

Interim Guidance for Facilities and Child Placing Agencies Licensed by the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Foster Care Licensing and Background Checks Division.

**Information provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment
(KDHE)**

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This guidance is based on what is currently known about the spread and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The purpose of the guidance is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among childcare facilities, families, and communities. KDHE will provide updated guidance as necessary based on the changing situation. Please check the [CDC website](#) and the [KDHE website](#) (COVID-19 Resource Center) periodically for updated information and guidance for a variety of settings as well as public health and health care professionals. (updated)

This guidance is intended primarily for facilities licensed by DCF (foster homes, child placing agencies, group boarding homes, residential centers, juvenile detention centers). It includes planning and preparedness recommendations that licensees should take now to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the future. The guidance also suggests actions to consider if public health officials determine that COVID-19 is spreading in communities. (updated)

Although precautions are necessary to prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 into communities, care should be taken to avoid stigmatizing individuals who may have been exposed to the virus. Licensed facilities should continue to offer a welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for children and their families.

Precautions taken by licensees should help prevent spread of COVID-19 while minimizing disruption and protecting children, families, and staff.

Planning and Preparedness Recommendations for Licensed Facilities

There are laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States. As the global outbreak continues to evolve, facilities are encouraged to prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks. Licensees should take the following actions **to plan and prepare** for COVID-19:

- **Sources for Information**: Stay informed and know where to go from the most current information. Sources of accurate information include the CDC, KDHE and your local county health department.
 - Share the following [CDC fact sheets](#) and poster with families of children in care and staff:
 - [What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019pdf icon](#)
 - [What the public should do to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the United States](#)
 - [Stop the spread of germs – help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19](#)
 - Share the following CDC fact sheet with families of children in care and staff who recently traveled back to the United States from China: [Travelers from China arriving in the United States – health alert](#)
- **Emergency Plans**: Develop or update emergency preparedness plans to address possible disruptions. in learning and program operations.
 - Identify critical functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage in the event of staff absences or closure.
- **Policy for Ill Residents and Employees**: Review your policies for the exclusion of sick children and staff.
 - Make sure that staff are aware and follow agency policies for sick children.
 - Develop flexible sick leave policies that encourage staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members.
 - Review children’s files and update contact information, including current case manager and necessary child placing agency staff.
 - Make plans for the isolation and supervision of children.
 - Implement monitoring systems to track staff absences.
 - Understand the usual absenteeism patterns for your facility.
 - Alert your local health department about large increases in absenteeism due to respiratory illnesses.
 - Follow existing procedures for reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses among children and staff, including hand washing and cough etiquette (coughing and sneezing into your elbow).

Recommendations for Facilities in Communities with Laboratory-Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Infection

In addition to the actions listed above, licensees in communities with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases may need to implement further actions in response to the spread of the disease in their community.

- Licensees should plan now for the possibility of suspending intakes/placements to help reduce the further transmission of COVID-19 within facilities or the community. The decision to temporarily suspend intakes/placements should be considered on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with DCF Licensing and public health officials.
 - Consider temporary suspension of intakes/placements of 14 days if a child in care or a staff member were present in the facility prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case.
- Understand that the length (duration), criteria, and public health objective of suspending intakes/placements may be re-assessed and changed as a local outbreak situation evolves. Licensees should follow the advice of DCF and local public health officials.
- If a child in care, staff member or visitor has been confirmed as a COVID-19 case, the licensee should immediately notify and seek guidance from local public health officials to determine when the best course of action for the facility and what additional steps may be needed. Follow the instructions of local public health officials. (New)
- Follow the instructions of local public health officials to determine when children and staff who are well but are sharing a placement with someone with a case of COVID-19.
- Work with local public health officials to communicate about a possible COVID-19 exposure. Communication to placing agents of children in care and to staff members should align with the facility's emergency preparedness plan. When communicating information, it is critical to maintain the confidentiality of any ill child or staff member.
- If a licensee suspends intakes/placements, children and staff should stay home-away from gatherings, crowds, and other social settings. (New)

Recommendations for Child Placing Agencies

Child Placing Agencies should review and update, as needed, their current crisis management plans and develop contingency plans to deal with possible disruptions in child placing activities and to cover staff shortages due to illness. These plans should be shared with clients, foster families and staff.

Records of children in out of home placement, foster families, clients and staff should be reviewed and updated. Be sure that current contact information and health histories, as required, are available.

Review and revise, if needed, sick leave policies to remove barriers to staff staying home when sick or to care for a sick family member.

Recommendations listed on the CDC and KDHE websites should be followed for staff members with illness, preparedness for business places, and for any information provided to foster families to reduce the spread of illness and measure to take if illness occurs.

Required Updates: COVID-19 Operational Policy and Procedure for Licensed 24-Hour Care Facilities: (New)

In an ongoing effort to reduce the spread of the infection disease, corona virus, all licensed 24 hours care facilities licensed by DCF Foster Care Licensing shall review and updates the facilities policies and procedures. All policies updates shall be submitted to the department for review and approval.

- **Screening and Monitoring:** (New)
 - Screening and monitoring for signs and symptoms of illness have always been a part of maintaining a healthy and safe environment. Screening should happen prior to entry and on an ongoing basis for all children and staff. Strong exclusion policies and increased sanitation is essential. These provisions are in place in order to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

- **Daily Routines - Recommendations for Preventing the Introduction of COVID-19 Into the Facility:** (Updated 3/8/21)
 - Plan to ensure adequate supplies to support hand hygiene behaviors and routine cleaning of objects and surfaces.
 - Post signs outside the entrance restricting entry to anyone with symptoms of illness/respiratory infection.
 - Limit outside visitors. NOTE: This does not include essential staff/service providers maintenance/repair worker. For those individuals, keep a log including date/time, name, and contact information (phone or email).
 - Set up hand hygiene stations at the entrance so that individuals can clean their hands before entering.
 - Work with placing agents/visitors stagger visits to avoid overcrowding in confined spaces. If possible, greet parents at the door or outside.
 - Screen children and staff daily before admittance for signs and symptoms of illness. Ask questions, observe for signs of illness, and check for fever. When checking temperatures, to the extent that you are able, do the following:
 - Perform hand hygiene.
 - Wear personal protective equipment (mask, eye protection, gown/coveralls and a single pair of disposable gloves).
 - KDHE recommends wearing a mask that fits snugly around the nose, mouth, and chin and has multiple layers of fabric. Alternatively, a thinner disposable mask may be worn underneath a cloth face mask to improve the fit. For more information on the mask guidance visit: <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/441/KDHE-Mask-Guidance-PDF---3-1-21>.
 - Be sure to use a fresh pair of gloves for each individual and that the thermometer is thoroughly cleaned in between each check. If disposable or non-contact thermometers are used and the screener did not have physical contact with an individual, gloves do not need to be changed before each check. In non-contact thermometers are used, they should be cleaned routinely as recommended by the CDC for infection control.
 - Individuals who have a fever or other signs of illness should not be admitted.
 - Exclude individuals with history of COVID-19 exposure, including travel within the last 14 days in a state, county or country identified as a hot spot for COVID-19, and those showing signs of illness.
 - Ensure frequent handwashing (<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>) and cough etiquette (coughing and sneezing into elbow).
 - Care for children in small stable groups. Children should be kept in the same group with the same provider/staff every day. Ideally, this means groups of the same 10 or fewer children/staff, if/when possible.
 - Avoid over-crowded conditions.
 - Allow as much room as possible between beds. At least six feet is recommended. Place beds so that children sleep “head to toe” rather than “face to face”.

- Get plenty of fresh air. Children of all ages should have an opportunity for daily outdoor play, weather permitting. Indoor rooms should be well ventilated. To promote air circulation, open windows whenever weather permits or when children are out of the area.
 - Intensify cleaning and disinfection routines.
 - Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games. This may also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
 - Use the cleaners typically used at your facility.
 - Pay special attention to cleaning and sanitizing toys.
 - Stock sinks and restrooms with soap and paper towels.
 - Place boxes of facial tissues and waste containers for used tissues throughout the facility and in places readily accessible to children and staff.
- **Continued Operations - Licensees should take the following steps to help stop or slow the spread of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19: (New)**
 - Stay informed and know where to go for the most current information. Sources of accurate information include the CDC, KDHE, and your local county health department.
 - Develop or update emergency preparedness plans to address possible disruptions in program operations.
 - Determine how to deal with high absentee rates among staff.
 - Identify critical functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage in the event of staff absences or closure.
 - Identify methods to communicate with staff in the event of quarantine.
 - Make sure that placing agents of children in care and staff are aware and follow the policies.
 - Develop flexible sick leave policies that encourage staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members.
 - Understand the usual absenteeism patterns for your facility.
 - Review your health care policies.
 - Review children’s files and update health assessments and contact information.
 - Develop a communication plan with placing agents and staff in the event of a COVID-19 case occurs in a staff or child.
 - Make plans for the isolation and supervision of sick children.
 - Implement monitoring systems to track children and staff absences.

For More Information

KDHE Resources (Updated)

- **[COVID-19 Resource Center](#)**
- **Information Line 1-866-534-3463 (1-866-KDHEINF) Monday – Friday 8 am to 5 pm**
- **• Coronavirus Disease 2019 website (New)**

CDC Resources

- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 website](#)
- [Health Alert Network: Update and Interim Guidance on Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings](#)
- [About Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [What to Do If You Are Sick with COVID-19pdf icon](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Persons Who May Have Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID- 19\) to Prevent Spread in Homes and Residential Communities](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), February 2020](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travelers](#)
- [Do Your Part. Slow the Spread of Germspdf icon](#)
- [Don't Spread Germs at Workpdf icon](#)
- [Stay Home if You're Sickpdf icon](#)

Other Federal Agencies and Partners Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

- Hand Washing: A Powerful Antidote to Illness: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Hand-Washing-A-Powerful-Antidote-to-Illness.aspx>
- Reducing the Spread of Illness in Child Care: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Prevention-In-Child-Care-or-School.aspx>
- Germ Prevention Strategies: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Germ-Prevention-Strategies.aspx>
- When to Keep Your Child Home from Child Care: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx>

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education

- Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standardsfor Early Care and Education Programs: <https://nrckids.org/CFOC>