

## VDH COVID-19 Interim Guidance for Outbreaks in Child Care Facilities as of March 29, 2020

In light of the current situation with COVID-19 infections in the United States, many child care facilities have closed. Some remain open, however, especially to provide care for the children of healthcare workers, first responders, and others whose help in the community is critical at this time. Children should remain home, quarantined with their family or other caregivers, to the extent possible. The guidance below outlines steps child care facilities that continue to operate should follow to protect the health of the children and staff at all times and in the event that one or more cases of COVID-19 infection occurs there.

Child care facility directors need to keep up with the latest guidelines from the Virginia Departments of Health and Social Services and have a key role in continuously assessing the health of staff and children and implementing measures to prevent disease. The recommendations below explain different steps that are recommended when no cases of COVID-19 infection have been identified, if cases occur among a single defined group, and when multiple groups are affected.

### **Steps to Take Now (Before an Outbreak)**

- Ensure that the facility has flexible sick leave and absentee policies that do not encourage people to come in while sick.
- Ensure all staff and parents/guardians are familiar with the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, especially fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Posting signs from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) or the [Virginia Department of Health \(VDH\)](#) is recommended.
- Make it clear that parents/guardians are not to bring a child to the facility if the child or anyone else in the household has any of those signs or symptoms.
- Screen each person arriving at the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection and ask if anyone in the household has any of the symptoms. Do not admit any person who is ill or has an ill person at home.
- Discourage anyone from entering the facility who is at high risk for severe disease, including those 65 years or older and those with underlying chronic medical conditions, such as heart or lung diseases.
- Follow [Virginia Department of Social Services](#) guidelines for management of activities in the facility. Maintain separate spaces for groups of no more than 10 people, counting staff and children. Encourage individual play and social distancing of 6 feet or more to the extent possible. Provide meals and snacks in those spaces and do not allow mixing of groups or larger group activities.
- Provide a place in the facility where ill persons can be placed until they can be picked up and taken home. Ensure staff of each group monitors for any indications of fever or respiratory illness and removes any ill person from the group and places the ill person in the designated area for sick individuals. Call parents/guardians and ensure the ill person is taken home as soon as possible. Follow the guidelines below for steps to take if illness occurs in the facility.
- Teach and encourage proper hand and respiratory hygiene practices. Provide for regular and routine handwashing with soap and water upon entry into the facility, before meals and snacks, after blowing noses, coughing, or sneezing, after toileting or changing diapers, and at other scheduled times during the day. Encourage coughing into the crook of elbows followed by

handwashing. Provide tissues and hand sanitizer to the extent product is available. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Provide supplies including handwashing stations with soap and water, paper towels, and lined trash cans.
- Institute routine cleaning and disinfection of toys and surfaces. Remove soft toys that are not easily cleaned. Refer to [List N](#) on the EPA website for EPA-registered disinfectants that have qualified for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.
- Maintain a log of staff and children that is updated daily and includes identification and contact information, symptom status, group assignments and location within the facility.
- Ensure all staff know and follow expected communication protocols to inform the center director about any health concerns in the facility. The center director must, in turn, communicate appropriately with local health and licensing officials. Notify the health department if individuals with known or suspected COVID-19 are identified, if severe respiratory infection is identified, or if clusters ( $\geq 3$  staff and/or children) are identified with respiratory infection. Parents/guardians must also be notified if a case occurs in the facility.

#### **Steps to Take during an Outbreak**

- Contact your [local health department](#) any time you have concerns about illness in your facility. The health department will need to gather information from you, such as the number of staff and children in the center, number ill, symptoms and dates of illness, locations of illness within the facility, as well as measures in place to limit the spread of disease. Depending on the circumstances, the health department might recommend laboratory testing of ill persons to confirm the cause of illness and provide additional advice to limit the spread of the virus.
- Any ill persons must stay home for a minimum of 7 days and until at least 3 days after symptoms resolve. They or their parent/guardian should call their physician's offices if they have any concern about the severity of the symptoms. If COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed, all others in the household must stay home in quarantine for 14 days.
- If a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 infection occurs in one defined group within the center, the ill person needs to go home as described above. Other staff and children in the group must be quarantined in their homes for 14 days. Parents/guardians and staff facility-wide should be informed of the situation. The [CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed. Other groups within the child care facility can continue to function, with daily and vigilant screening for illness occurring and social distancing and personal and environmental hygiene measures strictly adhered to.
- If suspected or confirmed cases occur in multiple groups within the facility, then all child care operations within the facility need to be suspended. Facility management can institute surveillance among the households of staff and children and reopen when 14 days have passed with no new cases in any household.

For additional information, refer to the [CDC website for Schools & Child Care](#).