



## Transitional Pandemic Requirements and Best Practices for Child Care Centers

*\* This document was updated to reflect rule changes effective August 9, 2020.*

Child care centers must follow all licensing requirements in addition to the following exceptions and additions outlined in the transitional rules. Additionally, centers must follow all guidelines set by the Governor of Ohio or the Director of the Ohio Department of Health.

This document summarizes the transitional rules, best practices, and any associated tips.

\*Please note that “employee” includes all administrators, employees and child care staff members (CCSM). These requirements and all new procedures established by the program should be reviewed with all employees.

### Ratio:

**Transitional Rule:** Child care centers may return to the statutory ratios and group sizes as set forth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:

Age of Children	Child Care Staff Member/Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
<b>Young Infant</b> (birth to less than 12 months)	1:5 or 2:12 in same room	12
<b>Older Infant</b> (at least 12 months and less than 18 months)	1:6	12
<b>Young Toddler</b> (at least 18 months and less than 2 1/2 years)	1:7	14
<b>Older Toddler</b> (at least 2 1/2 years and less than 3 years)	1:8	16
<b>Young Preschool</b> (at least 3 years and less than 4 years)	1:12	24
<b>Older Preschool</b> (at least 4 years and not enrolled in or eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten)	1:14	28
<b>Young School-age</b> (enrolled in or eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten or above and less than 11 years)	1:18	36
<b>Older School-age</b> (at least 11 years and less than 15 years)	1:20	40

**Best Practices:**

- Maintain stable grouping:
  - Same group of children each day.
  - Same staff with same children each day.
  - Keep siblings together, when possible.
  - Keep children whose parents/guardians have the same employer together, when possible.
  - Consider not combining groups at times when fewer children are present, even if appropriate staff/child ratios are maintained.
- Consider caring for a smaller group of children than allowed under current staff to child ratio rules.

**Tips:**

- Revise the daily schedules to ensure outdoor play/indoor large motor play at staggered times.

**Face Coverings:****Transitional Rule:**

- Centers shall ensure all employees wear a face covering while indoors, unless not medically appropriate.
- Centers shall ensure that all school-age children wear a face covering while indoors unless not medically or developmentally appropriate.
  - “School-age child” means a child who is enrolled in and attending a grade of kindergarten or above but is less than fifteen years old or, in the case of a child who is receiving special needs child care, is less than eighteen years old.
  - No child two years of age and younger shall wear a face covering.
- Face coverings, which include masks but exclude face shields, shall cover the individual’s nose and mouth.

**Best Practices:**

- Best practice for Face Coverings can be found in the Transitional Pandemic Child Care Toolkit:  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

**Tips:**

- Provide children with positive reinforcement by thanking them for wearing their face coverings, keeping their hands away from their face, storing their mask appropriately.
- Display pictures of superheroes and everyday people wearing face coverings.
- Incorporate a science activity that helps children understand how face coverings help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

## Handwashing:

### Transitional Rule:

- Follow all handwashing procedures pursuant to rule 5101:2-12-13, with the following additions:
  - All employees shall wash their hands upon entering a classroom and prior to leaving for the day.
  - All children shall wash their hands prior to leaving for the day.
- Centers may use non-permanent sinks to meet the handwashing requirements.

### Rule Reminders:

- Hand sanitizer should be kept out of the reach of children.
- Only children 24 months and older may use hand sanitizer.

### Best Practices:

- Employees and children should frequently wash their hands.
- Teach children and employees appropriate handwashing practices.
- Require anyone entering the program to wash and/or sanitize their hands.
- Wash hands carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash hands after coughing, sneezing, or using a tissue.
- Wash hands after water activities.
- Provide a hand washing/sanitizing station at the program's entrance.

### Tips:

- Create a sanitation backpack that includes items such as cleaner, sanitizer, gloves, paper towels, and/or a small trash bag to take when you are caring for the children outside.
- Teach children a 20-second song to sing as they wash their hands.
- Please see "Portable Sinks in Child Care" for additional information at:  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
- Communicate with families about the new handwashing practices in place in the program so they can reinforce with their children as well.
- Display handwashing posters to encourage proper washing, available on the provider pandemic page:  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
- Watch YouTube videos with the children about proper handwashing:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQn0z6xa8II&list=TLPQMTIwNTIwMjAye98QK66jBA&index=1>
- Require employees to watch a video on proper handwashing:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWmok9avzr4&feature=youtube>.

## Screening:

### Transitional Rule:

Ensure all employees and children are assessed for the following COVID-19 symptoms prior to or as soon as they arrive each day:

- A temperature of 100° F or higher
- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

### Best Practices:

- Incorporate social distancing while assessing for symptoms or use physical barriers to minimize exposure.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees who conduct COVID-19 symptoms screenings.
- Conduct COVID-19 symptoms screenings of any visitors to your program.
- Require parents/guardians and/or visitors wear a face covering at arrival and screening.
- Request that children and employees not eat, drink, or have physical activity immediately prior to taking their temperature.
- Teach employees how to:
  - Take a temperature.
  - Read a thermometer.
  - Sanitize a thermometer.
  - Properly put on and take off PPE.
- Modify drop off and pick up to ensure social distancing. Examples:
  - Stagger times.
  - Curbside drop-off and pick up.
  - Request same parent/guardian drop off and pick up child.
  - Provide physical guides (6 ft apart), such as tape on ground, for waiting in line.

### Tips:

- Remind parents/guardians to keep their child home when they are sick.
- Communicate with families about the COVID-19 symptom assessment procedures you have in place. Have them talk with their child prior to arrival about the new symptom assessment procedures.
- Talk with the children during the day about the new COVID-19 symptom assessment procedures your program will follow each day.

**Exclusion:**

**Transitional Rule:**

The chart below outlines the steps that must be taken if it is determined that an individual has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher or if the individual has any of the symptoms listed above AND has had known contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (including antibody tests). This also applies to anyone whose COVID-19 symptoms were assessed after arrival.

**Temperature of 100 degrees or higher and has had no known contact with someone confirmed or probable to have COVID-19**

Children	All Administrators, Employees and Staff Members	FCC Providers and Residents
Send the person home	Send the person home	Stop providing care
Must be fever-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to the program	Must be fever-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to the program	Must be fever-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours prior to resuming care

**Assessed to have at least one of the symptoms (this includes temperature of 100 degrees or above) AND has had known contact with someone confirmed or probable to have COVID-19**

Children	All Administrators, Employees and Staff Members	FCC Providers and Residents
Send the person home	Send the person home	Stop providing care
The individual must complete isolation or quarantine procedures for COVID-19 in coordination with the local health department prior to returning to the program	The individual must complete isolation or quarantine procedures for COVID-19 in coordination with the local health department prior to returning to the program	The individual must complete isolation or quarantine procedures for COVID-19 in coordination with the local health department

**Rule Reminder:**

- If a child meets exclusion criteria after arrival at your program, they must be properly supervised (within sight and hearing) until they are taken home.

**Best Practices:**

- When a child meets the COVID-19 exclusion criteria:
- Isolate the child in a separate room or space until they are taken home.
- If the child is not already wearing a face covering, put one on the child if it is developmentally and medically safe for the child to wear a face covering.
- CCSM supervising the child should continue to wear a face covering and should also wear protective clothing and wash hands often.

**Tips:**

- Review and test emergency contact numbers.
- Communicate with families about the program's isolation and discharge process.

**Notification:****Transitional Rule:**

- If an employee or child enrolled in the center tests positive for COVID-19 (including antibody tests), the program shall:
  - Notify ODJFS by the next business day in OCLQS as a serious incident, and
  - Notify their local health department by the next business day.

**Best Practices:**

- Work with the local health department to determine next steps to protect the children and employees in your program. This may include notifying families and deep sanitation of the program.

**Tips:**

- If a child or employee tests positive for COVID-19, use the JFS "Sample Parent Communication for Positive COVID-19 Test" in the Transitional Pandemic Child Care Toolkit:  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

**Dividers:****Transitional Rule:**

- If centers want to divide a room into smaller spaces to serve multiple groups of children, dividers may be used if they meet the following requirements:
  - At least 6 ft high.
  - Made from nonporous material or material which may be sanitized.
  - Meet requirements set by:
    - Department of Commerce.
    - Local building department.
    - State Fire Marshal.
    - Local fire safety inspector.

**Best Practices:**

- Please see "Using Dividers to Create Separate Spaces in Child Care Settings" at:  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

Please find additional best practices and tips at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.