

# UPDATED CHILD CARE COVID-19 GUIDANCE

As COVID-19 rates lessen and more people become vaccinated, the requirements for child care centers, group child care homes, family child care homes, and youth camps are being updated. Read on to learn more about current requirements still in place, as well as guidance from the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to continue keeping your staff, children, and families safe and healthy.

## REQUIREMENTS

### MASK-WEARING

- ◆ All adults, vaccinated or unvaccinated, shall continue to wear masks indoors in child care programs and youth camps.
- ◆ Children 3 years of age and older in child care programs and youth camps shall continue to wear masks indoors.
- ◆ Exceptions to indoor mask-wearing and details around mask breaks can be found in **Memo #41** and **Memo #29**.
- ◆ Children and adults are not required to wear masks outdoors.



### VACCINATION

- ◆ Child care staff and others in licensed child care and youth camp settings are covered workers, and must meet the requirements of **Executive Order 13G**.
  - **NOTE: This requirement is only relative to licensed programs.**
- ◆ There are options for how workers demonstrate compliance; and medical and religious exemptions are allowed in certain circumstances. For more information, including documentation requirements regarding proof of vaccination, please refer to **Memo #45** and the **Vaccine Testing and Documentation Requirement Chart**.
- ◆ For FAQs, please visit <https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-faq>.



### REPORTING

- ◆ COVID-19 is on the List of Reportable Diseases. Those required to report such diseases must report cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the CT Department of Public Health (DPH) Epidemiology and Emerging Infection Program at **860-509-7994**; and the local department of health in the town of residence of the case-patient by telephone on the day of recognition or strong suspicion of the disease. For weekend and afterhours reports to DPH, call **860-509-8000**. Contact information for the local health department can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Local-Health-Admin/LHA/Local-Health-Administration---Site-Map>. This requirement will remain in effect permanently and is not dependent upon a declared public health emergency.
- ◆ If a child or staff member who has been present in the child care program/camp is diagnosed with COVID-19, the child care provider must notify families and staff of the child care program/camp about the exposure.



# GUIDANCE

While not required, OEC strongly recommends providers continue to follow guidance considered best practice for health and safety from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the CT DPH:



Practice and teach frequent handwashing (for at least 20 seconds).



Cover your mouth with your sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use.



Avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with hands.



Continue to keep groups of children in cohorts if possible to limit the impact and need for quarantines should a COVID-19 case arise.



Continue enhanced health practices, including disinfection and sanitation, especially of high-touch areas, objects, and toys.



Ask individuals coming to the program whether they've been in contact with a COVID-19 positive case in the past 14 days, or if they have symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath) each day.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH CAMPS

- ◆ Children in residential camps who sleep together in a cabin, bunkhouse, etc. are considered “household cohorts” and do not need to wear masks when together, indoors or outdoors, if no non-household cohort members are near.
- ◆ Camp operators are strongly recommended to continue to limit group sizes and be aware of larger cohort risks. Maintaining smaller cohorts will reduce the number of individuals who may need to quarantine should a COVID-19 case arise.
- ◆ OEC strongly encourages all youth camps to consider the recommendations in CDC’s most up-to-date guidance when developing policies and procedures for the operation of their camp. Please refer to the following links:

- ◆ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/camp-planning-tool.pdf>
- ◆ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

## NOTIFICATION OF OPEN/CLOSED STATUS VIA 211 CHILD CARE SURVEY

- ◆ Providers should maintain their open/closed status with 211 Child Care at the following link: <https://resources.211childcare.org/covid>
- ◆ If you have already reported your status, use the link to report change in open/closed status.
- ◆ Please do not report short-term closure due to COVID-19 exposure or quarantine if you will re-open once that term is over.
- ◆ If you have multiple sites that you need to report on, please complete the survey for each site.



## TESTING

- ◆ For information on testing, please visit the Connecticut COVID-19 Response site: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/COVID-19-Testing>
- ◆ To locate a testing location near you, please visit 211: [https://www.211ct.org/search?terms=COVID-19 %20Diagnostic%20Tests&page=1&location=Connecticut&taxonomy\\_code=11048&service\\_area=connecticut](https://www.211ct.org/search?terms=COVID-19%20Diagnostic%20Tests&page=1&location=Connecticut&taxonomy_code=11048&service_area=connecticut)

## DEALING WITH EXPOSURE

When COVID-19 exposure happens in a child care program or youth camp, it is critical that the program/camp be prepared for contact tracing at the direction of the local health department. To support this process, the child care/youth camp provider should be prepared to:

- ◆ Name a contact tracing lead to speak with the local health department.
- ◆ Ensure up-to-date contact information for staff and children.
- ◆ Have documentation of attendance, staffing patterns, and daily group schedules at the ready.
  - ◆ Determine if the child/staff member attended/worked at the program while symptomatic or during the two days before symptoms began.
  - ◆ Identify what days the child/staff member attended/worked during that time.
- ◆ Identify where, when, and with whom the individual had contact while at the program.
  - ◆ Close contact means having spent at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 6 feet of the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

Exclude the children and staff members who had close contact with the affected child/staff member according to public health direction. Work with public health officials to determine messaging about exposure, quarantine needs and/or isolation, and closures. For more information, consult the following CT State Department of Education resources:

- ◆ Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/Addendum-5-Interim-Guidance-for-Responding-to-COVID-19-Scenarios-in-CT-School-Districts.pdf>

OEC provides a sample COVID-19 Contact Tracing Checklist, outlining steps to take when a COVID-19 case is diagnosed in a child or staff member. More detailed information related to contact tracing can be found at <https://www.ctoec.org/forms-documents/oec-covid-19-exposure-in-child-care-and-youth-camps-flyer.pdf>



## TRAVEL GUIDANCE

- ◆ The current advisory is to follow travel-related guidance from the CDC and the CT DPH: <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/travel>



## VENTILATION

Ventilation plays an important part in reducing the spread of disease.

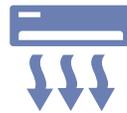
- ◆ Understand your current system and adjust to optimize.
- ◆ Increase the amount of fresh air coming into the building either by adjusting mechanical systems or opening windows.
- ◆ For **buildings with central ventilation systems** (e.g., air conditioning), keep the system running when the building is occupied; do not make system control changes; change filters regularly.
- ◆ For **buildings without central ventilation systems or with areas not served by the system**:



Open windows to bring in fresh air.



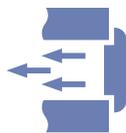
Maximize fresh air intake into window air conditioning units.



Set blower fans on low speed, pointed away from people in the room.



Adjust ceiling fans so fins are drawing air up toward the ceiling.



Turn window fans to exhaust air out the window without blowing into walking paths.



Do not use fans that blow air into a room or only circulate air.



Separate, free-standing air cleaner or HEPA filter units are not recommended.

These guidelines will continue to be updated in conjunction with decisions made with the Office of the Governor and CT DPH.

For more information and FAQs, please visit

<https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-faq>  
and [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Coronavirus/Community\\_Resources/Vaccinations/Print-Materials/Fact-Sheets/COVID\\_Rules\\_Vaccinated.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Coronavirus/Community_Resources/Vaccinations/Print-Materials/Fact-Sheets/COVID_Rules_Vaccinated.pdf).

