

Frequently Asked Questions for Transitional Pandemic Child Care

**This document was updated June 4, 2020. Additions are noted in each section.*

Programming/Procedural

- 1. Will the state be giving us any guidance on which children already enrolled will get the limited spots available?**
This is a program decision.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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 a death occurs?**
Programs should consult with their attorneys and/or insurance company about this concern.
- 4. Will inspections for programs wanting to be licensed resume?**
Yes, inspections for all programs will resume.
- 5. If a program chooses not to open until fall, what should they do?**
The program should enter the date they plan to open in OCLQS before June 7, 2020. Instructions are located on the child care pandemic page <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
- 6. 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.

The following was added on June 4, 2020

- 7. 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.

The following were added on June 4, 2020

- 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. Can groups be combined, and ratio/group size doubled during naptime?**

No, as the maximum ratio and group size cannot be doubled.

- 2. Do I need to post the new ratios, or can I keep the ratio appendix posted?**

There is no rule requirement to post the new ratios.

- 3. 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.

- 4. 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.

- 5. For transitioning children, if we have an infant that will turn eighteen months soon to become a toddler, how do we transition? Then, when they become eighteen months and truly change classrooms, if that will put us over the six children limit, what do we do?**

This is a program decision; however, all ratio and group size requirements must be followed in all spaces.

- 6. Can multiple groups eat in the lunchroom at the same time if the groups are spaced apart?**

No, group size cannot exceed the six or nine, depending on the ages, without having a barrier that meets rule requirements between groups.

- 7. In a large room, could we divide off each class, using social distancing and still have a presentation such as Cusi on Wheels come to the program? Are programs permitted to conduct “Mommy and me” classes or have magicians, pet shows or librarians in their program?**

Individual groups should not be combined in a large area. The program is encouraged to carefully plan how they will ensure the safety of all children when outside individuals come into the program for special events.

The following was added on June 4, 2020

- 8. Will centers still be allowed to have college/high school students come into the classrooms?**

This is a business decision; see the ratio/group size technical assistance document.

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 polices 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.

The following was added on June 4, 2020

6. **Will administrator rules trainings still occur, be rescheduled, or have an online option?**

The Department is working on options to provide the administrator training.

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?**

No, there is no licensing requirement for children to wear masks and no children under age 2 should ever wear masks.

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? If you are checking temperatures at drop-off, do you not allow the entire family to come if only one child has a temp of 100?**

The rule requires the child to be discharged and is silent on other family members. The program can establish their own procedure for discharge and drop off.

The following were added on June 4, 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 during the summer?

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. Will I receive my licensing incentive payment?

If the program applied and is approved for licensure within the required time frame, they will receive the payment.

2. Will I receive my Step Up To Quality incentive payment?

If the program submitted a registration and receives a Step Up To Quality rating according to the required time frame and star ratings, they will receive the payment.

- 3. 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.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Will our rates be going up?**
Reimbursement is not changing. Payment will resume at the rate prior to the pandemic period.
- 6. 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 will end on May 30, 2020.
- 7. 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/>).

The following were added on June 4, 2020

- 8. Will providers be paid for children who have an existing authorization to their program but who cannot attend because of reduced ratios?**
Providers will continue to be paid based on attendance using the TAP system.
- 9. 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.
- 10. For caretakers not currently working, can children attend daycare?**
If the family was determined eligible by the county agency for publicly funded child care, but has since become unemployed, any changes to their qualifying activity (i.e. employment) that occurs before August 1, 2020 will not negatively impact their eligibility.

*Step Up To Quality****The following were added on June 4, 2020*****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.