



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: March 16, 2020

TO: Providers of Services to Young Children

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #6
Message from the State of Connecticut regarding Child Care

The Office of Early Childhood is in close communication with the Governor, the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the state's Emergency Operation Center. This situation continues to evolve and we will continue to monitor closely and communicate with you again soon.

1. Child care is a critical part of the public health emergency response. It is particularly important to ensure that public safety workers are able to work, healthcare workers are able to care for the sick (including those with coronavirus), and other workers can continue vital services in society, such as pharmacies and food stores.
2. It takes a village! Families may consider first identifying trusted friends, neighbors, and family members to care for your child if you must go to work. Ask those individuals:
 1. Have you traveled to a country for which the CDC has issued a Level 2 or 3 travel designation within the last 14 days?
 2. Have you had contact with any persons under investigation for COVID-19 within the last 14 days, or with anyone known to have COVID-19?
 3. Do you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, fever or shortness of breath)?
4. Be a good neighbor! Inform your child care provider if your child will not be attending care. This will open up spaces for essential workers in your community who need child care.
5. For people who are unable to secure a backup child care plan, call 2-1-1 to identify open and available spaces for care near your work or home.

Families and staff need to be vigilant in implementing health care practices to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These practices include frequent handwashing, covering their mouth with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, avoiding touching their eyes, nose or mouth with their hands and most importantly staying home when they are sick.

Phone: (860) 500-4413
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 301
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
www.ct.gov/oec
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The CDC website includes links to tip sheets, posters on handwashing, and tips for families in its Interim Guidance for Administrators of US ChildCare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease. All CDC guidance is updated as necessary to respond to this changing situation.

Child care facilities must implement control measures to reduce the risk of spreading any infectious disease. The following recommendations should be included in a guidance document:

- All staff and children should be screened for risk prior to entry into the child care environment and throughout the day. Screening should be developed that includes at the very least, temperature, coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, travel history, has the child or employee been recently on an airplane, and do they share a home with an individual 60 years of age or older and/or an individual with co-morbidities.
- Staff who have a temperature greater than 100 degrees should not be permitted to work. Additional consideration/consultation should occur with the child's medical provider if the child's temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees.
- Protocols should be developed that identify care for a child with an elevated temperature or children who may be ill, i.e. "sick room".
- Hand hygiene:
 - Reinforce to staff and children, regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
 - Before coming in contact with any child;
 - Before and after eating;
 - After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing;
 - After using the rest room;
 - Before handling food;
 - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated; and
 - After using any shared equipment like toys, computer keyboards, mouse.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. Use of alcohol based hand sanitizers should always be supervised by adults.
- Respiratory hygiene:
 - All staff: cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow;
 - Encourage children, when appropriate to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow; and
 - Dispense of soiled tissues immediately after use.
- Protocols need to be developed for routine cleaning and disinfection.

We thank you all for your continued support and commitment to children and families in CT.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

DATE: March 9, 2020
TO: Providers of Services to Young Children
FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner
RE: COVID-19/Coronavirus

As you may be aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that it expects the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) to spread across the United States as the number of cases continues to grow worldwide. While the immediate risk to the American public is believed to be low at this time, there are steps that we can all take to prepare.

First and foremost, education is vital to reduce the spread of this and any other illness. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is participating in weekly state conference calls to exchange information with the Governor's Office, Department of Public Health and other state and local officials to ensure all proper protections are in place for the state. Outbreaks involving novel coronavirus evolve quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change frequently as new information becomes available. It is important to stay informed and so it is recommended that you listen to public messages and check the below websites often for updates. Here, you will find resources and the most-up to-date guidance.

DPH: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Secondly, it is also important that good public health practices to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses are implemented. The same steps which prevent other respiratory viruses, such as the flu, from spreading can also prevent COVID-19 from spreading. It is important to follow these steps as a matter of standard practice:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Be sure adequate supplies are readily available in bathrooms and other wash areas
- Remind staff of the importance of avoiding touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Remind staff to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and encourage those who are ill to stay home
- Follow your existing protocols for staff presenting as ill or who may have been exposed to a contagious disease
- Talk to families about cancelling scheduled visits when someone in the household is presenting ill or who may have been exposed to a contagious disease
- Do not bring toys or other objects into homes

Phone: (860) 500-4450 · Fax: (860) 326-0552

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 302

Hartford, Connecticut 06103

www.ct.gov/oec

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In February 2020, COVID-19 was added to the List of Reportable Diseases. Therefore, **those required to report such diseases must report cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the Connecticut Department of Public Health and to the local department of health in the town of residence of the case-patient by telephone on the day of recognition or strong suspicion of the disease.** The COVID-19 report form is available on the DPH website at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/EEIP/Forms/nCoV_PUI_Form.pdf?la=en .

Specific information related to travel and COVID-19 can be found on the above referenced websites. In addition, you may contact your local health department for specific guidance. To locate the appropriate contact for your program, you may use the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/dph/Local-Health-Admin/LHA?Local-Health-Administration---Site-Map>

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect the health and safety of Connecticut's children.