

COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES AND OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMS



Updated July 30, 2020

The Snohomish Health District Child Care Health Outreach Program is available to answer your questions about COVID-19 or other health or safety concerns. We have decided to develop an FAQ of some of the most commonly asked questions. If your questions are not addressed in this document, please don't hesitate to email us at childcarehealth@snohd.org or call us at 425-252-5415 and leave a message. We will gladly respond to your questions.

Update 7/30/2020:

Streamlined with links to Washington State Department of Health (DOH) guidance for comprehensive coverage and details.

Overview

This FAQ provides key clarifications and additions to [prevailing DOH guidance](#) for COVID-19 prevention and control in child care facilities and other youth programs. Please review, be familiar with, and follow that guidance.

What should we do if we have a positive case associated with our program?

If you get a report that a staff member, child, or family member has received a positive COVID-19 test result, call the Snohomish Health District Communicable Disease program at (425)-339-5278; introduce yourself and mention that you are a child care provider or run a youth program. You will be asked to provide some information about the person and will be given isolation and/or quarantine guidance and whether certain parts of your program may need to close temporarily.

Any areas in which an infected person was present should be closed and ventilated for 24 hours prior to having staff enter the space to conduct a thorough cleaning. For guidance on cleaning and disinfecting spaces where a confirmed or suspected case has been, please see the CDC's guidance for "[Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities.](#)"

When do we need to exclude a child from care? What if they just have one symptom?

Snohomish Health District has created [a poster](#) outlining the symptoms that child care and youth program providers must screen for each day. This poster has been updated a few times since it was initially released. Programs should make sure they have the most current copy.

If a child or staff member has any of the [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#) (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever of 100.4F or higher, chills, sore throat, head/muscle/body aches, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, congestion/runny nose not related to seasonal allergies, unusual fatigue, or new loss of taste or smell), they should be excluded from childcare and tested for COVID-19.

If a child has been exposed to COVID-19 in any setting during the past 14 days, they should remain quarantined at home and excluded from child care until 14 days after their last exposure have passed.

Further management of such children depends on their exposure history, symptom status, and COVID-19 test results as set forth in the [guidance table](#) developed by Snohomish Health District:

If you have specific questions, please contact the Child Care Health Outreach program.

Can we use playground equipment? Do we need to disinfect it?

Washington State Department of Health [guidance for child cares, youth programs, and summer day camps](#) allows for the use of outdoor playground equipment. This guidance states that playground equipment requires normal routine cleaning but does not require disinfection. When using an outdoor play area:

- The playground equipment should only be used by only one group of at a time.
- The high touch surfaces on the equipment are cleaned with soap and water at the end of the day and between groups of children. Disinfection of outdoor play equipment [is not recommended by the CDC](#).
- The number of children on the equipment at any time is limited to promote physical distancing between the individual children.
- Children must wash their hands thoroughly after playing outside and should be encouraged to avoid touching their face.

Do staff have to wear face coverings? Are face shields an acceptable alternative?

The [Governor's mandate](#), issued on June 8th along with the Safe Start guidance, requires all employees to wear cloth face coverings unless they are working alone. This includes staff at child care facilities and youth programs. An order from the [Secretary of Health](#), effective June 26th makes it mandatory for all persons age 5 and over to wear face coverings. Children ages 5 and up must wear cloth face coverings. Face coverings are recommended for children ages 2-4. They should be supervised while wearing them and may need help putting them on, taking them off, and getting used to them. Even when face coverings are worn, physical distancing should still be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

The question about face shields is addressed on the [Department of Labor and Industries website](#):

“Face shields provide good droplet protection for the wearer, but the purpose of using a cloth face covering or mask is to protect others. Because people can be infected and actively transmitting the virus without knowing it, coverings stop the virus at the source – the mouth and nose – from getting into the air. It prevents workers from passing the virus to other workers and customers.”

A face shield can be used in addition to, but not instead of, a cloth face covering or mask for staff. When there is a need to show the mouth (for teaching or language development), a cloth face covering with a clear window is an acceptable option. Face shields may be utilized in lieu of cloth face coverings in the uncommon event that face coverings are not able to be used for medical reasons. When utilized, face shields must extend beneath the chin, reach both ears and must be flush at the forehead. A cloth drape around the edge is encouraged/advised.

More information about face masks can be found in the [SHD blog post](#), in the [SHD child care and youth programs guidance](#), and on the [State of Washington](#), [DOH](#), [CDC](#), and [LNI](#) websites.

What is the best way to give staff their required breaks?

It is very important that small groups be kept consistent. This means that the staff and children in each group should remain the same from day to day to prevent transmission of the virus. It is best if the staff to child ratio allows for one staff member to take a break without having to bring another individual into the

small group space. For example, in a toddler room with 7 children and 2 staff or 14 children and 3 staff, one staff could take a break and the group would remain in ratio.

If that is not possible due to staff shortages or for financial reasons, and a float person is brought into the room, consider the following:

- Any adult who is not a normal part of the group must wash hands immediately upon entering and upon leaving the space.
- Any person providing breaks who is not a normal part of the group must wear a cloth face covering at all times when they are in the group space.
- Consider timing when bringing in adults who are not normally part of a group to minimize close interactions with children. For example, give staff their lunch break during children's nap time so the float staff can remain 6' away from the children while they rest; or give 10 minute breaks when the children have just started a new, engaging activity that does not require much adult interaction; or give breaks when the group is having outside time where the risk of transmission is lower.
- Staff who are taking their breaks should keep a physical distance of at least 6' from other staff members who are not a part of their small group.

Is child care availability restricted to essential workers?

Initially, child care was restricted to children of essential workers. As we now move through the various phases of reopening and more individuals return to work, child care must be opened to all who need care. Parents who are able to keep their children home are still strongly encouraged to do so to help limit transmission. In order to prevent the spread of the virus, child cares must still follow the guidance of the local health jurisdiction. Currently group size must be kept to 22 or less and physical distancing must be practiced to the greatest extent possible.

Our child care has been closed and is now wanting to reopen. What do I need to know?

Some child cares that have been closed will likely reopen over the upcoming weeks. If you are thinking about reopening your child care, make sure you visit the Snohomish Health District website and read through the [Guidance for Child Care and Early Learning, School-age Care, Youth Development Programs, and Summer Day Camps](#). Make sure that you are able to implement the guidance before opening.

In addition, if a building has been closed for an extended period of time, it is important to [flush the plumbing system](#). The CDC has issued guidance for [cleaning and disinfecting when reopening buildings](#). Facilities that have been closed for more than 7 days require only normal routine cleaning.

Are child cares and other youth programs required to follow Snohomish Health District guidance or are they just recommendations?

The responsibility to control COVID-19 and all other communicable diseases lies with the local health jurisdiction, which in Snohomish County is the Snohomish Health District. The guidance issued by Snohomish Health District must be followed by child cares and youth programs in Snohomish County. Local health guidance may differ slightly from state or national guidance due to differences in our population and the local transmission of disease at the time the guidance is released.

As we learn more about the coronavirus and as transmission rates in our community change, the guidance will be updated. Make sure that you stay informed of the latest information by visiting our website at: <https://www.snohd.org/491/COVID-19-Info-for-Schools-Child-Cares> and sign up to receive our Health Alerts for Child Care Providers and our Child Care Health Outreach Program newsletter. You can do so by visiting

www.snohd.org/notifyme. You may also wish to sign up to receive the Public Health Essentials blog with more general information for the community.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Snohomish County child cares should contact:

Snohomish Health District Child Care Health Outreach Program | Prevention Services
3020 Rucker Avenue | Everett, WA 98201 | **tel: 425-252-5415** | Fax: 425-339-5254
Email: childcarehealth@snohd.org Website: <http://www.snohd.org/238/Child-Care-Providers>

Child cares in other counties should contact their [local health jurisdiction](#).