

L.A. County ECE COVID-19 Response Team

Frequently Asked Questions

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General

Can I provide care for the children of non-essential workers?

The California Department of Education, Early Learning and Care Division’s [Management Bulletin 20-06](#) provides guidance to early learning and care programs that continue to provide services to children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this bulletin encourages programs that can safely remain open to do so in order to “serve children currently enrolled in care as well as children eligible for emergency child care”. Thus, in addition to children of essential workers and at-risk populations, programs are able to continue providing care to children previously enrolled.

My program is currently closed, can we reopen?

Yes, if you are able to do so safely.

The California Department of Education, Early Learning and Care Division’s [Management Bulletin 20-06](#) provides guidance to early learning and care programs that continue to provide services, or plan to re-open with necessary precautions. For additional information on how to provide care in a manner that is safe for both children and staff, refer to:

- The Department of Social Services’ Community Care Licensing Division’s [Provider Information Notice 20-06](#)
- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health’s [Guidance for Early Childhood Education Providers](#)
- The California Department of Social Services’ [COVID-19 Facility Self-Assessment Checklist](#)

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- [Updated Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) (5/20)

Health & Safety

Where can I get the latest guidance for operating during COVID-19?

The latest guidance from Community Care Licensing Division can be found at:

https://cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCLD/PINs/2020/CCP/PIN_20-06-CCP.pdf

The latest guidance from the LA County Department of Public Health can be found at:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/education/GuidanceEarlyChildhoodEducation.pdf>

Where can I find current ratios? How many assistants can be in a room with 10 children?

On April 7th, the California Department of Social Services' Community Care Licensing Department released [Provider Information Notice \(PIN\) 20-06](#), which provides information pertaining to physical distancing guidance and healthy practices for child care providers. It also includes ratios for both Center-Based Care and Family Child Care Homes, which are as follows:

- Care Centers
 - 0-18 Months- 1:4 staff-to-child ratio, maximum group size of 10
 - 18-36 Months- 1:6 staff-to-child ratio, maximum group size of 10
 - 3 Years-Kindergarten Entry- 1:10 staff-to-child ratio, maximum group size of 10
 - 0-School age (mixed age groups)- 1:6 staff-to-child ratio, maximum group size of 10
- Family Child Care Homes
 - *Small and large family child care homes may serve a total capacity of no more than 14, and group size may not exceed 10 children*
 - 0-18 Months- 1:4 staff-to-child ratio, maximum group size of 4
 - No more than 2 infants when 6 children are present- 1:6 (2 infants and 4 children) staff-to-child ratio, maximum group size of 6

Should providers be wearing masks? Should children be wearing masks?

According to the guidance provided by LA County Department of Public Health:

All early care and education staff should wear a mask or face covering while they are working. Children birth through 2 years old should not wear face coverings and children 3 through 8 years old should use face coverings only with adult supervision to ensure that the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation. Children with breathing problems should not wear a face covering.

How can physical distance be supported between children?

Physical distancing can be supported by limiting the number of children to no more than 10 children in a single classroom. This will minimize cross-contagion and promote distancing between children. Also, re-engineer classrooms to put six feet between children's activity stations, tables, and chairs. In addition, eliminate circle time and other activities that bring children close together and prevent the sharing of toys and materials. Instead, use a backpack or a large Ziploc bag for each child's individual materials.

When can we expect new guidelines? Will they be different in the Fall?

Guidelines will be revised by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health periodically and posted at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov

Should teachers be tested for COVID-19?

Early care and education staff do not need to be routinely tested for COVID-19.

Will there be a fine if social distancing is not maintained?

Social distancing is a way to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but no fines are being levied.

What is the process for allowing a child who showed symptoms to return to care?

Children must stay home when they are sick with symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever and cough. Children must remain at home in isolation and not return to the ECE facility for a minimum of 10 days after onset of symptoms AND until their symptoms have improved AND they are free of fever for at least 3 days without fever-reducing medication.

What happens if there is a positive case of COVID-19 at my program? What is the reopening procedure?

If a program has a positive case of COVID-19, the administrator should contact the Department of Public Health Acute Communicable Disease Program for guidance on steps you need to take to minimize risk for other children and staff. They will discuss if and for how long you may need to close for appropriate cleaning and other steps. The program can be reached (213)-240-7941 during daytime hours or (213) 974-1234 (After Hours Emergency Operator).

Can we rotate groups of children to classrooms that other groups of children have used?

Children can rotate into classrooms that other children have used, but cleaning is recommended in between groups.

How often should outdoor equipment be disinfected?

Playground equipment ideally should be cleaned between groups of children.

Do children's books need to be disinfected?

Board books with thick wooden pages and coated surfaces can be wiped down like toys, but paper tends to get ruined when you get it wet. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, leave books untouched for 24 hours after use. If someone is COVID-19 positive, books and paper products should be set aside for 72 hours.

Can ECE programs use misters outside and engage in waterplay activities?

A mister is not a concern, but it can be difficult to ensure social distancing during water play. If a provider would like to use water play, create a clear plan to maintain social distancing.

Supplies

What supplies are available to providers?

Available supplies vary based on donations from local and state level organizations. Potential supplies available include face masks, books, hand sanitizers, cleaning solution, diapers, and wipes. Please note, these supplies are separate from (and in addition to) the funds recently allocated for supplies from the state.

Who is eligible to receive supplies?

All providers that are open and serving children and families are eligible, regardless of funding type. This includes community-based organizations, those receiving state funding, Head Start programs, family child care homes, privately funded programs, license-exempt providers. ECE Programs that are part of school districts can participate as long as they are open.

How do I sign up to receive supplies?

Please contact your local Resource and Referral (R&R) agency to find out how to sign up for supply distributions. Enter your program's zip code into the search feature at this website to determine your local R&R and its contact information: <https://www.ccala.net/connect-to-child-care/>

Is my program eligible if currently closed, but reopening?

Yes, if your program is planning to reopen soon, you can access the supplies. If you are not planning to reopen imminently, please leave supplies for providers who are already open and serving children and families. Future distributions of supplies will continue throughout this crisis situation.

Essential Workers

Who qualifies as an essential worker?

California's classification of essential workers can be found at <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>. The list includes, among others, health care, agriculture, grocery and pharmacy, food service, transportation, essential government services, and early care and education.

How can an essential worker find child care?

Essential workers can call 888-92CHILD or visit <https://www.ccala.net/connect-to-child-care/>, enter their zip code and get connected to their local Resource & Referral agency. Agents at the R&R can help find available spaces in open programs that meet the individual needs of families. They will also assist essential workers in accessing Emergency Childcare Vouchers and other financial assistance programs if eligible.

Do providers have to determine if a parent is an essential worker?

No, a child care provider is not responsible for determining if a parent is an essential worker. Families that seek an Emergency Child Care Voucher will have to fill out a self-certification form, but it is the responsibility of the issuing agency to collect this information, not the program providing care.

How will child care vouchers for essential workers be administered?

The Emergency Child Care Vouchers are administered through the Resource and Referral/Alternative Payment agencies in Los Angeles County. To locate the agency that corresponds to a specific community, call 1-888-922-4453 or log on to www.ccala.net.

Financing

Will I continue to receive subsidy payments for children not attending past June 30, 2020?

There is a proposal in the State budget to provide additional, much needed vouchers for families past June 30. However, this needs to be deliberated by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor. If you want to make this need known, you may wish to contact your State Senator, Assemblyperson or the Governor's Office to advocate for this need.

Will Emergency Child Care Vouchers be available past June 30, 2020?

At this point, Emergency Child Care Vouchers are set to expire June 30, 2020. However, there is an appropriation in the Governor's May Revise for Emergency Vouchers that needs to complete the budget process for next fiscal year, typically adopted on June 15th.

With the reduced group size limits, I will not be able earn enough revenue to cover expenses. What should I do?

Unfortunately, this reality is affecting ECE providers across the nation. Advocates are currently working with the Governor and Legislature to find a solution to this pressing issue.

In the meantime, please see this [list of resources](#) for protecting your child care business at www.lacoe.edu/childcare. The Small Business Administration received additional funding on April 27th for a second round of the Paycheck Protection Program.

With the reduced group size limits, I will not be able to accept all families that have registered or put down a deposit. What should I do?

We recommend that you follow your business guidelines, including what's included in any parent handbook on this, and inform families of any changes as soon as possible.

Head Start & School District-Supported Programs

When will Head Start programs reopen?

Depending on the situation, some programs will gradually start to open in-person services in mid-July. However, some programs will continue to operate through distance learning due to social (physical) distancing requirements.

Are school district, year-round preschool programs allowed to reopen?

When and the extent to which school district supported programs can open is a local decision and will vary by individual district. LA County Office of Education will provide overall guidance in the near future, however, providers should look to local leadership about their specific program.