

COVID-19/ECE Task Force Notes and Resources

SAFER AT HOME FAQ

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) [recently provided you with additional information](#) regarding the Safer at Home phase in Colorado, and answered some of your common questions about that phase and how it will impact child care providers.

At the time of that communication we had not received clarification on the guidance to conduct curbside drop off and pick up at child care facilities, however, that clarification has now been published:

Q: The guidance for child care facilities operating under Safer at Home says that curbside pick up and drop off is the only option. If our facilities can keep the number of people in a room under 10, do we still need to use only curbside pick up and drop off?

A. Providers should consider implementing curbside drop off and pick up or an alternative approach that ensures physical distancing and does not allow parents to congregate in one area during drop off or pick up. According to CDPHE, curbside pick up is one of the best ways to reduce the number of people from congregating. However, not every child care facility can accommodate this practice without jeopardizing the safety of children. Using separate entrances, social distancing signage and taping off six-foot increments for parents waiting to drop off kids, as well as staggering drop off and pick up times are all allowable options to centers. Child care programs should work with their licensing specialist or local public health agency if they need specific recommendations.

More information for child care providers on the Safer at Home phase can be found on the [CDPHE website](#) and the [OEC's FAQ page for child care providers](#).

If you have questions or would like additional guidance about how to operate safely as Colorado moves into the Safer at Home phase, please reach out to your licensing specialist or email cdhs_oec_communications@state.co.us.

Q. The [Safer at Home Executive Order \(EO\)](#) prohibits public gatherings of 10 or more people. Does that mean that no more than 10 children, or 10 people overall, can be in one area of a child care facility?

A. We appreciate all the input and perspectives shared on this topic by so many providers across the state. In the past few days, the Governor's Office, CDPHE and CDHS have convened and determined that the guidance is "No more than 10 children should be in one group in a child care facility. This does not include staff."

Groups of 10 children and their caregivers/teachers should remain consistent each day, for the entirety of the day, with providers doing everything they can to maintain the same consistent groups for the duration of the Safer at Home order.

Q. How long will the group size of 10 limit be in place?

A. CDPHE does not have an end date for the limit of 10 children in a group at this time. The Department continues to work closely with CDPHE to determine when current regulations can be lifted, while still ensuring the safety of children and staff in child care facilities. The limit of 10 children not only helps to slow the community spread of COVID-19, it also helps limit children's exposure while in child care.

Q. Do the group sizes of 10 apply to common areas?

A. Yes, the group size of 10 children applies to common areas. There is the possibility to have more than one consistent group of 10 in a common area as long as physical distancing (6 feet between each child and minimum of 36 square feet per child) can be accommodated.

Q. Given the group size limits, are there shortages of available care as people go back to work? Will the state temporarily approve child care spaces in churches and schools on an emergency basis?

A. CDHS continues to closely monitor supply and demand. In instances where supply has been an issue, CDHS has prioritized reopening existing, licensed child care in a variety of settings to meet the demand. Alternative spaces are considered if no licensed space is available.

Q. Where can child care programs get personal protective equipment (PPE)?

A. The Department ordered 33,000 masks for child care staff and has partnered with the Early Childhood Councils to distribute these and other supplies to providers. They should be available the first week of May. Child care programs should reach out to their local [Early Childhood Council](#) to obtain masks.

Q. The guidance for child care facilities operating under Safer at Home says that curbside pick up and drop off is the only option. If our facilities can keep the number of people in a room under 10, do we still need to use only curbside pick up and drop off?

A. We do not yet have a final answer on this question. When guidance is clarified it will appear on the [Office of Early Childhood's FAQ page](#).

Q. Is it possible to place a partition in a classroom to allow for multiple groups of children?

A. Due to safety reasons, such as fire safety, access to exits (egress) and toilet facilities, and the required 6 feet of space between children to maintain social distancing, the use of partitions in classrooms is not approved at this time.

However, providers may:

- Use large spaces such as a gymnasium or cafeteria for a classroom for groups of 10 children that are consistent from day to day to the extent possible. If the space is large enough to allow for social distancing (6 feet between each child and minimum of 36 square feet per child), more than one stable group could be in the space at the same time as long as there is adequate space between groups and safe egress is not compromised.
- Use a space that has already been approved by licensing but does not have an assigned group of children. These spaces include but are not limited to multipurpose rooms, gross motor rooms, art rooms, music rooms, etc.

CDHS requires permanent indoor classrooms unless there is designated indoor space meeting the social distancing requirements assigned to this group of children in the event of inclement weather.

Q. Can mothers nurse in child care program buildings?

A. Nursing mothers should be accommodated as much as possible. A quiet space away from other children that also can provide social distancing should be provided. CDC guidance to promote and support breastfeeding is available [here](#).

Q. Does the guidance apply to summer camps?

A. This guidance does not apply to overnight or residential camps, nor does it apply to outdoor or mobile school-age programs. That guidance will be released separately.

Q. Is the guidance in the Safer at Home EO recommended or required?

A. The public health order implements the requirements from Executive Order D 2020 044 Safer at Home, and the guidance materials then provide additional explanation. Reading the public health order carefully will provide a better understanding of what is required, and unless the terms used are optional, such as may, urged or encouraged, the actions listed in the public health order are required.

[Safer at Home Guidance for the Early Childhood Community from OEC](#)

[You can read the state's full guidance and associated links here:](#)

<https://mailchi.mp/state/state-ta-day-schedule-change-and-provider-webinar-1978110?e=5d6097b6fc>

[CDPHE will continue to update their website with guidance and information on Safer at Home as it becomes available.](#)

[You can also see updated FAQ for child care providers on the Colorado Department of Human Services \(CDHS\) Office of Early Childhood's FAQ page.](#)

[Latest updates on State Budget picture](#)

While the federal coronavirus relief package provided some aid to states, the [federal funds](#) from the CARES Act cannot be used to generally backfill revenue losses, only for unexpected expenses incurred due to the coronavirus pandemic. As such, the JBC has begun, this week, to reverse prior actions taken earlier in the legislative session that had approved spending. They will utilize the JBC staff documents as the basis of their discussion (linked in the tracker in the next sentence) and are looking at both the 'deeper cuts' and preliminary cuts as areas for action. [Here](#) is a tracker of key budget items affecting children and families prepared by the Children's Campaign.

In advance of the JBC cuts for the current and next fiscal year, a new executive order [reduces spending by \\$228.7 million](#) in the current fiscal year in order to maintain the required statutory reserve. The lengthy document lists reductions of specific line items across executive branch agencies. The reductions don't rely on furloughs or layoffs of state employees, but instead decrease spending for travel, not filling additional staff positions, delaying projects, halting unexpended grant dollars, and downward revisions due to lower utilization of services.

In light of a challenging budget year, any legislation that costs money will likely not pass. One example of this is paid family leave that was proposed earlier this session. Given the cost of a paid

family leave program is very significant, the legislative sponsors of the FAMLl bill announced on Thursday that they planned to support a series of ballot initiatives to accomplish the same goal and withdraw their current legislative proposal. The 3 ballot initiatives, [#283](#), [#247](#), and [#248](#) brought by [Colorado Families First](#), have been challenged at the Colorado Supreme Court. Today, the Colorado Supreme Court allowed initiatives #247 and #248 to move forward. Initiative #247 would provide the most generous benefit with 16 weeks of leave and a maximum of 26 weeks, there would be no small business exemption, employers would pay 75% of the premium at 1.04% of the employee's wage, and private plans would not be allowed. Initiative #248 would provide 12 weeks of leave with 16 weeks maximum, no small businesses would be exempted, employers and employees split the 0.88% wage premium equally, and some private plans would be allowed. Initiative #283 would also provide 12 weeks of leave up to a 16 week maximum, small businesses under 10 employees would be exempt from paying the employer premium, employers and employees would split a 0.9% wage premium equally, and some private plants would be allowed. All three initiatives are structured as a state-run insurance program. The abandoned bill proposed to mandate that employers provide a FAMLl benefit and then allow employers to buy insurance on the private market.

In a press conference Friday, Governor Polis was asked whether or not he would issue an executive order to extend deadlines or alter signature gathering requirements for ballot initiatives. He did not say definitively, but stated that they are examining what is possible under the constitution and are working on ways to honor the rights of people to place initiatives on the ballot.

Letter from CFI & CCLP Regarding Budget Cuts & Alternatives

Colorado Fiscal Institute and the Colorado Center on Law and Policy have begun to pull partners together to advance a three-pronged approach to resolving the state's budget crisis: 1) spending down state reserves, 2) Instituting an Emergency TABOR Tax (an action TABOR permits without a vote of the people during an emergency) that is focused on cutting taxes for 95% of Coloradoans, and 3) advocating for additional federal funding. To join the group working on these issues, please contact Caitlin Schneider at schneider@coloradofiscal.org.

Federal Advocacy Letter from Colorado re: State and Local Budget Relief

Given Colorado's coming budgetary issues, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bell Policy Center is organizing a sign-on letter to the entire CO Congressional delegation, outlining the need for unrestricted federal funding for state and local governments in the next relief package. Budget cuts would be devastating to the people of this state, but they are inevitable without an influx in new revenue. You can find the letter here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MMA44RdPnACsqKkR0p7sKO4gMBq7vttR-d8Qv3aM4bM/edit?usp=sharing>

We are asking for organizational sign-on to this letter by end of day MAY 8, THIS COMING FRIDAY. We are hoping to get a large number of groups, so feel free to share this letter across the state

throughout your networks. If you wish to sign on, or you just have questions, please contact Joshua Mantell at mantell@bellpolicy.org.