



4 South Eagleville Road •Mansfield CT 06268 •Tel: (860) 429-3325 •Fax: (860) 429-3321•Web:www.EHHD.org



Childcare Guidance for COVID-19

Childcare is an important part of the public health emergency response to Covid-19. It is particularly important to ensure that public safety workers are able to work, healthcare workers are able to care for the sick (including those with coronavirus), and other workers can continue vital services in society, such as pharmacies and food stores.

Information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, some early information is that children with confirmed COVID-19 generally had mild symptoms. A small percentage of children have more severe illness. People who have serious chronic medical conditions are believed to be at higher risk. Despite lower risk of serious illness among most children, children with COVID-19-like symptoms should avoid contact with others who might be at higher risk, such as [older adults and adults with serious chronic medical conditions](#).

What steps can daycare providers and staff take to support children, families and our community

Mitigation Strategies for Childcare centers

- Identify those students that may have an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (immunocompromised, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, etc).

Parents should consider keeping these children home and keep them away from sick people.

- Educate students and the community about COVID-19 and preventive hygiene practices.
- Consider daily screening children for possible symptoms (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) when children arrive at the center and at least once more during the day.
- Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.
- Encourage staff and students to stay home when sick.

- Reinforce to staff and children, **regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol with adult supervision. Handwashing should be done:

- ✓ Before and after coming in contact with children.
- ✓ Before and after eating food.
- ✓ After coming in from outside.
- ✓ After sneezing or blowing their nose.
- ✓ After using the bathroom.



- Remind staff and children to cover their mouths and nose with a tissue or their sleeve when coughing or sneezing. **Not their hands.**
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, according to product directions and program policy. Clean:
 - ✓ Doorknobs, keyboards, cell phones, and light switches.
 - ✓ Sanitize cribs and mattresses daily.
 - ✓ Spray down all furniture and surfaces in the building with sanitizer solution and let it air dry overnight
- Consider having students eat meals in smaller group gatherings.
- Limit gatherings.
- Stagger drop offs and pick-ups of children.
- If feasible, limit the rotation of teachers, aids, and students throughout different classrooms to reduce mixing of individuals.

- Do not allow children to bring items or toys from home.
- Provide plenty of opportunity for children to get outside but considering staggering small groups of students.



How to talk to children about COVID-19

As public conversations around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) increase, children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents, family members, school staff, and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear. CDC has created guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease. Get up to date information at www.cdc.gov.

Remain calm and reassuring.

- Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it.

Make yourself available to listen and to talk.

- Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.

- Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.

Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.

- Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

Provide information that is honest and accurate.

- Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.

Empower children.

Teach children everyday actions they can to reduce the spread of germs

- Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
- Remind children to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash and then wash their hands.

- Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov> and the CT Department of Public Health <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus> are primary sources for information about COVID-19 and offer information specific to child care programs and settings that serve young children. Individuals who have general questions that are not answered on these websites can also dial 2-1-1 for assistance. This hotline is available 24 hours a day and has multilingual assistance and TDD/TTY access for those with a hearing impairment.