

Guidance on child cares remaining open/closing in light of COVID-19 pandemic

March 20, 2020

Child care is an essential service. This means that the operations of child care are necessary to continue to support the function of societal operations. Child care may remain **open** under the following conditions:

1. First priority shall be given to children of first responders, medical professionals and other professionals whose work is essential for the general community to stay healthy and safe. This includes children of workers who provide access to food and/or work in the general supply chain for goods, services and other basic needs.
2. **Child care providers/operators who are over the age of 60 should close and should not be providing care.** In addition, it is recommended that caregivers who are over the age of 60 and/or have underlying health conditions such as diabetes, lung disease or are medically fragile should stay home and should not be providing care to children in a child care setting.
3. All child care providers should immediately institute the practice of checking the temperature of each child when they are brought into the child care, before the parent leaves. If the child presents with a temperature of over 100.4, the child should not remain at the child care and must return home with the parent. Children who have had symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea should remain home for at least 24 hours after the last episode, and should be fever free for at least 24 hours without being given fever-reducing medications. Families should be informed of this new policy in writing and [providers can use the template provided by OECOSL to make this notification](#).
4. Social distancing practices should be continued with new policies that do not allow more than 20 children within one classroom or area. In addition, it is recommended that when possible programs keep the same children in consistent groups with the same teacher/caregiver. Flexibility can be used for intermittent scheduling when appropriate; however, the overarching goal is to minimize mingling of children.
5. It is recommended that programs adjust their daily schedules to allow one hour per day for deep cleaning when children are not present. This may mean that programs close one hour early or open one hour late and have teaching staff perform deep cleaning of the early education environment. [Please reference the cleaning and sanitizing information released by OECOSL](#) for information on how to ensure cleaning practices are safe in the child care environment.

6. **If a positive case of COVID-19 has occurred for a child or caregiver the facility must temporarily close to facilitate cleaning.** Those who are direct contacts should self-isolate. The facility should complete deep cleaning and sanitizing of the child care in order to rapidly reopen. Please see the OECOSL guidance document [titled COVID-19 checklist](#) for guidance as well as [sample templates for notifying staff and families of closures due to COVID-19](#).