

ANNOUNCEMENT

C-20-08



Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Bureau of Certification

Issue Date: 07/10/2020
Effective Date: 07/10/2020

Subject: COVID-19 Operations for Licensed Child Care
To: Child Care Providers, Child Care Certification and Early Learning Resource Centers Staff
From: *Tracey Campanini*
Tracey Campanini
Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning

PURPOSE

To issue clarification regarding health and safety compliance during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to licensed child care providers and child care certification representatives employed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) who conduct monitoring visits and complaint investigations.

BACKGROUND

Guidance has been provided for the operation of child care in Pennsylvania during COVID-19. Beginning March 25, 2020, communications and updates were provided directly through the Certification listserv as well as being publicly posted on the [DHS Resources for Providers webpage](#). The primary directive has been in order to continue to operate or reopen, child care providers must follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Guidance for Child Care That Remain Open](#) (CDC Guidance).

As child care programs have continued to operate or are planning to reopen, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has received requests for clarification regarding the expectations for compliance with the CDC guidelines. This announcement serves to further clarify OCDEL's expectations for compliance with the CDC guidelines, compliance with applicable regulations and Executive Orders issued by the Governor or Secretary of Department of Health.

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DISCUSSION

The CDC Guidance outlines critical planning and activities which should occur in child care settings to protect the health and safety of both children and staff. There are four critical parts of the CDC Guidance that align with Executive Orders (EO) issued by Pennsylvania Department of Health in the [Guidance for Businesses Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees and the Public and the Order of the Secretary of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#). Those four critical elements (“Critical Elements”) are:

1. Child care staff must wear face coverings indoors; they must also wear face coverings outside where staff are unable to maintain the 6-foot social distance, unless a medical reason prevents the staff from wearing a face covering. This includes anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
2. The child care program must establish and implement a screening procedure to assess for symptoms of COVID-19 for staff and children prior to entering child care space and mingling with others. [CDC guidance](#) should be followed in developing the screening procedure.
3. The child care program must have a written health and safety plan that aligns with CDC guidance to minimize the risk of COVID-19. The safety plan must be communicated to staff and enrolled families. At a minimum the safety plan must address:
 - a. Screening procedures,
 - b. Child drop-off and pick-up policies,
 - c. Sick policies,
 - d. Mask policy, and
 - e. Cleaning/sanitation procedures.

Please see the [Child Care Facility COVID 19 Health and Safety Plan Template](#) for developing a health and safety plan.

4. The child care program must adhere to the reporting of suspected or confirmed cases of enrolled children or staff with COVID-19 and complying with follow-up guidance pertaining to remediation, quarantine and directive for temporary closure to address additional cleaning and sanitation.

Effective July 17, 2020, child care certification representatives will cite child care programs operating out of compliance with the previously described Critical Elements derived from [CDC guidance](#). The citations for items 1-4 will be issued under 3270.21, 3280.20, and 3290.18, all

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pertaining to “general health and safety.” Child care programs failing to comply with acceptable plans of correction, may be subject to further action that impacts the child care programs’ Certificate of Compliance, ability to continue to operate, and eligibility for distributions of supplemental financial supports.

NEXT STEPS

Child Care Facility Operators and Staff:

1. Review this announcement with all relevant staff.
2. Review the *CDC Guidance for Child Care Providers That Remain Open*.
3. Review Announcement C-20-06, Revised: *Interim Guidance for Certified Child Care Facilities operating during the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic*
4. Create, or revise as needed, COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. Post for staff and parents to see and post online when possible.
5. Implement the plan activities.

Child Care Certification Representatives:

1. Review this announcement.
2. Track and communicate to OCDEL headquarters, programs failing to adhere to acceptable Plans of Correction on a weekly basis.