

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 March 29, 2021, for all New Mexico Child Care Centers, licensed and registered homes, and early childhood professionals.**

Required Practices

- **Licensed providers may return to group size and ratios according to their licensed Star level.**
- Providers must conduct **daily temperature checks and screenings for symptoms** prior to entry for staff and other essential visitors entering the building. Essential visitors include breast feeding mothers, therapists, early interventionist and special education staff, FOCUS verifiers, and ECECD regulatory staff.
- Providers must conduct **daily wellness checks** on every child at the facility.
- **Masks are required for all staff**, gloves and gowns as needed for wellness screenings of children or health screenings of staff and essential visitors.
- **Mandatory mask wearing** for children over the age of three (unless drinking, eating, or napping).
- **Mandatory training for all staff**, including cooks and transportation staff, on COVID safe practices.
- **Frequent handwashing.**
- **Clean and sanitize frequently** touched surfaces throughout the day and disinfect at the end of each day.
- Children must maintain at least three (3) feet of **physical distance**, including during naps, when possible. Mats should be placed head-to-toe.
- Providers must **eliminate 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 over three years of age.
 - ◆ Use the vehicle's vents and windows to bring in fresh air, 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.
- **All staff must test for COVID-19 monthly.**
 - Providers must **exclude children or staff from the program who have two or more symptoms** consistent with COVID-19 and/or test positive.
 - 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 in the past three months).

Resources:

More detailed guidance concerning best practices related to COVID-19 is available from the New Mexico Department of Health: bit.ly/nmdoh-march2021.

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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