

# ENHANCING BASIC POLICIES

## AMIDST CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The following is offered as guidance to assist you in enhancing your regular basic policies and procedures in response to the coronavirus pandemic. As always, defer to your local laws and regulations set by your Department of Health and Department of Child Care Licensing as appropriate.

Topic	Your Response / Procedure
Sanitize and disinfect regularly	<p>Establish an amplified cleaning/disinfecting procedure paying particular attention to surfaces touched most frequently, examples like doorknobs, light switches, et and maybe something about toys that are most frequently mouthed by youngest children. Make sure staff understand and are complying with the new requirements. Communicate to families what you are doing and provide them with details on frequency of deep cleaning, daily cleaning and interim cleaning practices.</p>
Aggressively implement sick policy for staff	<p>Be sure you are actively enforcing your sick policy for staff. Now is the time to make certain your staff understand your hyper-vigilant sick policy requirements. Because the most concerning thing about this virus is that it is contagious before symptoms appear, enforcing - almost to an extreme degree - your policies on what constitutes a sick staff member is imperative. If a staff member feels ill, they should be directed to stay home. Remember, you don't want anyone who feels under the weather to be inside your program.</p> <p>The nature and severity of symptoms and requirements of your local or state health department will determine the necessity of medical consultation.</p> <p>Contact your local health department if you have any question of whether it is a reportable (harmful) infectious disease.</p>

	<p>If it is possible, pay sick employees to stay home. See the Business Resources on Coronavirus specifically about Employee Rights / Families First to see what your responsibility is regarding paying for sick leave.</p> <p>If staff are feeling well-enough to work remotely, give them at-home or on-line tasks while they recover if you are able. Perhaps they can prepare your summer curriculum and activities, update other records or even take professional development courses that would help them meet their required PD hours. Be creative as to how you can get other important tasks addressed remotely.</p>
<p>Aggressively implement sick policy for children</p>	<p>Naturally children sneeze, cough, and have runny noses. It's just the nature of being a kid. However, your job as caregiver just became that much more difficult because you are trying to evaluate symptoms that may or may not be related to a coronavirus infection. Because the most concerning thing about coronavirus is that it is contagious before symptoms appear, so enforcing - almost to an extreme degree - your policies on what constitutes a sick child and poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others is imperative.</p> <p>Things to consider:  In these extenuating circumstances, you may want to extend your sick policy to exclude a child from care who exhibits congestion or cough. This is contradictory to Caring For Our Children's Model Child Care Health Policy on <a href="#">Inclusion/Exclusion Due to Illness</a>. Please also defer to your State regulations. You may want to make this decision after taking the child's temperature. Temperature driven decisions are unarguable. If your policy is to exclude children with a temperature of 101° F, out of an abundance of caution, you may decide that a temperature of 100° requires excluding the child from your program for a period of time. Remember that children can simply become over-heated during physical exertion, so be sure to allow a child to rest and cool down and then double-check that temperature. Parents will push back indicating that their child has been fever-free for xx # hours and should be let back into the program, but you must be as certain as possible that the child</p>

	<p>has had ample time to recover and is fever- and symptom-free without fever reducing medicine for three days at a minimum. It may help to explain to families that you are taking these additional precautions in effort to remain open and that you are working hard to avoid having to close.</p> <p>The nature and severity of symptoms and requirements of the local or state health department will determine the necessity of medical consultation. Contact your local health department if you have any question of whether it is a reportable (harmful) infectious disease.</p>
Isolate sick children immediately	<p>If a child appears to be feeling unwell and is running a temperature, immediately isolate the child and call their family member to come and get them. Remember, it is your responsibility to keep all children in your care as safe as possible so implementing a zero tolerance for suspected sickness is not unreasonable and it is an appropriate action given the severity of the coronavirus issue.</p>
Implement hand-washing songs	<p>Get children involved by helping them learn to wash hands properly. Using a variety of songs can be a fun way to implement this learning opportunity in the classroom. See “In the Classroom/Teacher Resources” section of your shared resources website for a variety of fun songs.</p>
Avoid face-touching	<p>Raise the awareness of the practice of not touching one’s face, eyes, ears, mouth, nose. These areas are most susceptible to harbor the coronavirus and therefore more easily spread upon contact.</p>
Sneeze into tissue or arm	<p>Sneezing into a tissue or arm has always been a best practice to reduce the spread of germs. Now, more than ever, it is important to be vigilant with the implementation of this practice and help get children in the habit of sneezing into their arms and using tissues, too. Remember, always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water following any use of tissues.</p>

<p>Limit big group gatherings</p>	<p>Avoiding big group gatherings is pretty much the norm right now, but have you considered whether your outdoor time with children is a potential problem? Consider whether you can stagger individual age groups' outdoor time to limit interactions and reduce opportunity for exposure to other classroom groups.</p>
<p>No Visitor Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement a no visitor policy</li> </ul>	<p>Limiting access to only your immediate staff and maintenance/cleaning staff will reduce unnecessary interactions with external people. Consider whether it is possible to have your teachers perform daily cleaning and disinfection instead of using an outside service. Should outside service providers be required to deep clean your program, ensure they are using personal protective equipment and that their services comply with state licensing requirements for cleaning and disinfection.</p>
<p>Drop Off / Pick Up Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excluding parents from entering your facility</li> </ul>	<p>Important Considerations:          These two options are presented for your consideration. Only you can decide whether excluding or limiting drop off practices will be an issue for some young children. Given we are dealing with uncertain times, the need to maintain the health and safety of your program, staff, families and children is your number one focus and this may mean making difficult or unpopular changes to routine procedures.</p> <p><u>Option 1 – Exclude Families from Entering</u>          You may want to consider not having parents enter your facility. Changing your drop off/pick up policy to exclude families from coming into your facility is one way to minimize interactions and potential exposure. This will require having a teacher meet families at the door. Again, out of an abundance of caution, you may want to also take the family member's and child's temperature using a no-touch thermometer. If the temperature is acceptable, the teacher would escort the child to the appropriate classroom. If the temperature is unacceptable, then you can exclude them from access to your program.</p> <p>For pick up, the parent should announce themselves at the outside door and a staff member would gather</p>

the child's belongings and escort the child to the waiting family member.

Option 2 – Allow Families Minimal Access at Drop Off

If you prefer not to exclude families from entering your facility, this alternative may work for you.

In order to limit access to your facility, allow only one family member may come into your entryway to drop off their child. Be clear about your expectations. Explain to families that you are asking that the family member not linger, touch as few surfaces as possible since the program is at its cleanest when first opening, and to leave quickly. Again, out of an abundance of caution, you may want to also take the family member's and child's temperature using a no-touch thermometer. If the temperature is acceptable, the teacher would escort the child to the appropriate classroom. If the temperature is unacceptable, then you can exclude them from access to your program. A teacher will escort the child to their room, and staff in that room will assist the child in getting comfortable. For pick up, ask the family member to text or call when arriving to pick up their child, and a staff member or teacher brings the child out to the car.

For both options

Communicate in writing in advance to families about this change in drop off and pick up procedure. Explain that it is out of an abundance of caution that you are implementing this temporary change in order to reduce the number of interactions and limit access within the facility and in an effort to protect the well-being of all staff, families, and children. Remember, this change in procedure is all about health and safety. Parents will understand why you are making these changes when you put into context that you are protecting their child's health and safety.

<p>Tracking Staff Movements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimize interaction among staff and track staff movements</li> </ul>	<p>More important now than ever, you want to be able to track staff interactions with other staff and children and movement throughout the day. It is recommended to limit transferring staff from one classroom to another in order to reduce opportunities to transmit the coronavirus.</p> <p>Should there be an incident where the coronavirus is suspected, knowing your staff's possible interactions and movements will help you address immediate needs for cleaning and disinfection. Depending on how many other staff or classrooms the staff or child may have been in contact with will determine whether you need to close for two – three days for deep cleaning or close your business for an extended period of time in order to quarantine.</p>
<p>Daily Communication Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and share a parent and staff communication plan that is updated daily.</li> </ul>	<p>Make sure you are communicating daily positive as well as negative updates. Indicate that you are following the recommendations of your local health department and child care licensing and will adjust daily as news becomes available as conditions are rapidly changing. You want to give parents some comfort as to how you are staying on top of this challenging situation and doing your very best to keep children safe.</p>
<p>Daily Task Force Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement a Daily Task Force Meeting with Staff</li> </ul>	<p>Implementing a Task Force which will meet each morning for 15-20 minutes to address new information, questions, concerns, decisions and even to discuss challenges and opportunities will help you stay abreast of this rapidly changing situation and your internal response to it. This Task Force may include all staff or may only include your senior leadership team. In either case, be sure that this knowledge is shared with all staff as quickly as possible. (See Daily Communication Practices above)</p> <p>This practice will help you address emerging needs as well as leveraging the knowledge and expertise of your team which may have ideas and suggestions that you may not have thought about.</p>