

HEALTH OFFICER  
GUIDANCE FOR MODIFIED CHILDCARE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
March 23, 2020

COVID-19 is an infectious disease, and there is evidence of minimal to moderate community spread in Contra Costa County. In order to limit the spread of disease, contact with infected individuals must be reduced as much as possible, and social distancing strategies must be implemented to slow the spread of disease. Contra Costa Health Services recognizes the need for education, social services, and essential community functions and services. This document aims to provide interim guidance for any modified childcare. In particular, we want to support the childcare needs for essential workers with a prioritization on frontline health care workers, emergency services workers (those working in the Health DOC-Department Operations Center EOC-Emergency Operations Center), first responders, and all county employees deployed as DSW (Disaster Service Workers).

**Pursuant to § 120175\* of the California Health and Safety Code, the Health Officer of Contra Costa County recommends the following guidance for childcare, effective immediately:**

- 1) Modified childcare should:
  - a. Be in stable groups of 6-12 children (“stable” means that the same group of students are in the group each day). Students should not change from one group to another.
  - b. Each group should ideally be in a separate room, and groups should not mix with each other (for example: stagger meals, playground, recess, and toileting/personal hygiene activities to minimize mixing of groups). Avoid mixing students in common areas.
  - c. If the above is not possible, increase space between children’s desks, ideally to be at least 3-6 feet apart
  - d. Staff should also be stable and remain with one group of students (primary caregivers should minimize movement from group to group or room to room).
  - e. Recommend excluding children with underlying medical conditions which could increase their risk. Personal physicians should be contacted for child-specific recommendations.

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\* **H&S Code § 120175, et seq. (2001), *Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Act*.** Each health officer knowing or having reason to believe that any case of the diseases made reportable by regulation of the department, or any other contagious, infectious or communicable disease exists, or has recently existed, within the territory under his or her jurisdiction, shall take measures as may be necessary to prevent the spread of the disease or occurrence of additional cases.



2) Infection control measures:

- a. Teachers, staff, and caregivers should self- screen at home for respiratory infection symptoms (coughing, sneezing, runny nose, and fever) each morning before interacting with students; Ill teachers and staff should NOT come to work.
- b. **Exclude ill students and staff (those with symptoms specified above) from the facility.** We strongly advise not requiring a doctor's note for ill absences. We recommend having a temporal (forehead) thermometer at each childcare site which can be cleaned after each use with 60% alcohol or a wipe.
- c. **Students or staff who develop symptoms at childcare should be separated from others, and sent home immediately (within 1 hour).**
- d. **Ill students or staff should not return to childcare until they are well.**
- e. Screen visitors **and** do not allow those with symptoms of fever and/or respiratory infection to visit. Limit non-essential visitors.
- f. Students, staff, and teachers should maintain 6 feet of separation as much as possible.
- g. Students, staff, and teachers should wash hands with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (if hands are not visibly dirty) before and after eating, drinking, touching eyes/nose/mouth, toileting, and physical contact with each other.
- h. High-contact areas and surfaces (i.e. counters, educational equipment, telephones, door-knobs, etc) should be cleaned and disinfected frequently. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available at [cchealth.org](http://cchealth.org) and [here](#)

The duration of this guidance will be determined by the spread of disease in the community, in consultation with the California Department of Public Health and regional public health partners. **This recommendation will remain in effect until further notice from the Health Officer.**

CHRIS FARNITANO M.D.

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Health Officer

3/23/2020

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Date

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