



May 14, 2020

Dear Child Care Provider,

The Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) have worked together to develop the following guidelines to assist child care providers in re-opening quickly and safely.

Re-opening Guidelines for Child Care Facilities

These guidelines are intended for application in non-health care related places of employment. The foundation guidelines for businesses and employers remains the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)'s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). All adult employees as well as parents dropping off children should be made aware of and follow all general guidelines listed.

General Guidelines that Apply to All

All employers have to determine how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. In order to re-open and successfully remain open for business, everyone individually and collectively must actively participate in the core recommendations:

1. Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home.
2. Practice social distancing to the greatest extent possible (or wearing a cloth face covering if it is not possible to maintain 6 feet of distance).
3. Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol).
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects (e.g., keyboards, phones) and surfaces (e.g., handrails, workstations, sinks) or remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces (e.g., trash can lids).
5. Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
6. Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away immediately after use.
7. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment when possible, or disinfect them before and after use.
8. Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.

Guidelines Specifically for Child Care Settings

In addition to the above safe-practices, employees and customers of child care facilities should follow these guidelines to minimize the potential for transmission and spread of COVID-19, in addition to following the recommendations in the [CDC Guidance for Open Child Care Programs](#).

1. Consider changing your sign in procedures for parents and other visitors (e.g., move handoffs closer to the front door to minimize parents coming into the classroom space and avoid possible exposure to children and caregivers).
2. Limit visitors to the facility.
3. Limit communal sharing of food, and donations where possible.
4. Make sure children, staff, and visitors are washing hands as directed by DHEC.
5. Clean and disinfect all surfaces within the facility regularly.
6. Direct staff to stay home when they are sick, and direct parents to keep their children home when they are ill. Encourage parents to watch for signs of illness (fever > 100.4°F, cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell) in their children. Screen children upon arrival, if possible.
7. Children who live in the same house as a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 should not attend day care.
8. Establish procedures to ensure children and staff who become sick at daycare or arrive at your facility sick are sent home as soon as possible. Keep sick children and staff separate from well children and staff until they can leave.
 - a. If an employee develops symptoms and is sent home, he/she should follow the [CDC guidelines](#) with regard to when to discontinue home isolation and return to work.
 - b. All areas where the infected individual was present should be cleaned and disinfected following the [CDC guidelines](#) PRIOR to facility re-opening.
 - c. Follow guidance from DHEC Epidemiology that may be specific to the scenario.
9. Follow the child care licensing regulations related to diapering procedures. Ensure that dirty diapers are placed in a container that is not accessible to children.
10. When feasible, staff members and older children should [wear cloth face coverings](#) within the facility.

It is very important that all child care operators, workers and customers understand that while these guidelines are voluntary, it is in everyone's best interest to diligently follow them as we move to re-open our economy and keep it open.

If you have general questions about COVID-19, the DHEC Care Line is here to help at 1-855-472-3432 on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For the most up to date information about the Coronavirus, visit DHEC's website at scdhec.gov/COVID19. For child care specific questions, please contact the DSS Division of Early Care and Education at 1-888-825-7174 or schildcare.org.