

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 August 23, 2021, for all New Mexico Child Care Centers, licensed and registered homes, and early childhood professionals.

Required Practices

- **Parents/guardians may resume entry exclusively for the purposes of pick-up or drop-off under the following conditions:**
 - Limit entry to one parent or guardian;
 - Time spent in facility should not extend beyond that which is necessary for picking-up or dropping-off child(ren);
 - Masks are required to be worn indoors by all parents/guardians;
 - All other parental interactions with staff must remain virtual or outdoors (e.g. – parent-teacher conferences, daily reports, payment processing, etc.); and
 - Ensure physical distancing is maintained
 - All other access to the facility must be limited to essential visitors, which includes breast feeding mothers, parents/guardians seeking services, therapists, early interventionists and special education staff, FOCUS verifiers and FOCUS consultants, ECECD regulatory staff, and practicum students.
 - Providers must conduct **daily temperature** checks and screenings for symptoms prior to entry for non-vaccinated staff and all other essential visitors entering the building.
- **Masks are no longer required outdoors** for staff, children, parents, and essential visitors but are recommended in public places such as parks, etc.
- Indoor mask requirements remain in effect for everyone **age 2** and over.
- Licensed providers may operate at group sizes and ratios according to their licensed Star level
- Providers must conduct daily wellness checks on every child at the facility.
- **Masks are required indoors for all staff**, plus gloves and gowns as needed for wellness screenings of children or health screenings of staff and essential visitors.
- Masks are required for children **age 2** years and older when indoors (except when drinking, eating, or napping)
- **Training on COVID safe practices is required for all staff**, including cooks and transportation staff.
- Good hygiene practices are required, including frequent handwashing/sanitizing
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned often throughout the day and disinfected at the end of each day.



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Continued

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- Providers should not serve 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 **two years** of age and older.
 - Use the vehicle's vents and windows to bring in fresh air and 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.
- **Requirements regarding testing for non-vaccinated staff and practicum students**
 - **Non-vaccinated staff** and practicum students must test for COVID-19 every week. Providers must maintain copies of test results for at least twelve (12) months for review by licensing.
 - **Fully vaccinated** staff and practicum students do not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless they are involved in a rapid response situation.
- Providers must exclude children or staff from the program who have two or more symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or test positive, including those who are fully vaccinated. Anyone who is symptomatic should isolate themselves and seek testing for COVID-19.
- 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-19 infection in the past 90 days). Anyone fully vaccinated who is exposed to a confirmed case should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days after exposure and get a COVID test 3-5 days after exposure; if symptoms develop, they should get tested and self-isolate while waiting for the results.



Resources:

More detailed guidance concerning best practices related to COVID-19 is available from the **New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH)**: bit.ly/nmdoh-march2021 and from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**: <https://binged.it/3fvSta5>

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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