



## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan



## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Licensed and Certified Child Care Programs Deemed Critical Businesses During Peacetime Emergency

All critical businesses in Minnesota are required to have a COVID-19 preparedness plan that protects staff, children, families and the community you serve.

According to Executive Order 20-48, critical business, including providers licensed and certified to provide child care services, are required to follow guidance from the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. MDH encourages providers to follow the [CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#). Updated guidance and helpful tools can be found on [mn.gov/childcare](https://mn.gov/childcare). Because there is currently no vaccine for this virus, you will need to operate your program for many months with the possibility that COVID-19 could be confirmed in your program. The MDH/CDC guidance is designed to prevent, and mitigate, or respond to the transmission of COVID-19 in your program setting.

[Executive Order 20-74](#), signed by Gov. Walz on June 5, 2020, requires all critical businesses to develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that outlines how you will implement MDH and CDC guidelines.

Your COVID-19 Preparedness Plan must describe how your program will implement, at a minimum, the following components, in compliance with MDH and CDC guidelines for child care programs:

1. frequent handwashing;
2. cleaning and disinfecting;
3. arrival and departure;
4. social distancing throughout the day;
5. plans for identifying and excluding sick staff, volunteers and children;
6. source control and cloth face coverings;
7. workplace ventilation
8. playground use
9. meals and snacks;
10. field trips and events, and
11. communication and training about the Plan.

You must develop your Plan by June 29, 2020. Providers need to evaluate, monitor, and update their plans if necessary, on a regular basis. The Plan needs to be posted at all of the business's workplaces in readily accessible locations that will allow for the Plan to be readily reviewed by all workers.

You do **not** need to send the completed plan to your DHS (or county) licenser for review or approval. However, you will need to:

- notify enrolled families about the plan and make it available to them upon request;
- train staff, substitutes and volunteers on the plan and ensure they are capable of implementing it, and
- post the plan in a prominent place or make it accessible to staff and volunteers who need to review it.

## 1. Frequent Handwashing

### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

We will reinforce handwashing routines, especially upon arrival, after having been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Ensure children are supervised when using hand sanitizer and that it is inaccessible to them when not in use. All children, staff, and volunteers will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing food or drinks
- Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- Before and after diapering
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
- After playing outdoors or in sand
- After handling garbage
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.
- Supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
  - After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.
- Place [posters](#) describing handwashing steps near sinks.
- CDC guidance on handwashing can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#HandHygiene>

## 2. Cleaning and disinfecting

### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

We will intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts:

Toys that can be put in the mouth should be cleaned and sanitized (see below). Other hard surfaces, including diaper changing stations, door knobs, and floors can be disinfected.

- [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. Use the cleaners typically used at your facility. Guidance is available for the selection of appropriate [sanitizers or disinfectantspdf iconexternal icon](#) for child care settings.
- 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 [hereexternal icon](#). If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for concentration, application method, and contact time for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- If possible, provide EPA-registered disposable wipes to child care providers and other staff members so that commonly used surfaces such as keyboards, desks, and remote controls can be wiped down before use. If wipes are not available, please refer to CDC's guidance on [disinfection for community settings](#).
- All cleaning materials should be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children from inhaling toxic fumes.

### Clean and Sanitize Toys

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should 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. You may also clean in a mechanical dishwasher. Be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child's mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Washing with soapy water is the ideal method for cleaning. Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.
- 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.

## Clean and Disinfect Bedding

- Use bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, mats) that can be washed. Bedding that touches a child's skin should be cleaned before use by another child.

## Plans if someone is or becomes sick.

- We will partition off an area (such as a cot in a corner of the classroom) that can be used to isolate a sick child. Child will be under constant supervision.
- We will follow CDC guidance on how to [disinfect your building or facility](#) if someone is sick.
- If a sick child has been isolated in your facility, clean and disinfect surfaces in your isolation room or area after the sick child has gone home.
- If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member:
  - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
  - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
  - Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before you clean or disinfect to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas.
  - If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
    - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

## 3. Arrival and Departure

### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

## Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policy

- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility, so that children 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.
- During the first weeks of preschool parents will be welcomed into the school for drop-off and pick-up. Parents, children, and staff are asked to social distance as well as can be expected, wear a face covering and wash hands upon arrival.
- After a few weeks, when the teachers and parents feel the children are ready to transition to outside drop-off and pick-up. Teachers will greet the children outside as they arrive and at the end of the day, walk all children back to their cars.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for [severe illness from COVID-19](#).

#### Screen Children Upon Arrival (if possible )

- Persons who have a fever of 100.4° (38.0°C) or above or other signs of illness should not be admitted to the facility. Encourage parents to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Screen children upon arrival, if possible.

#### Reliance on Social Distancing

- Ask parents/guardians to take their child's temperature either before coming to the facility or upon arrival at the facility. Upon their arrival, stand at least 6 feet away from the parent/guardian and child.
- Ask the parent/guardian to confirm that the child does not have fever, shortness of breath or cough.
- 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.

You do not need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) if you can maintain a distance of 6 feet.

- If you use non-contact thermometers, clean them with an alcohol wipe (or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab) between each client. You can reuse the same wipe as long as it remains wet.

#### 4. Plans for sick children, staff, and volunteers

##### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

We will conduct daily health checks. This includes screening for children, staff, and volunteers to ensure those who exhibit any symptoms of illness are not present. We will follow the exclusion guidance and ensure children, staff, and volunteers stay home when sick:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf>

Require sick children and staff to stay home.

- Communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- Communicate to staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with facility management if or when they start to feel sick.
- Establish procedures to ensure children and staff who come to the child care center sick or become sick while at your facility are sent home as soon as possible.
- Keep sick children and staff separate from well children and staff until they can be sent home.

- Sick staff members should not return to work until they have met the [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

Have a plan if someone is or becomes sick.

- Plan to have an area (such as a cot in a corner of the classroom) that can be used to isolate a sick child. Additional information about isolation in related settings can be found here: [isolation at home](#) and [isolation in healthcare settings](#).
- Be ready to follow CDC guidance on how to [disinfect your building or facility](#) if someone is sick.
- If a sick child has been isolated in your facility, clean and disinfect surfaces in your isolation room or area after the sick child has gone home.
- If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member:
  - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
  - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
  - Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before you clean or disinfect to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas.
  - If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
    - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Monitor and Plan for Absenteeism Among Your Staff

- Develop plans to cover classes in the event of increased staff absences and will reach out to substitutes to determine their anticipated availability if regular staff members need to stay home if they or their family members are sick.
- Recommend that people at [higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#) (older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying [medical conditions](#)) consult with their medical provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home if there is an outbreak in their community.

Review plans for implementing social distancing strategies

- Social distancing focuses on remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance from others when possible. Detailed guidance for implementing social distancing strategies in child care centers and schools is found here: [Social Distancing Strategies](#)

Assess Group Gatherings and Events

- Follow [current guidance](#) about gatherings and events.
- Plan to limit nonessential visitors and postpone or cancel use of classroom volunteers.

We will notify [local health officials](#), staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)[external icon](#) and [FERPA](#)[external icon](#) or and other applicable laws and regulations.

We will inform those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop. Maintain confidentiality as required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)[external icon](#) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or and other applicable laws and regulations.

We might need to implement short-term building closure procedures **if/when an infected person has been in the classroom** [during their infectious period](#) and has close contact with others. If this happens, we will **work with local public health officials to determine next steps**.

## 5. Social distancing throughout the day

### At Peace In Christ Preschool:

- As soon as children are ready we will transition to outside drop off and pick up and will limit direct contact between parents and staff members and adhere to social distancing recommendations.
- We will continue to ensure small class sizes to provide enough space for children to play.
- We will create consistent groups of children as much as possible.
- We will spread out during meeting time using assigned seating on our squares.
- We will limit the number a children at each table by limiting the chairs.
- We will use visual cues and reminders to promote social distancing.
- We will go outside more often, weather permitting, to allow for more room to play and fresh air.
- Cancel or postpone special events such as open house, holiday events, and special performances.
- If possible, arrange for administrative staff to telework from their homes.

## 6. Source control and cloth face coverings

### At Peace In Christ Preschool:

#### Face coverings for Staff and Volunteers:

Cloth face coverings are an important piece of mitigating the spread of the virus but are most effective if it can stay in place without being pulled on or touched by the person wearing it or others. Within this context, the provider, staff members, and volunteers are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings much as possible, recognizing the development needs of the children in care.



Staff and volunteers *may remove* their face covering or face shield temporarily to engage in certain activities listed below that make wearing a face covering or shield difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent feasible:

- When they feel it would interfere with the early childhood development process. Ex. reading a story, circle time, working on language development and other times the staff feels it is important that the child sees their facial expressions.
- When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with a face covering difficult.
- When eating or drinking.
- When participating in physical activity or when engaged in other activities (e.g., presenting, performing, or playing an instrument) that would make it difficult or impractical to wear a face covering or face shield.
- When receiving a service (e.g., medical, nursing, or personal care services) that are impossible or difficult to perform when the individual receiving the service is wearing a face covering.

#### **Face coverings for children:**

- Children 5 years of age and under are not required to wear a face shield or face covering in the preschool classroom.
- We will practice age-appropriate social distancing and hand hygiene that support the development and safety for all children in the environment.

### **7. Workplace ventilation**

#### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

The fresh air ventilation system will be on at all times during the school day.

We will go outside more often, weather permitting, to allow for more room to play and fresh air.

### **8. Playground use**

#### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

The children and staff will wash hands before and after playing on the playground.

## 9. Meals and snacks

### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

- Snacks will be served in classrooms and staff will plate each child's snack to serve it so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.
- Caregivers should ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Caregivers should wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.

## 10. Field trips and events

### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

- We will not plan large group activities, such as field trips and family events.
- If we have an in-house field trip, we will screen the presenter. Social distance practices will be maintained, groups should not be mixed, and whenever possible, cleaning and sanitizing should occur between groups.

## 11. Communications and training

### **At Peace In Christ Preschool:**

- This plan will be available to the Commissioner and offered to families. Be sure to communicate to families, using plain language, the expectations for parents and children in implementing this plan (e.g. outdoor pick-up/drop-off protocols).
- The plan will be posted in a prominent place and readily accessible to all of your employees, adult caregivers, substitutes, and volunteers who need to review it. We will provide training to ensure everyone is following our plan. We will keep these individuals updated on any changes to the plan.
- Staff with concerns about their employer's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan or questions about their rights should contact MNOSHA Compliance at [osha.compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.compliance@state.mn.us), 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742.