



# Arkansas Department of Health

## Arkansas Department of Human Services



To: Child Care Facilities

From: Dr. Nate Smith, Secretary of Health  
Cindy Gillespie, Secretary of Human Services

Date: April 8, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Facilities

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. According to the CDC, information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, but the information suggests that children with confirmed COVID-19 generally had mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. People who have serious chronic medical conditions are believed to be at higher risk. Despite lower risk of serious illness among most children, children with COVID-19-like symptoms should avoid contact with others who might be at risk.

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is providing guidance to the regulated child care facilities throughout the state on proactive measures, including new screening recommendations for staff and visitors. Taking these proactive measures will help limit the spread of COVID-19 and safeguard children and their families.

- It is recommended facilities should prohibit persons from the facility with the exception of:
  - Facility staff;
  - Persons with a legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, child care licensing staff, and DHS Child Protective Services staff;
  - Professionals providing services to children;
  - Children enrolled at the facility; and
  - Parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the facility.
- Pickup and drop-off children outside of the facility, unless it is determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter a facility.
- All efforts should be made to limit congregation of children and class sizes to 10 or less.
- Staff should wear cloth face masks to diminish potential spread from people who might be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic for COVID-19. For safety reasons, under **no** circumstances should a mask be placed on a child under the age of 2. Face coverings are **not** required for children under the age of 10, as many children in this group will have much difficulty consistently wearing a mask. However, if a child older than 2 but younger than 10 is able to consistently wear a face covering, it is encouraged.

- **Do not allow sick children to be cared for in the facility.** If a child becomes sick while at the facility, contact the parent or guardian immediately and separate the child from other children at the facility.
- Ensure that each child is provided individual meals and snacks. Do not serve family style meals.

### Screening criteria

Before allowing entry into the facility, screen all individuals listed above, including taking the temperature of each person upon arrival at the facility each day. For employees, screening should be done prior to every shift. Deny entry to any person who meets any of the following criteria:

- A temperature of 100.4°F or above;
- Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and low-grade fever; or someone who is currently being tested for COVID-19;
- In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
- In the previous 14 days has traveled outside of the United States or to areas in the US with widespread transmission such as New York State, New Jersey, Connecticut and New Orleans.

ADH and DHS will continue to closely monitor the evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. As the situation is rapidly changing, child care providers are encouraged to call the ADH COVID-19 School and Child Care Hotline at **833-504-0155** for questions or additional guidance. Please contact the Department of Human Services Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, Child Care Licensing at 501-682-8590 for licensing or regulatory questions.

COVID-19 Information:

<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>

General Protection Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Helpful information on talking with children about COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

Homemade Mask:

[https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/DoHomemadeFaceMasksHelpPublicFinal4.1.20\\_.pdf](https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/DoHomemadeFaceMasksHelpPublicFinal4.1.20_.pdf)