

Health and Safety Requirements for New Mexico Child Care Facilities and Early Childhood Professionals

On March 11, 2020, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham declared a public health emergency in order to maximize the resources available to fight the spread of COVID-19 and minimize public health risks for New Mexicans. The fight against COVID-19 is ongoing, fluid, and requires our collective diligence and attention. **The following is a list of required health and safety practices, effective March 29, 2021, for all New Mexico Child Care Centers, licensed and registered homes, and early childhood professionals.**



Required Practices

- **Licensed providers may return to group size and ratios according to their licensed Star level.**
- Access to facility must be limited to **essential visitors**, which includes breast feeding mothers, therapists, early interventionists and special education staff, FOCUS verifiers, and ECECD regulatory staff.
- Providers must conduct **daily temperature checks and screenings for symptoms** prior to entry for staff and other essential visitors entering the building.
- Providers must conduct **daily wellness checks** on every child at the facility.
- **Masks are required for all staff**, gloves and gowns as needed for wellness screenings of children or health screenings of staff and essential visitors.
- **Mandatory mask wearing** for children age 3 years and older (unless drinking, eating, or napping).
- **Mandatory training for all staff**, including cooks and transportation staff, on COVID safe practices.
- **Frequent handwashing.**
- **Clean and sanitize frequently** touched surfaces throughout the day and disinfect at the end of each day.
- Children must maintain at least three (3) **feet of physical distance**, including during naps, when possible. Mats should be placed head-to-toe.
- Providers must **eliminate family-style meals**; have employees (not children) handle utensils. Wear gloves when serving children. Plate each child's meal.
- Providers must **serve meals in the classroom**. If spaces such as cafeterias need to be used—as with licensed out of school time programs—stagger use and clean and sanitize between use.
- **Transportation safety requirements:**
 - ◆ Mandatory mask wearing for passengers over three years of age.
 - ◆ Use the vehicle's vents and windows to bring in fresh air, avoid using the recirculated air option.
 - ◆ If possible, maintain one empty space between passengers.
 - ◆ Require handwashing/hand sanitizer before and after exiting the vehicle
 - ◆ Clean and sanitize regularly touched surfaces between groups/runs.
- **All staff must test for COVID-19 monthly.**
- Providers must **exclude children or staff from the program who have two or more symptoms** consistent with COVID-19 and/or test positive.
- Staff and children who were in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 positive case must **quarantine for 10 days** (unless they are two weeks past full dose of vaccination or have recovered from COVID in the past three months).

Resources:

More detailed guidance concerning best practices related to COVID-19 is available from the New Mexico Department of Health: bit.ly/nmdoh-march2021.

Providers must report all positive cases to the ECECD Rapid Response Hotline (1-833-866-3272), Department of Health (1-855-600-3453), and all positive staff cases to the New Mexico Environmental Department Occupational Health and Safety Bureau: (505) 476-8700 or online at nmgov.force.com/rapidresponse.



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