

Frequently Asked Questions for Transitional Pandemic Child Care

This document was updated to reflect rule changes effective August 9, 2020. The ratio/group size question was removed from the Ratio/Group Size/Supervision section below on January 12, 2021 as regular licensing rules apply.

Programming/Procedural

- 1. Will additional staff/administrator still be permitted to allow other staff to go on breaks or will the assigned teacher be the only person permitted to interact with one group of kids?**
Additional staff are permitted to provide breaks and be assigned to a group.
- 2. Will ODJFS be sending us a waiver to have families sign releasing us of any liability should one of our kids get sick, show symptoms or a death occurs?**
Programs should consult with their attorneys and/or insurance company about this concern.
- 3. Will inspections for programs wanting to be licensed resume?**
Yes, inspections for all programs will resume.
- 4. If a program chooses not to open until fall, what should they do?**
The program may have been placed in temporary closure status and will need to request the status be changed when it is time to reopen the program. Instructions are located on the child care pandemic page <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>. *This question was updated to reflect rule changes effective August 9, 2020.*
- 5. Are parents ever allowed in the program?**
Rule requires that parents have access to the program. The program can decide how they want to safely allow for this.
- 6. How do we suggest programs conduct severe weather drills, or what if there is a tornado warning? Are all children allowed to come together for the drill and in case of an actual weather emergency?**
Fire drills and weather drills are required. Weather drills should be completed by individual groups/classrooms to reduce contact between two groups. In the event of an emergency, all emergency procedures should be followed to ensure the safety of the children.

Indoor Space

- 1. Can a common area that is included in the total square footage of useable space for children over 2 ½ years be used as a classroom space, even if that space does not include 35 square feet per child?**
If a common area has not been approved for all day use by one group, the program should contact the building department for approval. The square footage requirement for children 2 ½ years of age or older has not changed.
- 2. Can infants still share a crib in between use (one baby MWF, one baby TR) and sanitize crib/mattress in between uses?**
This is a program decision and the equipment would need to be cleaned and sanitized between use.

- 3. A divider is used to separate a classroom to allow two groups of children in the space and the diaper changing station/bathroom and the sink are now in the defined area for only one group of children. Can the children who no longer have the sink and changing table/bathroom in their space still use them?**

Yes, the changing table/restroom and sink can be used by the other group. It is recommended that they be cleaned and sanitized in between uses. It is also recommended that only the child being changed should be taken to the diaper changing area. Ratio and group size must be maintained in each space.

- 4. How does the rule dictate accessibility to restrooms and sinks and using larger areas like cafeterias or gyms as classrooms when dividing into smaller areas?**

Prior to using a common area for classroom space, such as a cafeteria or gym, you should contact the local building and fire department. That space may not be approved for that type of use. It is recommended that larger areas shared at different times throughout the day be sanitized in between groups. Children must be able to use the restroom when needed. Handwashing sinks must be accessible to the children when needed. Portable sinks are permitted and you can find guidance on them here <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

- 5. Can two infant groups share the same crib area?**

No, infants assigned to one group cannot share a crib area or play area with another group of infants.

- 6. Does the divider in between the crib area and the infant play space have to be 6 feet?**

No. The divider in between the crib area and play space is intended to separate those two areas which are used by the same group of children.

- 7. Do cots need to be spaced six feet apart during naptime?**

It is recommended and considered best practice that cots be placed six feet apart if possible. Children could lay head to toe as well. However, this is a decision the program should make.

- 8. If a large space is divided, like a gym or cafeteria, is a baby gate sufficient as a door?**

Prior to using a common area for classroom space, such as a cafeteria or gym, you should contact the local building and fire department. That space may not be approved for that type of use. Any space that is divided must have a 6-foot barrier.

- 9. Can centers with existing cloth walls cover them with sheet plastic to make them washable?**

This is a program decision.

- 10. Do cribs need to be 6 feet apart?**

No, cribs do not need to be 6 feet apart. Programs are encouraged to increase the space between cribs if possible.

Ratio/Group Size/Supervision

- 1. Should children from the same family still be in one group, or can they now be in the appropriate rooms?**

It is a program decision in which room children are cared, however, ratio must be maintained for the youngest child in the group.

- 2. Are we able to combine classrooms in the morning or afternoon or do they need to stay separated all day?**

It is a program decision to combine groups, however, ratio must be maintained for the youngest child in the group and rule requirements for combining groups must be followed.

Documentation/Forms

- 1. Should anything be updated on the enrollment forms before reopening?**

While the requirement is for the JFS 01234 to be updated annually, it is best practice to have the name and number of emergency contacts updated during this time.

- 2. Will the best practice training count toward the six hours of professional development?**

Yes, the training can be used for the licensing professional development requirement and can be documented on the JFS 01307 "Professional Development Documentation for Child Care." However, it is not Ohio Approved so will not count towards the PD Certificate for SUTQ.

- 3. Are digital signatures acceptable for enrollment forms, administration of medication forms, health care plans, etc. to limit the amount of in person interaction?**

Yes, digital signatures are accepted.

- 4. Do postings need to be in every room? If you have a large room/gym and have divided it into multiple spaces, does each space need the postings?**

Postings are required for each room, not each divided space.

- 5. Will parent handbooks need revised to incorporate new rules/policies?**

There is no additional requirement for the written policies. However, if programs are updating any policies or procedures due to COVID-19, the written policies should be updated. This can be done in the form of an addendum to the current written policies if they choose.

Safe/Sanitary

- 1. If we have immune compromised family members or children, can we stay closed to protect those people?**

When a program opens is a business decision. Child care programs are permitted to operate beginning May 31.

- 2. We were hoping to wait until Clorox wipes and hand sanitizer was available for purchase before reopening. Do you know if the state will get us those supplies to keep our homes and kids safer?**

Currently there is not a plan to provide cleaning supplies to programs.

- 3. Does social distancing need to be maintained between children and teachers?**
There is no licensing requirement for social distancing in the same group.
- 4. Will children need to wear masks?**
Yes, all school-aged children are required to wear a face covering while indoors unless not medically or developmentally appropriate. No child two years or and under are required to wear a face covering. *This question was updated to reflect rule changes effective August 9, 2020.*
- 5. What happens if one child in a family gets a temperature of 100 while at your program? Do you send the entire family home?**
The rule requires the child to be sent home and must be fever-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to the program. If the child has a fever and has had known contact with someone confirmed or probable to have COVID-19, then the child must complete isolation or quarantine procedures in coordination with the local health department prior to returning. The same process would apply to other children in the family who are exhibiting symptoms and who are also attending the program. *This question was updated to reflect rule changes effective August 9, 2020.*
- 6. Can hand sanitizer be used by children aged 24 months and over and by staff to satisfy handwashing requirements?**
As stated in the rule, hand sanitizer can be used in place of handwashing unless hands are visibly soiled.
- 7. Will portable sinks be permitted in the future after the pandemic rules are lifted, relaxed, or changed?**
This has not been determined.
- 8. Will sensory play be allowed?**
This is a business decision. It is recommended that children have their own sensory container and that they be sanitized in between uses.
- 9. Are water activities allowed if they do not intend to swim? Wading pools? Sprinklers?**
This is a business decision.

Other

- 1. Has the state indicated how long these mandates will be in place for?**
At this time, there is no timeline associated with the temporary rules.
- 2. We are in a school so we cannot reopen. Can I use another building?**
You may submit for a temporary change of location. Also, you may work with the school and local health department to determine if the child care program could open in the licensed space.

3. **If the programs remove items such as dress up clothes, stuffed animals, etc., will the programs be marked out of compliance for not having these items?**
Rule requires the categories of equipment and materials required, not the specific equipment or materials.
4. **What are the requirements for using playground equipment?**
Please refer to the best practices training as there are no additional rule requirements for playground equipment. The training can be found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
5. **If a child travels out of state must they quarantine for fourteen days before returning to school?**
The program may refer to their local health department for guidance on quarantine after travel.
6. **Is the OCLQS going to show the change in Step Up To Quality rating expiration date extensions?**
All rating expiration dates, and annual report anniversary dates were extended six months in OCLQS.

Payments/Publicly Funded Child Care

1. **Can I use pandemic days beginning May 31, 2020 before reopening?**
No, beginning May 31, 2020, pandemic days can only be used if the program has been ordered to close to by the Ohio Department of Health or the local health department.
2. **Can I use pandemic days if I must close the program?**
Pandemic days can only be used if the program closes due to a positive COVID-19 case and the health department has required them to close. If the health department requires the closure, the program must submit documentation from the health department otherwise pandemic days cannot be used.
3. **Will our rates be going up?**
Reimbursement is not changing. Payment will resume at the rate prior to the pandemic period.
4. **If we stay closed will the state continue to pay us?**
If a program makes a business decision to stay closed, ODJFS will not pay the program. Closure payments ended on May 30, 2020.
5. **Will we get unemployment compensation if we stay closed?**
Contact the Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations for assistance with this question (<https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/>).
6. **Do parents have to bring their children to the program every day to remain eligible for PFCC?**
A family will not lose their eligibility for PFCC because they do not attend a program daily.

*Step Up To Quality***1. Are there changes to the SUTQ standards?**

There are no changes planned to the SUTQ standards. Some standards may not be assessed until a later date. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

2. What happens if a SUTQ renewal or annual report is due and the program has not reopened yet, after the order is lifted?

Because the program would be in temporary closure status, they would need to act in the first 90 days or reactivate after 90 days of reopening.