

Minimizing the Risk of Spreading Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Child Care Facilities Phase 2

Montana's Governor issued a Directive on May 19, 2020 that moves Montana to Phase 2 Reopening on Monday, June 1, 2020. That Directive requires child care providers to continue to follow the April 1, 2020 Childcare Directive and associated guidance. All licensed child care centers must still follow all state law and regulations for Child Care Centers. Using the above, this document outlines requirements and recommendations to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 in child care facilities.

Daily Health Check:

- Conduct a daily health assessment of all children and staff upon entrance into the facility. These health assessments screen workers and children for symptoms associated with COVID-19. While infected people without symptoms can also spread the disease, this check is important to ensure that visibly sick, potentially contagious people get tested, stay home and are not at the workplace. Please see the following guidance document on [health assessments](#), including the current CDC list of COVID-19 symptoms and what to do if staff or children are exhibiting symptoms. More information regarding COVID-19 can be found here: <http://Missoula.co/cvirus>.

Isolation and Exclusion:

- Exclude children, staff, parents, and guardians from the child care site if:
 - They have been directed by the Health Department to quarantine or isolate for COVID-19; or
 - They have COVID-19 symptoms, including:
 - Fever over 100.4°F
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills or repeated shaking with chills
 - Sore throat
 - Unexplained muscle pain
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Vomiting
- In addition to the COVID-19 symptoms, the state child care rules require staff and children to be excluded if they have, or have had in the last 24 hours, the following symptoms:
 - A bacterial infection such as strep throat, scarlet fever, impetigo, conjunctivitis, or a skin infection unless on antibiotics for 24 hours prior;
 - Chickenpox with active sores;
 - Jaundice; or

- Uncontrollable coughs and sneezes, difficulty breathing, stiff neck, poor food or fluid intake, or other signs of severe or contagious illness.
- Parents and staff who are concerned that their illness may be COVID-19 should be directed to contact one of the [COVID-19 screening centers](#) listed on the Health Department's website. If they **are** accepted for testing, they must stay home until they receive a negative COVID test. If they are **not** accepted for testing, they must be excluded until they are symptom-free, with no help from symptom-reducing or relieving medicines, for at least 24 hours.
- The health department contacts anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or anyone who has been identified as a close contact of a case. They will be under the direction of a public health nurse for isolation, quarantine, and symptom monitoring.
- For additional information, call the Coronavirus Hotline: **406-258-INFO (258-4636)**.
- To access the free **Missoula County Screening and Testing Center**, please call **406-258-4636** and select **2** to speak to a nurse. If recommended for testing, appointments can be scheduled at that time. The Missoula County Testing Center is located at the Missoula County Fairgrounds: 1101 South Ave W.* By appointment only*
- Dedicate a spot onsite to place children if they develop symptoms that require exclusions. This spot cannot be the kitchen or an area that cannot be supervised.
- Parent/guardian must be immediately called to retrieve child.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting:

- Intensify cleaning efforts throughout the facility.
- Cleaning removes visible dirt and debris using hot soapy water; sanitizing reduces pathogens to safe levels; disinfecting destroys pathogens on a surface.
- State regulations require child care facilities to use chlorine bleach to sanitize and disinfect surfaces. Household bleach is fine, but it must be unscented
- Allow surfaces to thoroughly air dry after applying bleach solution. Refresh bleach solutions daily or use bleach test strips to ensure proper concentration. If using a product other than bleach, ensure it is an EPA approved cleaning product effective at inactivating COVID-19. Always use in accordance with label instructions. Only use products safe for food contact surfaces on those surfaces.
- Clean and disinfect restrooms daily with ¼ cup of bleach per gallon of water.
- Only use toys that can be cleaned and disinfected. Clean and disinfect toys **daily** with ¼ cup of bleach per gallon of water. Cloth toys should be laundered before being used by another child. If possible, implement a toy rotation system to allow time for cleaning between days. Mouthed toys should be set aside until cleaned. Do not share toys between different groups unless cleaned and sanitized beforehand.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces with ¼ cup bleach per gallon of water throughout the day.
- Disinfect nap mats, cots, or cribs with ¼ cup of bleach per gallon after use.
- Clean and sanitize tabletop eating surfaces or food contact surfaces with 50-100ppm bleach (1/4 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart of water).
- Clean and disinfect diaper changing station with ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon of water between uses.

- Wash all bedding and laundry using a hot water wash and a hot air dry.

Distancing:

- Contact your Child Care Licensor regarding group size and facility limits.
- When possible, limit group sizes to 10 people total, including children and staff. Continue to adhere to Montana Child Care Licensing ratios for specific age groups.
- Where possible, keep grouped children together throughout the day and maintain the same groups from day to day. Where possible, keep family units in the same group.
- To the extent possible, children should not access a classroom space allocated to a different group of children.
- Incorporate social distancing, also known as physical distancing, within the group, to the degree possible. Social distancing means providing physical separation between people of at least six feet.
- Plan activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children.
- Limit items that are shared between children in a group. If items are shared, remind children to wash their hands after sharing. Disinfect shared items in accordance with toy cleaning policies.
- Avoid use of outdoor play structures, especially when it is difficult or impractical to sanitize between uses.
- Incorporate outside time and open windows frequently to allow fresh air. Being outside should not be seen as being completely safe, but with more fresh air and more space between people, the risk of COVID-19 spread can be reduced.
- Provide outdoor play in staggered shifts, if possible, to prevent the congregation of groups.
- Stagger eating times to avoid congregation of large groups. Sanitize tabletop eating surfaces between mealtimes for each group.
- Alternate drop-off and pick-up times to avoid large groups from congregating.
- Implement a sign-in and sign-out policy that minimizes risk of transmission. This may look different for each facility but can include having parents wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon entrance, using a pen rotation system where parents can use a pen from a “clean” bin and then transfer it to a “dirty” bin where it will get disinfected for later use, or encourage parents to use their own pens. The key point being, if items are shared, people should wash their hands afterwards and avoid touching their faces with unclean hands.

Hygiene:

- Pay close attention to proper handwashing by staff and children.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds--especially upon arrival at the facility, after using the restroom, before eating, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
 - If hand sanitizer is used, ensure it contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Be vigilant about keeping children’s fingers out of their mouths and remind them not to touch their eyes or nose.
- Encourage all to cover their coughs or sneezes.

- Avoid family style meal service. Reduce shared surfaces and disease transmission by having specific staff responsible for food distribution. As always, use gloves or tongs to avoid barehand contact with ready-to-eat food.

Cloth Face Coverings:

Both the Governor and the Missoula City-County Health Board recommend that cloth face coverings be worn in public when 6-foot distancing cannot be consistently maintained:

- To the extent practical, when 6-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained when interacting with parents or others outside of their assigned camp group, have staff wear cloth face coverings.
- When practical, have kids and staff wear cloth face coverings when social distancing is not possible within a group, like during transportation in vans and buses.
- Note: Younger children may not be able to reliably wear, remove, and handle cloth face coverings following CDC guidance. Cloth face coverings should never be placed on a child younger than two, those who have trouble breathing, or any child who cannot take it off by themselves. In addition, a child should never wear a cloth face covering while sleeping, while in the water, or when activity levels will make it hard for them to breathe or cause heat distress.
- Please see the [Health Department's Guidance for Preschools & Childcare](#) page for our Cloth Face Coverings in Child Care guidance doc and CDC recommendations.

Accommodate High-Risk Staff and Participants:

- Encourage and allow staff who are in a vulnerable population to leave the workplace.
- Make special accommodations for vulnerable populations working at or attending child care or those who live with higher-risk individuals
 - High-risk population includes:
 - People who are 65 years or older
 - People with underlying health conditions such as heart, lung, or liver disease, diabetes, or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who are immunocompromised, including those undergoing cancer treatment
 - People of any age with severe obesity (BMI \geq 40)

Governor of Montana's Child Care Directive:

- Please see the State of Montana Directives and FAQs for more info:
 - [Governor Bullock's 5/19/20 Phase Two Directive and Guidance](#)
 - [Governor Bullock's 4/1/20 Childcare Directive](#)
 - [DPHHS 4/1/20 Childcare FAQ](#)