



## Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 for Child Care Providers

### What do I need to know about COVID-19?

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a disease first identified in China that now has cases spread throughout the world. The virus causes fever, cough and shortness of breath. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) are preparing for the possibility of the virus spreading widely in the US and NC.

### What should I be doing?

Review and update your policies for child and staff illness and absence. Make sure parents are keeping sick children home and staff that do not feel well do not work. If a child has a fever or cough, separate them from other children and contact their guardians to send them home or keep them from care.

Take common-sense steps and help children and families do the same:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with others who are sick.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue then throw the tissue in the trash. If a tissue isn't available, cough or sneeze into your elbow or onto your shoulder, so that germs do not end up on your hands. Wash or sanitize your hands afterwards.

Clean frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, tables, countertops, and toilets often with cleaners. Use cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (like keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before each use.

### If there are cases of COVID-19 in my community, what do I need to do?

The first step is to talk with your local health department. If local health department officials report that there are cases in your area, child care programs and schools may need to take additional steps to prevent spread of the virus. Local health department officials will provide guidance when it comes to decisions about temporary closing or other responses.

Find information about contacting your local health department ( at: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/county-health-departments>)

### Are children more likely to get COVID-19 compared with adults?

No, there is no evidence that children are more likely to get COVID-19. Most confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been in adults. Children should follow the usual steps to avoid getting sick or spreading infection. This

## NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

includes washing hands often using soap and water, avoiding people who are sick, and staying home if you are sick. There is not a vaccination for COVID-19, but it is recommended that children who are able get a flu shot to protect them from the flu. (From CDC FAQs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>)

### **If a parent or an adult in close contact with the child enrolled in child care has been exposed to COVID-19, should their child stay home from care?**

Work with the local health department for next steps. Follow your usual policy for child illness. Make sure parents are keeping sick children home.

### **What should you do if you believe you have been exposed?**

If you are not having symptoms, monitor your health. Call your health care provider if you develop a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If you are sick with fever or cough you should not come to work. Talk to your local health department and child care consultant if you have children, staff, or parents/guardians who were exposed and are having symptoms like fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

### **What else do I need to know?**

No one group, ethnicity or population in the US is at a higher risk for getting or spreading COVID-19 than others. While people may worry or have concerns about COVID-19, it is important to not let fear lead to social stigma toward friends, neighbors or members of the community or unwarranted paranoia.

You can check the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) and the NCDHHS website at [www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus) for up-to-date and accurate information about COVID-19. Resources can be found at the NCDHHS webpage, as well as, at the CDC, like [materials on handwashing](#).

The CDC has provided [guidance](#) on COVID-19 for child care programs and schools.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has helpful tips on preventing the spread of germs and reducing the spread of illness in child care settings:

- [Germ Prevention Strategies](#)
- [Reducing the Spread of Illness in Child Care](#)