![Iowa Department of Human Services logo](IOWA Department of HUMAN SERVICES)

CHILDCARE GUIDANCE
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Updated April 1, 2020

While not often included with first responders, the service you provide is critical. Thank you for your public service. We appreciate childcare providers staying open to provide quality, safe care to Iowa's children during this critical time.

The updated guidance has been developed in close consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). The health and safety of children, family, staff and childcare providers is of the utmost importance. Childcare programs provide an essential support for working families. We need to ensure childcare for essential workforce, including healthcare, first responders, critical infrastructure—which includes food service and grocery workers.

SHOULD ALL CENTERS REDUCE TO SERVING 10 CHILDREN?

The Iowa Department of Human Services (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.

To remain open during this time, we insist all childcare centers follow practices outlined below.

MITIGATION PRACTICES **ALL** CENTERS **MUST** DEPLOY IMMEDIATELY:

HYGIENE AND CLEANLINESS

1. Implement common-sense practices for preventing disease spread, such as: covering a cough, staying home when sick, and washing hands. Childcare providers are an important part of ensuring children maintain personal hygiene best practices. Increase these practices, particularly after eating or using the restroom. Talk to children about these practices. The CDC recommends washing hands for at least 20 seconds.

2. **Remove all plush toys from childcare settings. Do not allow children to bring plush toys from home. Wash blankets daily. Minimize the amount of toys in your childcare settings and clean them daily.**

3. Implement regular deep-cleaning practices at a minimum once a week, while continuing daily cleaning as normal.

HEALTH

1. **Conduct mandatory temperature screenings upon drop-off every day. Send home children with temperatures of 100.4 degrees or higher. Do NOT allow children with fever into childcare settings.**

2. Ensure that staff and children are not admitted to a childcare center when they are ill. Staff should stay home if someone in their home is ill. Children should also stay home if their parent is ill. If a child's parent is ill, send the child home, and have the parent call their primary healthcare provider. Healthcare practitioners are equipped to screen individuals and to refer for additional testing, if needed.

3. Sick children should be separated until they are able to go home. Staff who are ill should go home immediately.

4. Talk with your staff and parents about travel plans to affected areas so you are able to assess any potential risk. Visit the CDC's Information for Travel page for the most up-to-date alerts.

5. Put your infectious disease outbreak plan into action.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

1. Insist parent(s) drop-off children at the front door, limiting adult entry to the facility.

2. Cancel all gatherings, field trips, staff training and congregate meal settings. Distance children while eating.

3. Ask that staff practice social distancing outside of work (remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining approximately 6 feet of distance from others when possible).

4. Avoid mixing children across classes and stagger passing times.

5. Limit deliveries from outside vendors. If possible, have them deliver after business hours or leave deliveries outside of the facility.

REPORTING

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

2. If you see clusters of absences, report to DHS and we will coordinate with IDPH on potential closures.

3. Report clusters of illness to DHS.

4. If you are considering closing, please notify DHS.