



A Union of Professionals

COVID-19 Resources

Child Care Centers and You: COVID-19 Infection-Prevention Best Practices

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While our essential workers are fighting COVID-19 on the frontlines, their children need supervision and engagement at home. Many of our members nationwide are rising to this task and volunteering to work in child care centers. Making sure you are protected while doing this work is vital. Here are some best practices that your child care center should have in place, and examples of ways you can keep yourself safe while doing this work.

Has your center administrator provided you with training that includes:

- Information related to COVID-19, including how the illness is spread, how to prevent its spread, symptoms, and when to seek medical assistance for sick children or employees (link to Covid-19 basics factsheet on transmission and symptoms)?
- Information on how to properly clean and disinfect surfaces, including knowing the hazards associated with the cleaning and disinfecting products, how to properly use them, how to best protect yourself, and how to access the required employer-provided personal protective equipment for use?

Has your center administrator developed a communications plan that includes:

- A system to check with parents and guardians daily on the status of their children when children are dropped off at the facility? For example, parents and guardians should know that children should stay at home if they are sick, have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, or if someone in the household has symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath).
- Information and communications in the primary languages spoken by the parents and guardians?
- A way to collect email addresses and home, work and mobile phone numbers from parents and guardians of children at the facility so the

Find these resources and more at www.aft.org/coronavirus

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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facility can reach them at all times? Does this list include secondary emergency contacts in case the primary parent or guardian is unable to answer the call?

- Communications systems that they've tested with parents and guardians, employees, facility management, and emergency medical services?
- Procedures to notify local health officials upon learning that someone who has been at the child care facility has COVID-19? These officials will help administrators determine a course of action.
- A plan in case the program needs to close, including how the center will communicate with parents, staff and vendors?

Has your center administrator developed a cleaning protocol that includes:

- Procedures to routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, shared toys)? These procedures should include:
 - Opening windows and doors to allow as much fresh air to circulate in the space while cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and toys.
 - Using products that are Environmental Protection Agency-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.
 - Providing the mildest EPA-registered disposable wipes for employees to wipe down commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) before use. Hydrogen peroxide products are recommended because it is the least harsh chemical that kills this virus.
 - Following the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., safety requirements, protective equipment, concentration, contact time). For example, if bleach is being used, it should be diluted to a 10-part water/1-part bleach solution and remain wet on surfaces for at least three minutes.

- Removing plush toys because they cannot be adequately cleaned.
- Ensuring there are adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.

Has your center administrator implemented social distancing protocols, such as:

- No large group activities?
- Keeping children in groups of no more than 10 individuals in a classroom, including teachers?
- Assessing classrooms and outside play areas divided by gates or partial walls as one room that serves one group of children at a time?
- Limiting outside visitors and volunteers with the exception of employees or contracted service providers for the purpose of special education or required support services, as authorized by the school or district?

Has your center administrator implemented any policy on health checks for staff and children, such as:

- Modifying caregiver drop-offs and pickups so that they do not enter the child care setting? For example, have parents or guardians remain in their cars and wait until a staff member can meet the child at the door?
- Screening children and employees for fever, cough or shortness of breath upon arrival each day?
- Providing that nurses who are in centers should have loose-fitting surgical masks on hand to give to students or staff who show symptoms of respiratory illness? N95 surgical respirators are not needed outside healthcare settings?
- Designating a private room away from others for students or staff members who show symptoms of respiratory illness? They should be attended to by a limited number of trained staff and be provided with a surgical mask.

- Having a plan in place for contacting parents and guardians immediately and criteria developed for seeking medical assistance, which should include Immediately notifying your local health department?

Do you have resources available to practice good hand hygiene for staff and children?

- Do you have access to adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissues) to support healthy hygiene practices? These practices include frequent hand-washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer where soap and water are not available). This includes:
 - When staff and children arrive at the facility and before they leave the facility.
 - Before and after handling food, feeding a child or eating.
 - Before and after using the toilet, changing a diaper, or helping a child use the bathroom.
 - After helping a child wipe their nose or mouth or tending to a cut or sore.
 - After working in sandboxes and similar children's play areas.
 - Before and after giving medicine to a child.
 - Before and after eating.
 - After handling wastebaskets or garbage.
 - After children play outside in sandboxes or other children's play areas.
- Consider teaching and practicing cough and sneeze etiquette (cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve—not hands).
- Discourage children from sharing food, drinking cups, eating utensils, towels, toothbrushes, etc.

Do you have resources and training to follow cleaning protocols?

- Have you received training on how to safely use cleaners and disinfectants on surfaces and objects? This includes:
 - The hazards of the cleaners and disinfectants available for use at the work site.
 - Wearing personal protective equipment (such as gloves).
 - Ensuring cleaners and disinfectants are used in a manner that does not endanger employees or children at the facility.

Are you able to:

- Stagger mealtimes, as needed to maintain a group size of 10 or fewer and support social distancing?
- Provide bagged or individual lunches?
- Provide pre-approved, individually wrapped snacks?

And, finally, have you assessed your risk?

Leading experts advise that certain vulnerable populations are at higher risk for complications from the virus that causes COVID-19. If you fall in any of these vulnerable groups and decide to continue working, please consult your medical provider at your earliest convenience. These populations include:

- Adults 60 years of age and older
- People who have serious underlying medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease

- Underlying immune disorders/people with compromised immune systems/people taking immune suppressant medications (examples of these disorders include rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, recent cancer treatment)
- Pregnant women
- People with HIV

For additional information, contact Amy Bahruth with AFT Health Issues at 202-879-4731, abahruth@aft.org.