

# Early Childhood Education and Care Department

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

### Frequently Asked Questions – Updated March 29, 2021

- 1. Can groups of children now be mixed?**  
*Yes, you may combine groups as necessary as outlined in the applicable licensing regulations. However, it is best practice and strongly encouraged to maintain stable groups, when possible, to reduce the spread of COVID.*
- 2. Can children in different classrooms but same age play outside together now?**  
*Yes, you may combine groups as necessary as outlined in the applicable licensing regulations. However, it is best practice and strongly encouraged to maintain stable groups to reduce the spread of COVID.*
- 3. Can providers combine groups at the beginning and end of day? Any restrictions on combining groups (only combine children from same school, etc.)?**  
*Yes, you may combine groups as necessary and as outlined in applicable licensing regulations. However, it is best practice and strongly encouraged to maintain stable groups to reduce the spread of COVID.*
- 4. Are we able to allow children from the public schools attend child care on some days of the week? After school?**  
*Yes, children from public schools may attend your child care center. Attendance of enrolled children may not exceed licensed capacity, as per regulation.*
- 5. Are families now allowed to enter my building to drop off and pick up?**  
*No, access to child care facilities is limited to essential visitors: breast feeding mothers, therapists, early interventionists and special education staff, FOCUS verifiers, and ECECD regulatory staff.*
- 6. Earlier language in the new health and safety requirements say mask wearing is mandatory for children “over the age of three.” Does this mean children ages three (3) and older, or children over the age of three – meaning four (4) years old and older?**  
*Masks must be worn by children ages three years and older. We have updated language in the health and safety requirements to make it clear that children three-years old and above must wear masks, unless they are eating, drinking, or napping.*
- 7. I did not see a Spanish version. Is it being released at a later time?**  
*Yes, ECECD is currently working on translating the updated health and safety requirements into Spanish. It*



will be available no later than March 31, 2021.

**8. For mandatory testing, can providers still use Vault testing? (some providers report difficulty getting the codes)**

Yes, Vault can still be used. ECECD no longer provides unique codes to providers. However, DOH has a statewide website where residents can order their tests. (Each individual orders a vault test and no unique link is required.) There is no cost. Please report any testing difficulties or concerns to [jennifer.sallee@state.nm.us](mailto:jennifer.sallee@state.nm.us).

**VAULT HEALTH LINK:**

[https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nm/?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_medium=SEM&utm\\_campaign=TestingAndTracing&qclid=Cj0KCQjwjPaCBhDkARIsAISZN7TK1W\\_ew6186awAAbtAPYoAqbRsJtXZqtSHDyeFWAhcx\\_MMdM5C4aAsCjEALw\\_wcB](https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nm/?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=SEM&utm_campaign=TestingAndTracing&qclid=Cj0KCQjwjPaCBhDkARIsAISZN7TK1W_ew6186awAAbtAPYoAqbRsJtXZqtSHDyeFWAhcx_MMdM5C4aAsCjEALw_wcB)

**9. Do all household members for a Licensed or Registered Home need to test monthly?**

Yes, all household members must continue to test. The only change is that testing is monthly instead of every other week.

**10. Does this also apply to those considered to be spending a significant amount of time in the home?**

Access to the facility must be limited to those with approved ECECD background checks and essential visitors: breast feeding mothers, therapists, early interventionists and special education staff, FOCUS verifiers, and ECECD regulatory staff. All non-essential visitors must be excluded.

**11. Does this apply to FFN providers?**

Yes, all child care providers and household members must continue to test and do so monthly.

**12. How will ECECD monitor compliance?**

ECECD expects all licensed facilities and registered homes to adhere to all health and safety requirements. Through ongoing monitoring, ECECD will review compliance with testing requirements. If a complaint regarding concerns of testing is received by our regulatory office, ECECD will investigate.

**13. Once vaccine is received, do staff need to continue monthly testing?**

Yes, testing must continue for staff who have received the vaccine. Per DOH, having the vaccine does not prevent an individual from contracting and spreading COVID-19.

**14. Are the temperature checks and health screening questions still required upon entry for children? No, only daily wellness checks are required on every child at the facility.**

**15. For those who are on a Conditions of Operation (COO) for COVID-safe practice (CSP) violations, how do the new requirements change group size etc?**

Providers on COO's for CSP violations will be monitored to ensure compliance with the new applicable requirements.



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