

# Recommended Health and Safety Protocols for Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs (EECCP)

Drafted by MA Department of Public Health and Department of Early Education and Care  
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The following information should be used by any EECCP providers seeking guidance on appropriate health and safety procedures for preventing and responding to the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in child care settings. For additional guidance, please visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html).

## What steps can we take to prevent the spread of illness in our program?

### 1) Require all sick individuals to stay home.

- All staff, parents, children, and volunteers should be directed to self-screen at home, prior to coming to the program for the day. If your EECCP is a home-based facility, all household members should self-screen before coming into the child care space. Self-screening includes checking temperature (temperature of 100.4 or greater is considered a fever), and checking for symptoms included feeling like you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal upset, new loss of taste/smell, muscle aches, or any other symptoms that feel like a cold.
- EECCPs should take the time to screen families before their children enter the program space using the attached Daily Screening Protocol for EECCPs. This tool is also intended to guide ongoing monitoring of children throughout the day and for daily pre-entry screening of staff.
- Ensure that employee sick leave policies are consistent with public health guidance and flexible enough to support staff to uphold the “stay home if sick” policy. If the EECCP is a home-based program, update the policies for families outlining protocols for notification to parents and dismissal of children in the event that the provider or a household member become ill.
- The following guidelines should be strictly enforced and posted where they can be easily seen by all staff and parents:
  - If you or your child have fever, cough or shortness of breath and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should NOT go to work or child care, and should avoid public places. Stay home and away from others until at least 72 hours after the fever is gone (with no fever-reducing medications) and symptoms get better.
  - If you believe that you or your child have had close contact to someone with COVID-19, but are not currently sick, monitor for fever, cough, and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day of contact with the person sick with COVID-19. You should NOT go to work or child care and should avoid public places for at least 14 days.

### 2) While children are present at the child care center, staff should practice the following:

- Children should be kept 6 feet apart as much as possible and frequently reminded not to hug, high-five, or have any other physical contact.

- Staff should know the steps needed for effective handwashing (use soap and water to wash for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly and dry with individual disposable towel) and build in monitored handwashing for children at all necessary times throughout the day (upon arrival, before and after meals, after toileting and diapering, after coughing and sneezing, after contact with bodily fluids). Children and staff should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer often, making sure to wash all surfaces of their hands (front and back, wrists, between fingers, etc.). Hand sanitizer and/or soap and water should be readily accessible to all children (as appropriate to their ages) and staff. Post handwashing instructions (example included below) near every handwashing sink and where they can easily be seen by children and staff.
- Children should be instructed to cover their mouth when sneezing or coughing with a tissue or their elbow. They should wash their hands with soap and water immediately afterwards.
- Staff should be actively monitoring children throughout the day for symptoms of any kind, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting and children exhibiting signs of illness should be separated from the larger group. Each child care center should have a thermometer on site to check temperatures if a child is suspected of having a fever. Special care should be taken to disinfect the thermometer after each use.

**3) At the end of each day, staff should thoroughly clean the child care center following the cleaning and disinfecting procedure described below.** Staff clothing should not be re-worn until after being laundered at the warmest temperature possible.

### What cleaning and disinfecting protocols should we follow?

- To ensure effective cleaning and disinfecting, always clean surfaces with soap and water first, then disinfect using a diluted bleach solution, alcohol solution with at least 70% alcohol, or an [EPA-approved household disinfectant](#). Cleaning first will allow the disinfecting product to work as intended to destroy germs on the surface.
- While cleaning and disinfecting, staff should try to wear gloves as much as possible. After cleaning and disinfecting, immediately wash hands for at least 20 seconds, whether gloves were worn or not.
- Perform the program's routine cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting practices, paying extra attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, including doorknobs, bathrooms and sinks, keyboards, and bannisters. Clean and disinfect toys more frequently than usual and take extra care to ensure that all objects that children put in their mouths are cleaned and disinfected before another child is allowed to use it.
- Launder soft and/or porous items as appropriate and in accordance with manufacturer's directions, preferably in the warmest temperature practical. Always dry items completely before returning them to the program space.
- Remove any items that cannot be easily washed (i.e. stuffed animals, pillows) or that encourage children to put the toy in their mouths (i.e. play food, pretend utensils). Shared items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected at all (i.e. playdough) should be removed from activity rotation for the duration of emergency care. EEC also

recommends that programs not use water or sensory tables at all during the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

## What health and safety guidance should we provide to families coming to our child care center?

Child care centers should regularly remind families of the following:

- **If a child is feeling unwell in any way, they should NOT be brought to the child care center.**
- Families should take their child's temperature each day before coming to the child care center. **Children with a fever need to stay home.**
- Should a child or family member test positive for COVID-19, the family should alert the child care center immediately.
- Families should be prepared to pick up their child at any time in the case that their child gets sick or that the center needs to close for any reason. Child care centers should also make sure to confirm family contact information each day upon a child's arrival in case the child needs to be sent home.
- Families should remember to practice illness prevention habits with their children, such as covering coughs/sneezes with a tissue or elbow, washing hands often for at least 20 seconds, and practicing social distancing by staying six feet apart from other people and avoiding hugs, high-fives, and other physical contact.

## What do we do if a child or staff member becomes symptomatic during the child care day?

- **Be prepared BEFORE someone gets sick!**
  - Understand the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Being informed will help you manage the situation if someone becomes ill.
  - Designate a safe space that is easy to supervise for children who may become sick while in care. The space should offer the child some comfort and allow staff to keep the child away from other children until the child can be picked up.
  - Have an emergency backup plan for staff coverage to ensure that you are able to maintain safe and careful supervision of children if a staff member becomes sick.
  - Know the contact information for the local board of health in the city or town in which the child care program is located. Not only are the local boards of health a great resource for preventative guidance, but if someone is confirmed to have COVID-19 or if there was a secondary exposure, the local board of health will be the first phone call. Have the phone number readily available so you don't waste time in an emergency.
- **If a child becomes symptomatic while at child care:**
  - Immediately separate the child from other children and minimize exposure to staff. Whenever possible, the child's nose and mouth should be safely covered to protect others from potential infection.
  - Contact the child's parents. The child should be sent home as soon as possible.

- If the child HAS NOT been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the family should be advised that the child may not return to child care until at least 72 hours after the fever is gone (with no fever-reducing medications) and symptoms get better.
    - If the child HAS been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19, the family should be advised that the child may not return to child care and should avoid public places for at least 14 days.
  - Remind other families to regularly monitor their children for COVID-19 symptoms and to keep their children home if they have a fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath.
  - Areas used by sick children should be closed off for use by children and adults for the remainder of the child care day, to the extent possible. Programs are encouraged to wait as long as possible (preferably 24 hours) before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- **If a staff member becomes symptomatic while working:**
    - The staff member should be removed from others until she/he is able to leave the program. Whenever possible, the the staff member’s nose and mouth should be safely covered to protect others from potential infection. Staff should return home to self-isolate.
      - If the staff member HAS NOT been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, he/she should not return to work until at least 72 hours after the fever is gone (with no fever-reducing medications) and symptoms get better.
      - If the staff member HAS had close contact to someone with confirmed COVID-19, he or she should not return to work and should avoid public places for at least 14 days.
    - Remind families to regularly monitor their children for COVID-19 symptoms and to keep their children home if they have a fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath.
    - Areas used by sick staff should be closed off for use by children and adults for the remainder of the child care day, to the extent possible. Programs are encouraged to wait as long as possible (preferably 24 hours) before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.

## **What do we do if a staff member tests positive for COVID-19?**

**Staff members who feel unwell should not report to work.** Staff members who test positive for COVID-19 should immediately notify their employer. The child care center should then proceed with the following steps:

- 1) Notify the local board of health. When you become aware that someone confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the program, **immediately notify the local board of health.** Board of Health officials will assist programs in determining appropriate next steps, including guidance on dismissal, communication, and cleaning/disinfecting.

- 2) Inform all families that their child may have been exposed to COVID-19 and that they should monitor their children for symptoms.
- 3) Inform all staff that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and that they should be monitoring themselves for symptoms.
- 4) Alert your EEC Regional Director that a staff member tested positive for COVID-19. Your Regional Director will inform DPH and may provide you with further guidance.

### **What do we do if a child or parent tests positive for COVID-19?**

**Children who feel unwell, or children who live in a household with someone who feels unwell, should not attend child care.** If a child or anyone in a child's household (parent, grandparent, sibling, etc.) tests positive for COVID-19, the child's family should immediately notify any child care center that the child attended in the last 14 days. The child care center should then proceed with the following steps:

- 1) Notify the local board of health. When you become aware that someone confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the program, **immediately notify the local board of health.** Board of Health officials will assist programs in determining appropriate next steps, including guidance on dismissal, communication, and cleaning/disinfecting.
- 2) Inform all families and staff that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and that they should monitor themselves and/or their children for symptoms.
- 3) Alert your EEC Regional Director that a child in attendance at your center (or their family member, as relevant) tested positive for COVID-19. Your Regional Director will inform DPH and may provide you with further guidance.

### **Will emergency child care workers get priority testing for COVID-19?**

Yes. DPH will instruct testing centers to prioritize emergency child care workers that exhibit COVID-19-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) for testing.

### **Can exempt emergency child care centers obtain additional health and safety supplies from EEC or DPH (e.g., hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, gloves)?**

Due to the national shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitizer, child care centers will unfortunately not be able to receive these supplies from the Commonwealth's stockpile. EEC is working to identify sources for sanitizing and disinfectant materials. Please be in touch with your regional office, as you have identified specific needs for these materials. **Based on CDC guidelines, child care workers do not need to wear masks or gloves during day-to-day operations.**

## **Daily Screening Protocol for Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs (EECCP)**

**Instructions:** EECCPs should use this tool to screen children daily upon arrival and prior to entry into the child care space. The questions below may also be used to screen staff daily prior to entry into the child care space and for ongoing monitoring of children throughout the day.

<b>Does the child have any of the following symptoms?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
A temperature of 100.4°F or above?		
Cough?		
Shortness of breath?		
Sore throat?		
Low-grade fever? (slightly elevated, between 98.7°F and 100.4°F)		
Any other sign of illness?		
Has the child or anyone in the child's household had contact with someone in the previous 14 days with a confirmed or presumptive diagnosis of COVID-19 or someone who is ill with a respiratory illness?		
Has the child or anyone in the child's household travelled internationally in the past 14 days to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission?		

**If ALL of the above are NO, the child may attend EECCP care. If the child shows signs of any of the above during the day, follow exclusion protocols and call the child's parent/guardian to come pick them up.**

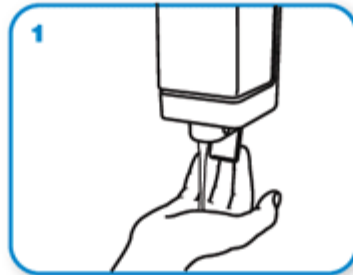
**If ANY of the above are YES, the child SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED to enter the child care building. The child should return home with parent or caregiver. Families should be encouraged to consult with their child's health care provider for further guidance.**

EECCPs should be strictly enforcing the guidelines below with regard to child and/or staff re-entry following illness or exposure:

- If the individual has a fever, cough or shortness of breath and HAS NOT been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual should stay home from the child care program and away from others until at least 72 hours after the fever is gone (with no fever-reducing medications) and symptoms get better.
- If the individual HAS had close contact to someone with COVID-19, but is not currently sick, the individual should stay home from child care program and away from others for at least 14 days. Families should continue to monitor for fever, cough, and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day of contact with the person sick with COVID-19.



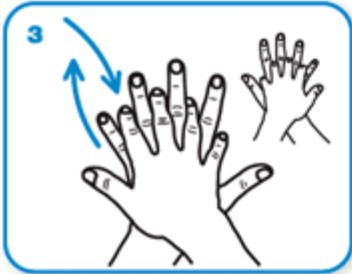
Wet hands with water



apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



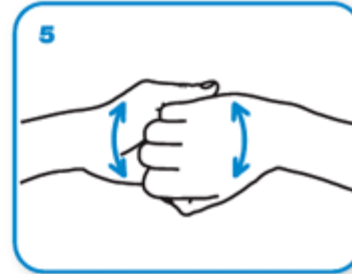
Rub hands palm to palm



right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



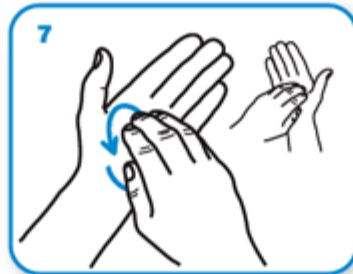
palm to palm with fingers interlaced



backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



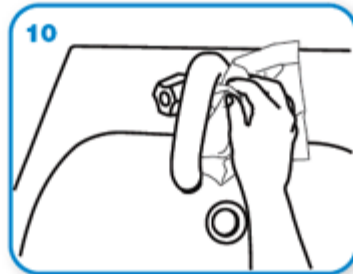
rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



Rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.