

March 20, 2020

DHS Issues Updated Childcare Guidance in Response to COVID-19

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) issues updated guidance for childcare settings. The updated guidance was developed in close consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). The health and safety of children, family and childcare providers is of the utmost importance. Childcare programs provide an essential support for working families. At this critical time, we need to ensure childcare for essential workforce, including healthcare, first responders and critical infrastructure, which includes food production, food service and grocery workers.

We recommend social distancing for all ages, as such DHS encourages parents who telecommute to keep their children home with them. DHS also encourages childcare settings to limit rooms to 10 individuals per room when possible, and to increase space between children. Recess, activities and hallway passing should be staggered to limit interactions.

There are a lot of considerations that factor into this guidance. DHS originally provided guidance to ensure best practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Today, we're issuing updated guidance to take further steps.

Our guidance aims to do the following:

- Increase sanitation practices and provide robust hygiene protocols.
- Prescreen children and staff before entering the program.
- Implement best practices for social distancing to the extent possible and minimize large groups and all optional activities.
- Report clusters of absences and any confirmed cases associated with families receiving childcare.

Please see the updated guidance [here](#).

Beyond supporting existing infrastructure, DHS is also committed to standing up emergency regulations to support community efforts to provide childcare to essential workforce. If you need access to childcare, please visit www.iowaccrr.org/families or call 1-855-244-5301 to help coordinate alternate sites.

All childcare providers should report available slots to CCR&R daily, or as frequently as possible. This will help ensure access for essential workforce.

GUIDANCE MAY CHANGE:

Please visit the [DHS COVID-19 Guidance for Childcare Webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information. DHS is compiling all COVID-19 DHS resources in one place at www.dhs.iowa.gov/covid19.

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