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DPHSS Guidance Memorandum 2020-20

RE: Minimum Requirements for Operations of Childcare Facilities

Outlined below are requirements for the opening of childcare facilities, which are based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A. General Restrictions, Requirements, and Recommendations

1. Operate at no more than the percent of occupancy rate for the facility, including employees, as identified in current or future Executive Orders.
2. Maintain ratio of staff to children required by regulations to ensure safety.
3. Staff members and older children are to wear face coverings within the facility. Face coverings are NOT be put on babies and children under age of two because of the danger of suffocation.
4. Implement social distancing
 - Special events such as festivals, holiday events, and special performances are prohibited.
 - At nap time, ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced 6 feet apart and place children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
 - Recommendations:
 - Childcare classes should include the same group each day, and the same childcare providers should remain with the same group each day.
 - Alter or halt daily group activities that may promote transmission.
 - Keep each group of children in a separate room.
 - Limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as art, music, and exercising.
 - Stagger arrival and drop off times and/or

B. Intensify cleaning, sanitization, and disinfection efforts

1. Prior to opening, thoroughly clean and disinfect the facility using disinfectant cleaning supplies according to CDC guidelines.
2. Facility is to develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting.
3. Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games. This may also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.

4. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered, fragrance-free household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available.
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>
5. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized are prohibited for use.
6. Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions are to be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry.
7. Cloth toys are prohibited.
8. Sharing of toys with other groups of infants or toddlers are prohibited unless these items are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
9. Set aside toys that need to be cleaned and sanitized.
 - Place in a dish pan with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for “soiled toys.” Keep dish pan and water out of reach from children to prevent risk of drowning. Washing with soapy water is the ideal method for cleaning. Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.
10. Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
11. Clean and Disinfect Bedding
 - Use only bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed. Keep each child’s bedding separate, and store in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots and mats are to be labeled for each child. Bedding that touches a child’s skin are to be cleaned and sanitized weekly or before use by another child.
12. Diapering
 - Follow the CDC guidance for diapering:
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/diapering/childcare.html>

C. Washing, Feeding, or Holding a Child

1. Contaminated clothes are to be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine.
2. Infants, toddlers, and their providers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand in the childcare center or home-based childcare.
3. Hands are to be washed before and after handling infant bottles prepared at home or prepared in the facility. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used for bottle-feeding should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after each use.

D. Food Preparation and Meal Service

1. Serve meals in classrooms; cafeteria-style feeding is prohibited.
2. Sinks used for food preparation are not be used for handwashing.
3. Caregivers should ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
4. Caregivers should wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.

E. Modify drop off and pick up procedures

1. Hand hygiene station is to be set up at the entrance of the facility so that children (and adults, if authorized) can clean their hands before they enter. If a sink with soap and water is not available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Keep hand sanitizer out of children's reach and supervise use.
2. Establish written protocols for controlling and limiting parents and visitors onto the premises of the facility.
3. Childcare providers are to greet children outside the facility as they arrive and escort them inside. Similar practice is to be implemented for departing children.
4. If requiring sign-in stations, disinfect pens between each use.
5. If possible, older people, such as grandparents, or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children.

F. Implement screening procedures upon arrival

1. Screen children upon arrival.
2. Instruct parents/guardians to take their child's temperature before coming to the facility, and upon arrival, ask the parent/guardian to confirm that the child does not have fever, shortness of breath or cough.
3. Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

G. Employee Health and Hygiene

1. Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms; employees with symptoms are not permitted to work.
2. Provide and maintain PPE for employees to perform enhanced cleaning/disinfection.
3. Stagger shifts, breaks, and meals whenever possible.
4. Conduct training for employees on enhanced disinfection and proper PPE base on CDC guidelines.


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