure
- h. Are there posters, announcements, or other forms of communication for the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#)?
- Yes No Unsure
- i. Are staff provided appropriate (flexible and non-punitive) leave or other time off to allow for mental health support?
- Yes No Unsure
- j. Are staff provided with the information to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#) if they are [feeling](#)

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[overwhelmed with emotions](#) such as sadness, depression, anxiety; or call 911 if they feel like they want to harm themselves or others?

Yes

No

Unsure

Resources and Guidance:

1. Familiarize yourself with [COVID-19 mental health support services](#).
2. Children and young people's social, emotional, and mental health [resources + recommendations by age group](#).
3. [AAP's guidance](#) related to child care during COVID-19.

Child Care Aware of America's [webinar recording](#): Practical Ways to Help Children in Child Care Cope with the COVID-19 Crisis.

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.