



## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

March 18, 2020

Dear Childcare Facility Partner,

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) appreciates your collaboration in the response to COVID-19 at your childcare facility.

Who is at Higher Risk for complications?

- Older adults with risk increasing with age.
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease

When people are close together, there is an increased risk that they will spread respiratory illnesses like COVID-19 to each other. ADHS recommends that children should be kept at home during this time period, and not watched by individuals that are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19. We recognize that many people need to continue to work, primarily healthcare workers, first responders, and critical infrastructure personnel. If your childcare facility remains open during this time period, ADHS has outlined a series of recommendations in this letter. Childcare services should implement protocols for symptom screening for all individuals entering the establishment, staggered recreational time, prevention of classroom mixing, meals and snacks in separate classrooms where possible, and frequent cleaning and disinfection.

### **Facilities should identify plans and resources.**

- Connect with your **local public health departments** to establish an emergency operations plan. Ensure the plan includes strategies to reduce the spread of a wide variety of infectious diseases (e.g., seasonal influenza). Effective strategies build on everyday facility policies and practices.
- Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage. Provide additional cross-training staff to ensure coverage in case people get sick and need to stay home.

- Identify contacts at local hospitals in preparation for potential need to hospitalize children, staff or facility volunteers.
- Increase physical space between individuals, as feasible.
- Limit gathering spaces to 10 or less people (e.g., stagger lunches, separate rooms), as feasible.
- Staff members and children should be excluded from the childcare facility if ill.

### **Recommendations for staff and volunteers:**

- All staff should be educated on the prevention of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.
  - This education includes basic hand washing, respiratory hygiene, and implementation of proper protective equipment.
- Check that staff are up-to-date on vaccinations, including their seasonal influenza vaccination, if possible.
- Environmental Services should be informed of all recommendations, so a coordinated approach can be made to ensure proper cleaning of environmental surfaces.
  - Use a bleach-and-water solution (0.1% solution; 1:50 dilution).
  - [List N: EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the Cause of COVID-19](#)
- Encourage environmental cleaning of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, including telephones, desks, remotes, keyboards, toys, and doorknobs.
- Staff members should be excluded from work if they are sick.
  - If staff have tested positive for COVID-19, they should remain under home isolation precautions for 7 days from specimen collection OR until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms of acute infection resolve, whichever is longer.
  - If staff have fever with cough or shortness of breath and have tested negative for COVID-19, they should stay home away from others until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms of acute infection resolve.
  - If staff have fever with cough or shortness of breath and have not been tested for COVID-19, they should stay home away from others until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms of acute infection resolve.

- If staff have other non-compatible symptoms and have not been tested for COVID-19, they should stay home until 24 hours after all symptoms are gone without the use of medicine.
- Staff should monitor all children for signs and symptoms of new respiratory infections.
  - Children or staff who are symptomatic with respiratory illness should be isolated immediately and be separated from well students and staff until sick students and staff can be sent home.

### **Recommendations for visitors:**

Because of the ease of spread in a childcare facility setting and the severity of illness that occurs in older adults and people with chronic medical conditions with COVID-19, facilities should only allow essential visitors and begin screening visitors even before COVID-19 is identified in their community.

Facilities should:

- Post signs at the entrances to the facility instructing visitors to not enter if they have fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection. Ensure that visitors sign visitor logs in case contact tracing becomes necessary.
- Ask all visitors about fever or symptoms of respiratory infection. Restrict anyone with:
  - Fever or symptoms of respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath).
  - Travel within the last 14 days to affected areas. Information on affected areas is available on [CDC's travel website](#).
  - Contact with an individual with COVID-19.
- Visitors should be instructed to limit their movement within the facility.

### **If you are concerned that a child or staff member could have COVID-19:**

Immediately contact your [local health department](#) if a child, staff member or volunteer meets exposure and symptoms criteria.

- Your Local Health Department will help assess the situation and provide guidance for further actions.

## **Recommendations for COVID-19-positive children or staff at your facility:**

- Laboratory positive COVID-19 cases should be immediately reported to your Local Health Department. Your staff, parents and volunteers should also be notified.
- Staff members and children should be excluded from the childcare facility if ill.
  - If staff or children have tested positive for COVID-19, they should remain under home isolation precautions for 7 days from specimen collection OR until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms of acute infection resolve, whichever is longer.
  - If staff or children have fever with cough or shortness of breath and have tested negative for COVID-19, they should stay home away from others until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms of acute infection resolve.
  - If staff or children have fever with cough or shortness of breath and have not been tested for COVID-19, they should stay home away from others until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms of acute infection resolve.
  - If staff or children have other non-compatible symptoms and have not been tested for COVID-19, they should stay home until 24 hours after all symptoms are gone without the use of medicine.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

## **Guidelines for Food Safety in your childcare facility:**

- Staff should take precautions if they handle and or prepare food.
  - Staff should not work when sick.
  - Staff should not touch ready-to-eat foods with bare hands.
  - Staff should carefully wash their hands with warm water and soap often, especially after using the restroom.
- Staff should follow appropriate food service and handling standards.
  - Food should be served only after reaching proper cooking temperature.
  - Fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly rinsed before cutting or eating.

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- Staff should use a barrier such as tongs, gloves, or other utensils to prevent direct hand contact with food.
- Kitchens in childcare facilities should continue to practice routine environmental cleaning and sanitizing including food contact surfaces and frequently-touched surfaces in food preparation areas.
  - Staff should clean and disinfect any objects or surfaces that may have been touched.
  - Staff should use sanitizers and disinfectants according to directions on the EPA-registered label.

### **Recommendations for parents:**

- All parents should be educated on the prevention of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.
  - This education includes basic hand washing, respiratory hygiene, and implementation of proper protective equipment.
- Parents should ensure that their children are up-to-date on vaccinations, including their seasonal influenza vaccination, if possible.
- For any required medical appointments, parents should coordinate with offsite medical facilities to avoid potential spread of COVID-19.
- Encourage environmental cleaning of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched at home.
  - Telephones, desks, remotes, keyboards, toys, and doorknobs.
  - You can use a bleach-and-water solution or disinfectant with a label that says “EPA approved” for killing viruses and bacteria. Always follow directions on product labels.

Please contact your [Local Health Department](#) or the Arizona Poison Control System Hotline (1-844-542-8201) for questions or assistance.

Sincerely,



Cara Christ, MD, MS  
Director, Arizona Department of Health Services