Department of Health Division of Environmental Health
Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs

This interim guidance is intended for administrators of public and private childcare programs and K-12 schools. Administrators are individuals who oversee the daily operations of childcare programs and K-12 schools, and may include positions like childcare program directors, school district superintendents, principals, and assistant principals. This guidance is intended for administrators at both the school/facility and district level.

Why is this guidance being issued? This guidance will help childcare programs, schools, and their partners understand how to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within childcare and school communities and facilities. It also aims to help childcare programs, schools, and partners react quickly should a case be identified. The guidance includes considerations to help administrators plan for the continuity of teaching and learning if there is community spread of COVID-19.

Encourage parents to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Persons who have a fever of 100.40 (38.00C) or above or other signs of illness should not be admitted to the facility. Screen children upon arrival, if possible.

Encourage staff to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illness.

- Only 10 individuals including the teacher/staff in classrooms
- Space for physical distancing
- Daily temps of children and staff
- No child or staff to come to the center with symptoms

Childcare classes should include the same group each day, and the same childcare providers should remain with the same group each day. Create a separate classroom or group for the children of healthcare workers and other first responders.

Keep each group of children in a separate room.

Limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as art, music, and exercising.

If possible, at nap time, ensure that children’s naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart. Consider placing children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up
Consider staggering arrival and drop off times and/or have childcare providers come outside the facility to pick up the children as they arrive. Your plan for curb side drop off and pick up should limit direct contact between parents and staff members and adhere to social distancing recommendations.

Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

- Screen Children Upon Arrival (if possible)
- Have childcare providers greet children outside as they arrive.
- Designate a parent to be the drop off/pick up volunteer to walk all children to their classroom, and at the end of the day, walk all children back to their cars.
- Infants could be transported in their car seats. Store car seat out of children’s reach.

Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices
- Train staff on healthy hygiene practices so they can teach these to students.
- Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility, so that children can clean their hands before they enter. If a sink with soap and water is not available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol next to parent sign-in sheets. Keep hand sanitizer out of children’s reach and supervise use. If possible, place sign-in stations outside, and provide sanitary wipes for cleaning pens between each use.
- Department of Health offers several free handwashing resources that include health promotion materials, information on proper handwashing technique, and tips for families to help children develop good handwashing habits.
- Ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices.

Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops). Clean with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available here. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Provide EPA-registered disposable wipes to teachers and staff so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use.
- Ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.
Implement multiple social distancing strategies

Administrators are encouraged to think creatively about all opportunities to increase the physical space between students and limit interactions in large group settings.

- Increase the space between desks. Rearrange student desks to maximize the space between students. Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused from virus containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- Avoid mixing students in common areas. For example, allow students to eat lunch and breakfast in their classrooms rather than mixing in the cafeteria. If it is not possible to suspend use of common areas, try to limit the extent to which students mix with each other, and particularly with students from other classes (e.g., stagger lunch by class, segregate lunch and recess area by class, send a few students into the library to pick out books rather than going as a class, suspend the use of lockers). Restrict hallway use through homeroom stays or staggered release of classes. Try to avoid taking multiple classes to bathrooms at once (e.g., avoid having all classes use the bathroom right after lunch or recess). In childcare or elementary school settings, consider staggering playground use rather than allowing multiple classes to play together, and limit other activities where multiple classes interact.
- Stagger arrival and/or dismissal times. These approaches can limit the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations and times.
- Reduce congestion in the health office. For example, use the health office for children with flu-like symptoms and a satellite location for first aid or medication distribution.
- Limit nonessential visitors. Limit the presence of volunteers for classroom activities, mystery readers, cafeteria support, and other activities.
- Teach staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school. Educate staff, students, and their families at the same time and explain why this is important.

Consider ways to accommodate the needs of children and families at risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

- Consider if and how to honor requests of parents who may have concerns about their children attending school due to underlying medical conditions of their children or others in their home.