

## **Guidance for Child Care Providers**

Thank you so much for the critical role you are playing in our state's efforts to protect the health and safety of our families. As we face the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize that many of you are serving as first responders within your communities and bear the great responsibility of continuing to provide essential care to children. We are grateful for your commitment to ensure that our emergency services as well as other front-line staff involved in this provision of basic needs have access to child care during this time.

We recognize the challenge of balancing the guidance recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19, along with the need to provide essential child care to the families that rely on your services.

### **If Remaining Open**

South Dakota Child Care Services is closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and guidance being distributed, then sharing that guidance with child care providers. For centers that remain open, we encourage you to adapt your services setting as much as possible to align with Department of Health and/or Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. In addition, centers should follow these guidelines:

- Encourage your staff and community members to protect their personal health;
- Educate your child care community and staff of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
- Require employees and children to stay home when sick and go home if they become sick;
- Limit families, events, or gatherings that require close contact and stagger incoming and outgoing children as much as possible;
- Have staff and children wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth
- Practice frequent facility cleaning. Particularly mouthable toys, any contact surfaces touched by children as per regulations. Clean and disinfect object and surfaces that are frequently touched such as door handles, counters, handrails, sinks and drinking fountains, bathrooms, or anything handled frequently.
- Adhere to social distancing – at least 6 feet apart. This can be challenging in child care but help children know the seriousness of these requirements and ways they can succeed at doing this. For example, put tape on the floor to outline “Julie’s space,” allow only one classroom of children outside at a time, etc.
- Conduct regular health checks of staff and children to look for symptoms of sickness or fever. Separate symptomatic individuals until they are picked up from the facility

Understanding this may be very challenging, we ask that child care centers only remain open if they can adhere to these guidelines for protecting vulnerable populations.

### **Child Care Assistance**

We are also appreciative of the child care providers that serve approximately 3,000 children in South Dakota's child care assistance program. Temporary program modifications will be implemented again this week to assist families and providers during this challenging time.

At this time Child Care Services does not expect a disruption in payments made to child care providers.

Child Care Services will continue to communicate through email as information becomes available.

## Resources

- The Small Business Administration has a disaster fund: [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster) or call the SBA at 1-800-659-2955
- The Reemployment Website (formerly Unemployment): <https://dlr.sd.gov/ra/default.aspx>.
- The Department of Health Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response has some supplies (no bleach) to support businesses. Contact the Office at <https://doh.sd.gov/providers/Preparedness/>
- Information on COVID-19 and resources like self-isolation and monitoring: [covid.sd.gov](http://covid.sd.gov)

On behalf of the entire state, thank you again for your efforts and diligence to serve our communities and protect those in your care during these unprecedented times.