**Child Care and the prevention of COVID-19**

Your local [Public Health Department](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/covid-19.htm) will have the most relevant and up-to-date information on COVID-19, please defer to this website for making determinations about your specific program. Note that some links may not pertain specifically to child care programs, but look for recommendations for schools.

Immediate measures you can take in your program include:

* Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth and wash your hands every time you do.
* Stay home when you are sick.
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
* If you are a group program and currently serve food in a lunchroom, consider moving to bagged lunches and serve them in classrooms.

Start to prepare for the possibility of larger-scale infection in your location:

* Prepare for possible increased number of employee absences.
* Assess levels of supplies that will be needed in case of an outbreak.
* Check your insurance coverage for contingencies, such as school closures and high employee absenteeism.
* Review your closure/tuition requirement policies and make sure parents are aware of them.
* Emphasize the need to remain vigilant against stigma due to perceived race, national origin, or recent travel. Foster a supportive environment free from rumors or associations of a virus with a specific population.
* Look to your [local health department](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm) for up-to-date information on when to close.
* Know that you must report any confirmed case of COVID-19 in your program to Licensing, local Health Department, and to parents of enrolled children within 24 hours.
* Prepare materials including [symptoms lists](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf), student absence protocols (how does a parent let you know? How are you keeping track over time?), emergency response team communications plans (who will lead efforts, what is your chain of command?), communications procedures with parents in the event of closures, and the like.
* Determine when school closures are indicated based on a set percentage of staff and student absenteeism as recommended by local and state public health authorities.
* Coordinate with local health and welfare agencies to ensure children receiving free and reduced-price meals continue to receive nutrition usually supplied at schools.
* Look to your local health department for guidance on reopening after a closure.