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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: March 11, 2020

TO: Providers of Services to Young Children

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: COVID-19 Memo #2
Supporting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families Related to COVID-19/
Corona Virus

The Office of Early Childhood is working closely with State Agency partners including the Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to gain and share information on COVID-19. OEC encourages providers to be proactive in learning about prevention strategies and resources.

Reliable sources of information: The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the [CT Department of Public Health](#) are primary sources for information and offer information specific to child care programs and settings that serve young children. Individuals who have general questions that are not answered on these websites can also dial [2-1-1](#) for assistance. This hotline is available 24 hours a day and has multilingual assistance and TDD/TTY access for those with a hearing impairment.

Communication: The Office of Early Childhood provides communication directly to providers when necessary to heighten their awareness of resources specific to emergency situations. Providers are encouraged to continue to visit the OEC website for information. The OEC defers to the Department of Public Health for health related questions.

Medical Care and Information: Families and staff should continue to follow guidance from the Department of Public Health to contact their primary care physician for medical questions and assistance. Licensed providers may also consult their health consultant or [local health department](#) for [questions related to implementation of guidance, or what to do if there is exposure to an infected individual](#).

Health: The strategies employed on a regular basis, including handwashing, staying home when sick, and cleaning and sanitizing, are critical elements of a plan to remain healthy. The CDC

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website includes links to tip sheets, posters on handwashing, and tips for families in its [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US ChildCare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#). All CDC guidance is updated as necessary to respond to this changing situation.

Back-up Care: Families may need assistance with alternate hours or back-up care for children if their regular caregiver is unable to provide care, if schools are closed, or if their work hours change. Encourage families to be proactive in looking for options to fill child care gaps, considering whether family members can work alternate schedules, or work at home. Child Care centers and homes may be able to extend their days or hours with notification to the OEC. [211 child care](#) provides information on enrollment availability if children are not yet enrolled in a program.

Planning: The [Office of Early Childhood](#) has plans in place to maintain services to the public. The OEC's [Child Care Emergency Preparedness Manual](#) is available at <https://www.ctoec.org/licensing/emergency-planning-and-response/>. This document describes how the OEC works with key partners, plans for the continuation of subsidies and services, supports recovery efforts and communicates with stakeholders. A section of the plan provides additional information on resources related to emergency preparedness planning, response and recovery. Programs should review their emergency plans as well.