

## Child Care FAQs for Families in Need of Care

Updated: May 26, 2020

### **I am considered an essential worker. Where can I find open child care?**

Child care facilities in counties under the Stay at Home order (Red phase) are permitted to operate with a waiver to provide child care for essential workers and their families. A map of child care facilities operating with a waiver is available [here](#). After the Stay at Home order lifts and a county transitions to the yellow phase, workers can find child care options here: [www.findchildcare.pa.gov](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov)

### **I am going to work in a yellow phase area. Where can I find open child care?**

Workers who need child care in yellow phase counties can find child care options here: [www.findchildcare.pa.gov](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov). Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC) can also support families by assisting with eligibility for the child care subsidy program, Child Care Works (CCW) and to connect families with child care. To locate the ELRC who supports your community, visit [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org).

### **What does the “red phase” mean for child care facilities?**

Child care facilities in counties in the red phase are closed unless they have an approved waiver to stay open for essential workers. Child care facilities or part-day school age programs can request waivers to stay open for essential workers [here](#).

Essential workers who need child care can find approved options [here](#) while they are in the red phase.

### **What does the “yellow phase” mean for child care facilities?**

Child care facilities are able to open without a waiver, but they are not required to open. Child care facilities that are open must follow [CDC guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) to maintain health and safety standards. Workers who need child care in yellow-phase counties can find child care options at [www.findchildcare.pa.gov](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov) or through their local ELRC at [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org).

### **What are my options if I have school-age children and schools are closed?**

Many licensed child care providers serve school-age children and expand the availability of enrollment slots and program activities to be responsive to families’ needs. For licensed child care, parents can search by the child or children’s ages on [www.findchildcare.pa.gov](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov) to find providers. Additionally, many communities support part-day school-age programming that is not licensed. Children who were kindergarten and older can enroll in these options developed and operated locally by community-based agencies like YMCAs or United Ways.

### **How do I know the child care facility I am using is safe?**

All open child care facilities must follow [CDC guidelines for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#).

### **What do I do if I am concerned that my child care is not operating according to the CDC guidelines for safety?**

Contact the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)’s [Child Care Certification Regional Office](#) in your community to report concerns regarding the health and safety of children in care.

### **Are child care staff required to wear masks?**

All staff should wear cloth face coverings while providing child care.

### **Is my child required to wear a mask?**

No, children are not required to wear masks. However, per current CDC guidance, they are strongly encouraged for children older than 2. More information on the CDC’s guidance for child care providers is available [here](#).

### **Who should I contact if I have questions about local child care?**

Resources are available to families seeking to understand information about child care in their community.

- Information on all child care including information about their operations, licensing inspection results, and quality level designation are available at [www.findchildcare.pa.gov](http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov).
- Local ELRCs can assist in answering questions and help families in selecting a provider. Find your ELRC at [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org).

#### **What if there are no child care facilities open in my area?**

Child care may not be available in every community. If you are having challenges finding child care, contact your ELRC at [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org).

#### **What if I need help paying for my child's care?**

Pennsylvania's child care subsidy program, Child Care Works (CCW) can be accessed two ways: online at [www.compass.pa.gov](http://www.compass.pa.gov) or by contacting the ELRC that serves your community at [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org).

#### **How do I know if my child care submitted a waiver to provide services to kids of essential workers?**

Only child care centers and group child care operating outside a residence located in counties in the Red phase ("Red counties") are required to obtain a waiver if they intend to remain open. To identify child care providers and part-day school age programs permitted to operate in Red counties, visit [Coronavirus Child Care Map](#).

#### **How do I know if anyone working at the facility has tested positive?**

In the event an exposure occurred for staff or children, a general communication will be shared to inform parents of enrolled children when there is a suspected outbreak of a communicable disease. Specific detail regarding the exposure will not be shared. Parents should follow up with their own medical professional to determine next steps.

#### **Does my child need their temperature taken when they come in every morning?**

Yes. The CDC Guidance to Child Care Providers Remaining Open advises one of three screening methods occur for all children and staff daily. All methods advise determining the child's temperature to ensure they are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Depending on the method selected by the provider, the temperature can be taken at the child care facility prior to entrance or at home and reported to the provider.

#### **Are there any changes to the required child to caregiver ratios?**

Currently, there are no changes to the child and caregiver ratios. The CDC Guidance advises strategies to maintain social distancing which focus on group management within child care while recognizing it is not feasible to maintain a 6-foot separation for young children. Child care entities should make efforts to maintain children in the same groups and assigned to the same staff daily. In addition, groups should not interact or change rooms to the extent possible.

#### **What special precautions are needed to ensure child care spaces are safe and clean?**

Caring for Our Children (CFOC) provides [national standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting](#) educational facilities for children on a routine basis. COVID-19 mitigation requires that child care providers increase the frequency of their existing cleaning and sanitizing. Additionally, parents should limit items coming to child care from home and items used for napping. Items used should be washed at the child care facility.

#### **What do I need to know about multisystem inflammatory syndrome?**

More information on multisystem inflammatory syndrome is available through the CDC [here](#). If you are concerned about symptoms your child is experiencing, please contact your health care provider.