



# COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care and Early Learning, School-age Care, Youth Development Programs, and Day Camps

*Updated September 4, 2020*

## Updates:

- Snohomish Health District has aligned with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) child care guidance. Child care providers in Snohomish County should follow the guidance presented [here](#).
- Significant changes to the most recent DOH guidance include:
  - Staff should be assigned to individual groups and not mix with other groups to the greatest extent possible
  - Cohorting of children is advised when the group size is large. The maximum group size remains at 22; however, if groups have more than 15 children they should form 2 subgroups of children who do not mix with each other within the shared space.
  - In rare circumstances a face shield with a drape may be used as an alternative to a cloth face covering
  - Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must stay home for 10 days after symptom onset and at least 24 hours fever free and symptoms improve. If a PCR COVID-19 test is done and comes back negative, the individual may return once it has been 24 hours since any fever resolves and symptoms improve.
- Included updated link to Snohomish Health District decision-making intervention table.

Child care settings, including school-age care and youth development programs, are open for all who need it, provided that the program can meet all the safety requirements. Children and youth should only attend programs in their local, geographic area. Child care is particularly important and must be available for our medical workers, first responders, and others serving vital functions during this public health emergency, as well as for those who cannot work from home and do not have other child care options. For the time being, programs should engage in a discussion with parents and encourage those parents who are able to keep their children at home to do so.

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, so we encourage you to monitor the Snohomish Health District's website at [www.snohd.org/ncov2019](http://www.snohd.org/ncov2019) and refer to the [Snohomish Health District FAQ](#). The Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Family (DCYF) is also providing updated information, guidance and resources on their website at <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/coronavirus-covid-19>.

This document is intended to provide key clarifications and additions to [updated Washington State Department of Health \(DOH\) guidance](#) for COVID-19 prevention and control in child care facilities and other youth programs.

**Please review, be familiar with, and follow DOH guidance.**

**Snohomish Health Districts expects that child cares and other included youth programs will follow the most current guidance from Washington State Department of Health (DOH). Click on the link below.**

**[Child Care, Youth Development, and Day Camps During the Covid-19 Outbreak](#)**

This guidance includes information on health screenings, physical distancing, providing staff breaks, hygiene practices, cloth face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting, what do to if someone develops signs of illness. The majority of this information has not changed from previous versions of both the DOH and Snohomish Health District guidance.

### **Staff and Parent Communication**

It is important that all staff are trained in the health and safety protocols for your site. Make sure staff are aware of how to conduct health screenings, how to practice physical distancing, and what do to if someone develops symptoms of COVID-19. Have substitutes available in the event there are staff absences and ensure staff have flexible leave policies should they become ill.

It is important that programs are talking to families and staff about the importance of staying home when sick, handwashing, maintaining physical distance, and wearing cloth face coverings as appropriate. Parents should be made aware of the possibility of extended closures and have back up plans for care if they are unable to stay home from work.

Child care providers should make sure that all appropriate licensing regulations are being met, including physical space requirements, child-to-adult ratios, and background checks for staff. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is responsible for licensing child care and school-age care programs. You can reach the Everett DCYF office at 425-740-6871. DCYF has developed a form for use in requesting a waiver or exception to child care licensing rules. Child care providers should ensure programs will be able to meet all the COVID-19 public health guidance.

Setting up a very clear and accurate attendance system is critical. Staff must track which children are in care, which groups they are in and on which days, and which adult staff members work with each group. This will make identification of close contacts easier should a case arise. Also, an increase in absences should be a signal to further pursue what cause of the absences is.

### **Guidance for Excluding Ill and High Risk Individuals**

- Any child, youth, or staff member who is sick must stay home. Symptoms of COVID-19 can be found on the [CDC website](#). We have [a poster available](#) to inform parents. Post this document at all entrances. For more information about COVID-19 symptoms, please see [our general FAQ](#).
- Staff should ensure they are fever-free and asymptomatic before leaving home and reporting for work. Here is an [employee screening checklist from Washington State Department of Health](#). If staff do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses, they may report to work.
- Management of symptomatic or recently exposed attendees and staff depends on their exposure history, symptom status, and COVID-19 test results as set forth in the [guidance table](#) developed by Snohomish Health District.
- Programs should set up a separate space to isolate children and/or staff who become ill with respiratory symptoms until families can pick them up. Children must be supervised at all times. While waiting to leave the program, the individual with symptoms should wear a cloth face covering or mask if tolerated (over age 2 only). Air out for 24 hours or as long as possible and then clean and disinfect the areas the person was in after they leave.
- Ask parents at drop off if there are family members sick with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at home. If yes, the child should also stay home.
- Ill family members, those providing care for ill family members, or home care providers should not enter the facility or program space.

- Children at high risk for severe complications from COVID-19, such as those with compromised immune systems or respiratory conditions like severe asthma, should stay home. When in doubt, have parents consult the child's doctor for guidance.
- Staff in [high risk categories](#), including those age 60 or over, those with compromised immune systems, and those with underlying health conditions, should consider staying home or being excluded from daily operations. Individuals should consult their health care provider and employer for further guidance.
  - NOTE: Small child cares or in-home providers who have owners/operators in high risk categories that cannot be excluded and who do not have licensed staff on hand in order to remain operational should strongly consider closing for the protection of their own health. If a child care center or youth program has a large percentage of employees in high risk categories who stay at home, they may need to close due an inability to meet ratios.
- Children and youth who have family or household members in high risk categories should be encouraged to stay at home to avoid spreading the disease to vulnerable individuals.
- Limit the number of people who enter your facility or program space. Restrict visitors and volunteers. Develop a plan to hand off children to families at the entrance to the program space. If parents are ill, the child or youth should not be admitted to the program and should return home with the parent.
- Monitor child, youth, and employee attendance, have flexible leave policies, and have access to trained substitutes to support employee absences.

### Resources for Transmission Reduction

- Physical activity is very important. Snohomish Health District has a document that provides [ideas on how to incorporate physical activity](#) into your day while adhering to physical distancing guidance.
- [Lesson plans](#) are available to help teach handwashing and hygiene behaviors to children.
- Follow the [Department of Labor & Industries safety and health guidance on face coverings and other workplace protections for staff](#). All physical distancing and sanitation guidance must still be followed even if masks/face coverings are worn and face coverings must be [cared for properly](#). More information on cloth face coverings can be found in previous [child care health alerts](#), in the [DOH Child Care, Youth Development, and Day Camps During the Covid-19 Outbreak guidance document](#), and on the [DOH website](#).

### What cleaning and disinfection protocols should we be following?

Continue with your normal cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures throughout the day following licensing guidance, but increasing the frequency of cleaning/disinfecting high touch surfaces.

Conduct thorough cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces each night after the children leave. Current guidance for environmental cleaning and disinfection can be found on the CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

This guidance specifies that disinfectants used should be registered by the EPA for emerging pathogens (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>) or, if a bleach water mixture is used, the disinfectant (green label) should be mixed at a concentration of 4 teaspoons per quart. This higher level of bleach disinfecting solution can replace the normal diapering/bathroom solution at this time. The disinfectant should be used on high touch surfaces

throughout the day when children are not in the immediate area and when proper ventilation can be ensured. Surfaces must remain wet for at least 1 minute. Labels can be found [here](#). The University of Washington has developed a handout with options for [safer cleaning and disinfecting products](#) effective against COVID-19.

Always follow cleaning and disinfectant product label instructions and use products only in well ventilated spaces. Keep all chemical products out of reach of children and do not use when children/youth are present. Allow adequate time for indoor spaces to air out before allowing children back in.

If groups of children or youth are moving from one area to another in shifts, finish cleaning before the new group enters the area. Allow enough time for space to air out between groups when disinfectants are used. Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces each night after children and youth leave.

If the program is operating in a public school building, using the school district's disinfectant products may be a preferred option. Contact the school district to see if this is available for use or if custodial staff are on site to assist with disinfection of high-touch surfaces.

More information on cleaning and disinfecting can be found in the [DOH guidance](#).

### **What if there is a confirmed or suspected case associated with the program?**

To prepare for the potential of children or staff showing symptoms while at the program, programs should have a response and communication plan in place that includes communication with staff, families, and Snohomish Health District.

Programs experiencing a confirmed case of COVID-19 among their population, or having a high rate of absenteeism (more than 10%) due to symptoms consistent with COVID-19, should [contact the Snohomish Health District for guidance](#). Depending on the extent of exposure, part or all of your program may need to close at least temporarily (e.g., for 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials). The duration may be dependent on staffing levels, outbreak levels in the community, and severity of illness in children, youth, or staff. It is important that we prevent children, youth, or staff moving to another facility or program, potentially exposing others. Those individuals who were in close contact with a confirmed case (such members of the case's small group) will need to quarantine.

If an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 spent minimal time (i.e. less than 15 minutes) in contact with others in the program or if there are multiple individuals who were close contacts of a known case who spent time in the program but were not symptomatic, the program may consider closing for 2-5 days to do a thorough cleaning and disinfecting and check for ill individuals. Contact Snohomish Health District for further guidance.

The Snohomish Health District has also developed [a table that provides guidance](#) on what to do if employees or family members/close contacts of employees or children are sick and/or are being tested.

It is important for child care providers to assist in stopping the spread of COVID-19 within their program and in the community by cooperating with Snohomish Health District in providing required information within the required timeframe as spelled out in the [governor's safe start plan](#).

The Snohomish Health District [FAQ document](#) has additional information and scenarios for when an ill child or staff person can return.

### **What should I do if I think I may have been exposed or may be sick with coronavirus? A**

document from the Snohomish Health District provides guidance (in multiple languages) on what to do if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 at: <https://www.snohd.org/502/What-to-do-if-you-were-exposed>

The Washington State Department of Health also has developed guidance for various situations.

- [What to do if you have confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#)

### **Where can I get the most current information?**

The situation with COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. To ensure that you have the most up to date information please check the Snohomish Health District website frequently at [www.snohd.org/ncov2019](http://www.snohd.org/ncov2019).

Additional resources and previous health alerts for child care facilities are posted at <https://www.snohd.org/491/COVID-19-Info-for-Schools-Child-Cares>. Make sure you are signed up to receive newsletters and Child Care Health alerts by going to [www.snohd.org/notifyme](http://www.snohd.org/notifyme).

You can also find helpful information and resources at:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- General information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
- Schools and Child Care: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- Guidance for Child Care: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>
- Suggestions for Youth and Summer Camp: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

Washington State Department of Health (DOH):

- General Information: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus> and <https://coronavirus.wa.gov>
- Schools and Child Care: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020COVID19/ResourcesandRecommendations>  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/DOH-OSPI-DYCF-SchoolsChildCareGuidance.pdf>  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/FallGuidanceK-12.pdf>
- Order of the Secretary of Health on Face Coverings  
[https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Secretary\\_of\\_Health\\_Order\\_20-03\\_Statewide\\_Face\\_Coverings.pdf](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Secretary_of_Health_Order_20-03_Statewide_Face_Coverings.pdf)

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (LNI):

- General Information: <https://lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-covid-19-resources>
- Face masks/coverings: <https://lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/coronavirus-covid-19-worker-face-covering-and-mask-requirements-questions>  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADLI/bulletins/28f4c48>