

COVID-19 Guidelines for Daycare Centers and Early Stimulation

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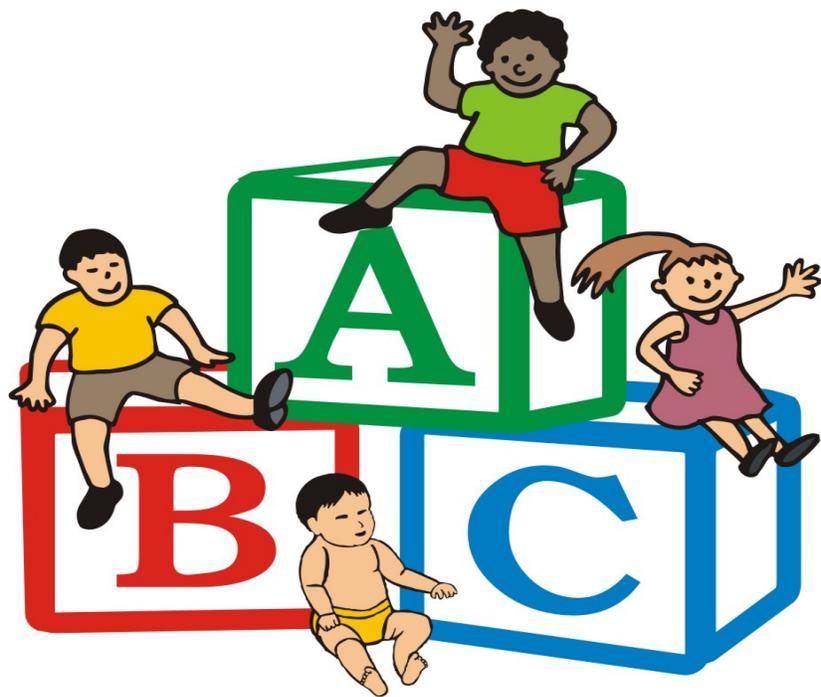


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Introduction

This document is a guideline that will help ensure the hygiene and safe reopening of childcare centers. It outlines safety and hygiene measures to prepare the center. These measures must be taken prior to receiving children and or staff at the center to ensure the safety of the children in your care, as well as your staff and the parents in connection with the outbreak of COVID-19 and the closure of all of the daycare centers.

This protocol serves as a guide for childcare organizations. With this, they can elaborate on the measures and actions necessary in a "location-specific protocol", and further specify them. When complete, the applicable guidelines should be clearly communicated to parents via the appropriate communication channels and, if possible, to the children upon their return to the center.

Most important is for everyone to apply a uniform method to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 in the daycare centers.

Before re-opening your childcare center, a Prevention and Safety plan must be drafted. This plan should be provided to staff and parents and send to the inspector for childcare centers. The inspector will visit your center and conduct an inspection based on this plan.

Use the below points /questions when preparing your "Prevention and Safety Plan":

1. What are the steps that you have put in place to prevent the spread of the COVID-19?
2. How would you ensure that the rules are adhered to?
3. What are the guidelines for the staff to adhere to?
4. Have your cleaning schedule in place.
5. How often are you ventilating the center?

Employee and child Health

Monitoring employee health

- Instruct employees with symptoms associated with COVID-19 to report to their supervisors. Instruct sick employees to stay home and to report to their physician a/o CPS.
- If employees are sick at work, send them home immediately. Clean and disinfect surfaces in their workspace. Others at the facility with close contact (i.e., within 6 feet) of the employee during this time should be considered exposed.
- Instruct employees who are well, but know they have been exposed to COVID-19, to notify their supervisor and follow the recommended precautions from the health department.
- Inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, while maintaining confidentiality.
- If you have staff members age 65 or older, or with serious underlying health conditions, encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home.
- Person in charge of the facility must report any suspected case on location to CPS (Collective Prevention Services).

Monitoring child health

- Encourage parents to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Children with the following symptoms must stay at home.
 - cold
 - sniffing and runny nose
 - coughing
 - fever (temperature above 37.5°C/99.5°F)
 - difficulty breathing/shortness of breath and any other flu like symptoms.
- Conduct a visual inspection of the child on arrival for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. Check the child's temperature. Do not allow the child to enter the childcare center if either this is the case.
- Children will be allowed back to the childcare center once they are symptom free for 24 hours. If someone in the household of the child is experiencing fever and/or shortness of breath, the child must also stay at home. The child can return to the center if no members in the household have any symptoms for 24 hours.
- If a child develops any complaints during their stay, separate the child and immediately contact the parent to pick up the child.
- If someone in the household of the child tests positive for COVID-19, the child must wait to return to the center after the person is symptom free for 24 hours plus an extra 14 days.
- Children with symptoms have to be tested as soon as possible by Collective Prevention Services (CPS), with permission from parent or guardian.

- If you have children with underlying health conditions, talk to their parents about their risk. Follow children’s care plans for underlying health conditions such as for instance an asthma action plan.

Hygiene Measures

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious infants and toddlers, and they often need to be held. To the extent possible, when washing, feeding, or holding very young children: child care providers can protect themselves by wearing an over-large button-down, long sleeved shirt and by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other up do.

- Caregivers should wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child’s secretions.
- Do not wear jewelry during high-risk activities, such as changing a diaper, wound care, preparing food.
- Cough and sneeze in a tissue, or in the inside of the elbow.
- Discard of the tissue immediately and practice good hand hygiene.
- Do not wear nail polish and or artificial nails.
- Caregivers should change the child’s clothes if secretions are on the child’s clothes. They should change the button-down shirt, if there are secretions on it, and wash their hands again.
- Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine.
- Infants, toddlers, and their caregivers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand in the center.
- Caregivers should wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles prepared at home or prepared in the facility. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used for bottle-feeding should be thoroughly cleaned after each use by washing with a bottlebrush, soap, and water.
- Children should have one sterilized bottle for every feeding and multiple bibs.

When diapering a child, caregiver must wash their hands and wash the child’s hands before beginning, and wear gloves, and when appropriately needed. Follow safe diaper changing procedures. Procedures should be posted in all diaper-changing areas.

Steps include:

- Prepare (includes putting on gloves)
- Clean the child
- Remove trash (soiled diaper and wipes)
- Replace diaper
- Wash child’s hands
- Clean up diapering station

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment for students and staff. Cleaning removes dirt and most germs, and usually done with soap and water. Disinfecting kills most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product used as directed on the label.

Centers must develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects such as:

- Door knobs and handles
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunch tables and chairs
- Countertops
- Light switches
- Shared toys
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones and desks top
- Computer keyboards and mice

Provide disposable wipes to caregivers and other staff members

NOTE: Computer keyboards are different to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene, before and after use to minimize disease transmission.

How to clean:

- Wear disposable gloves to clean
- Clean surfaces with water and cleaning agent.
- Clean from high to low and from clean to dirty.
- Use cleaning products according to the instructions on the package/ label.
- Change visible dirty water.
- Clean the floor with a clean mop.
- Always use clean clothes.
- Wash cleaning clothes at 60 degrees Celsius (if possible) and let them air dry.
- Clean cleaning material after use.
- All cleaning materials should be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children from inhaling toxic fumes.

Dry cleaning can also be applied by dusting off:

- Use a damp cloth to prevent dust particles from getting in the air.
- Vacuuming. The disadvantage of vacuuming the carpet is that the dust particles are spread in the air. If you must vacuum the carpet, it is highly advisable that:
 - vacuum the room when there are no children.

- open windows while vacuuming.
- use a dust wiper instead of a broom. The broom will be spreading dust.

Disinfect

- Use household disinfectant by following the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
- Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for application and proper ventilation.
 - To make a bleach solution, mix:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water (4 liter) OR
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
- Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.

It is not necessary to apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not frequently touched or high risk (e.g., floors, bookcases, top of filing cabinets)

Soft surfaces

- For soft surfaces, such carpeted floor, rugs, drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.
- Clean the surface using soap and water or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- Launder items if possible, according to the manufacturer’s instruction. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

Hard surfaces

- Clean surfaces with soap and water then disinfect.
- Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely with a cleaning cloth.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.
- Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning.
- If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes.
- Clean & sanitize hands immediately after gloves are removed.

Electronics

For electronics such as tablets, remote controls, touch screens, keyboards, and ATM machines.

- Consider putting a cover on electronics that can be wiped.
- Follow manufacturer’s instruction for cleaning and disinfecting. If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.

Toys

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used.

- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry. Be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child’s mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.
- Machine washable cloth toys should be used by one individual at a time or should not be used at all. These toys should be laundered before being used by another child.
- Do not share toys with other groups of infants or toddlers, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Place in a dish pan with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for “soiled toys.” Keep dish pan and water out of reach from children to prevent risk of drowning. Washing with soapy water is the ideal method for cleaning. Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.
- Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

Use bedding that can be washed. Keep each child’s bedding separate, and consider storing in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots and mats should be labeled for each child. Bedding that touches a child’s skin should be cleaned weekly or before use by another child.

- A week supply of personal items such as Towels, Blankets, Sheets, Clothing and personal hygiene products should be sent to school at the beginning of the school week. Ensure to include large zip-lock bags for wet soiled items to be sent home each day.

Social distancing

- Keeping distance between caregiver and children is not necessary.
- Keeping 6-8 ft/2 meters distance between children of the same group is not necessary. If possible, the classes should include the same group of children each day, and the same caregiver should remain with the same group each day.
- Ensure that inside and outside spaces allows for a distance of 6 feet/2 meters between caregivers. They must maintain a 6-8 ft/2 meters distance from each other at all times.
- Facial Masks can be worn at certain times throughout the day. Masks should not be worn constantly for more than four hours a day and all reusable masks must be washed daily.
- Consider whether to alter or halt daily group activities that may promote transmission.
- Outdoor play is very important for the preschoolers every day. Limit the mixing of children, such as schedule playground times at different times for each class.

- If possible, at naptime, ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced as much as possible, ideally 6 feet/2 meters apart. Consider placing children head to toe, in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

Dropping off and picking-up children, and the parents

- Organize the bringing and pick-up moments of children in such a way that it is possible to have 6-8 ft/2 meters between adults. Have children brought by one adult, so without extra adults or children who do not use childcare there.
- Keep pick-up and drop-off times as short as possible. Information about a child can be provided, for example, by digital means or by telephone, in order not to have to discuss this extensively during drop-off and pick-up time.
- Limit contact between children from different groups, between children and parents and if possible between parents among themselves as much as possible.
- Schedule pick-up and drop-off time of the children at different times.
- Consider bringing children to the entrance and – for younger children – allow only one parent inside the center.
- Consider drawing lines (or other demarcation) behind which parents have to wait.
- Ensure that – also with infants - the transfer can take place with due observance of the 6-8 ft. / 2meter distance rule.
 - E.g. have the parent put the child to sit down in a Maxi-Cozy, in a bouncer or on a play mat and to stand back so that the teacher can pick up the child. Above all, guarantee the emotional safety of all the children.
 - Pick up older children on the playground, with the necessary supervision.

During the hours in daycare

- It is not necessary to keep a distance of 6-8 ft / 2 meters between staff and children.
- It is not necessary to keep a distance of 6-8 ft /2 meters between children but limit the contact between children from different groups.
- Make sure that the (inside and outside) room where the care is taking place allows adults to keep 6-8 ft / 2 meters distance away from each other.
- Keep as much as possible a distance of 2 meters between children older than 4 years.

Complaints

If there are any health and/or safety concerns in your workplace you can contact Inspectorate VSA via Inspectoratevsa.sxm@gmail.com or call the Complaint Officer at 5202936