



CHECKLIST FOR CHILD CARE FAMILIES

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The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years and older, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness, especially if they have serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart disease or compromised immune systems.

We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

These facts are vitally important when considering the reopening of schools, daycares, youth camps and other places that provide care and education for our children.

One thing is for certain: education and childcare are essential and we must find reasonably safe ways to restore these services so that our children can be cared for, educated and their parents and guardians can return to work. We must find ways to protect our children from COVID-19 to ensure that they do not bring the infection to others, such as other household members, who may be at high risk for severe infection or even loss of life.

For adults in the workplace or other public spaces, we are confident that if certain measures such as cloth face coverings or non-medical grade masks, respiratory etiquette, frequent hand washing / hand sanitation and environmental cleaning and sanitizing are widely observed, we can then proceed with reopening Texas in a safe and measured way.

However, some of the protective measures that we can expect from adults, such as wearing cloth face coverings and maintaining distance from one another are, for a variety of reasons, simply not possible for infants, children and youth to practice in schools, daycares and youth camps. In some cases, the child will be too young to understand and practice these precautions. We cannot, for example, expect a group of toddlers or schoolchildren not to engage in interactive play or share toys.

All of these factors mean that while certain precautions against the spread of COVID-19 can and will be applied to schools, daycares and youth camps, the infection control measures that can be put in place in these settings will differ somewhat from those that are suitable for other social, business and commercial settings.

Therefore, every child care provider who is responsible for providing care or education for infants, children and youth in these settings must be aware of these facts and be willing to comply with the infection control measures that will be in place in these settings. Parents or guardians should monitor the health of their child and not send them to the program if they are displaying any symptom of COVID. Parents or guardians should seek COVID testing promptly and report results to the program given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Individuals aged 65 or older are at a higher risk of COVID-19. Parents or guardians should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, children and youth who attend daycare.

MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



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About minimum health protocols:

The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all child care centers choosing to operate in Texas. Child care centers may adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all employees and children.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Child care centers should stay informed and take additional actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support economic revitalization. Child care centers should also be mindful of federal and state employment and disability laws, workplace safety standards, and accessibility standards to address the needs of both workers and customers. Federal and state regulations regarding child care centers should be followed.

Health protocols for families whose children attend child care:

Those 65 and older are at high risk of serious injury or death from COVID-19. 75% of deaths in Texas are from those in the over-65 population. Therefore, children in daycare should minimize in-person contact with any person 65 years of age or older, especially those with pre-existing health conditions. This includes maintaining social distancing of at least 6 feet separation from those individuals, wearing a face covering or mask, and avoiding sharing utensils or other common objects with those individuals.

- Follow the drop-off procedures proscribed by your child care provider.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.
- Screen yourself and your child before going into a child care center for any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19



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- Wash or disinfect hands upon entering the child care center and after any interaction with employees, other customers, or items in the center.
- Consistent with the actions taken by many individuals across the state, consider wearing cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth) when dropping your child off, or when within 6 feet of another person who is not a member of the individual's household. If available, individuals should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks.
- Wash or sanitize hands after dropping off your child.
- Think carefully about how you prepare your child's lunch or drinks for the day. Consider disinfecting reusable items every evening and before leaving for the day.
- Pack extra changes of clothes for your child, as child care centers are being asked to change children's clothing more regularly to prevent disease spread.
- Avoid sending in toys that cannot be cleaned daily into the child care center. If you do allow your child to bring in a toy from home, these toys should be cleaned every day when the child comes home and every morning before the child leaves.
- Avoid sending items from your home for activities such as show and tells.
- Parents should be aware of the risk to individuals 65 years of age or older from a child who could show no signs of the virus.