

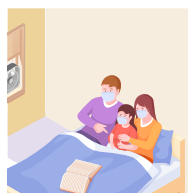
QUICK GUIDE: Help Protect Your Early Care and Education Program From COVID-19 and Other Infections

As an early care and education (ECE) provider, you can slow the spread of infections, such as COVID-19, to help protect children, families, and staff. To support healthy learning environments, CDC recommends ECE programs have everyday strategies to prevent the spread of infections as part of your normal operations, such as [promoting vaccination](#), [staying home when sick](#), [optimizing ventilation](#), [washing hands frequently](#), and following all rules on regular and consistent [cleaning](#), sanitizing, and disinfecting.

Everyday actions to prevent infections:



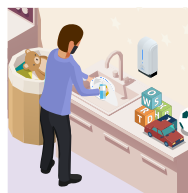
A. Before Drop-off: Encourage families to monitor children at home for signs of infectious illness, including COVID-19. Children and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.



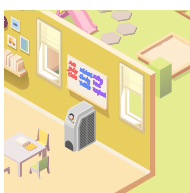
B. Educate Families: Educate families about when to keep their child home, such as when the child is sick.



C. Vaccination: Staying up to date on [routine vaccinations](#) is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. For COVID-19, [staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations](#) is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease. Encourage staff, children, and families to get vaccinated as soon as they can.



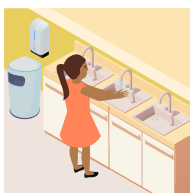
D. Cleaning and Disinfecting: Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces such as toys, door handles, tables, faucets, and drinking fountains regularly. Disinfect when someone is sick. Carefully follow rules for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting when diapering and feeding infants.



E. Ventilation Systems: Optimize ventilation systems by repairing, upgrading, and replacing Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. Consider purchasing MERV-13 air filters and portable air cleaners.



F. Personal Belongings: Keep each child's belongings, including masks and toothbrushes, separated. [Follow guidelines for safe toothbrushing in group settings.](#)



G. Hand Hygiene: Wash hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Thoroughly dry hands after washing. Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.



H. Isolate a Sick Child: Plan to have an isolation room or an area you can use to isolate a sick child or staff member. Make sure isolated children still have adult supervision.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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Consider adding and layering COVID-19-specific prevention strategies when your local [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) increase, particularly if they are medium or high, or if you are experiencing an outbreak in your program. These prevention strategies could include wearing [masks](#) correctly and consistently.

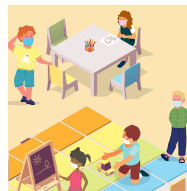
Refer to [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#) for more in-depth information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other infections in the ECE setting. This CDC guidance is meant to supplement—not replace—any federal, state, tribal, local, or territorial public health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which ECE programs must comply.

Layered Prevention Strategies to Consider During Medium or High [COVID-19 Community Levels](#)*:

*If the ECE program is experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, they can consider taking additional actions, even if their COVID-19 Community Level is low.



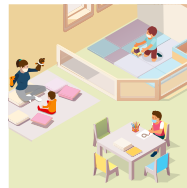
I. Drop-off/Pick-up: Stagger child arrival, drop-off, and pick-up times or locations and prioritize outdoor drop-off and pick-up if possible.



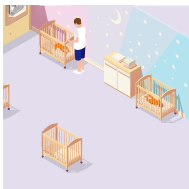
J. Masks: When COVID-19 Community Levels are high, everyone 2 years of age and older should wear a well-fitting mask that covers the nose and mouth, except when eating or sleeping. At all levels, choose masking based on individual risk or place (e.g., nurse's office).



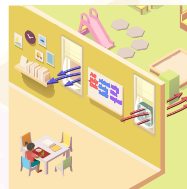
K. Mealtimes: Eat meals outdoors or in well ventilated areas while keeping physically distanced as much as possible.



L. Reduce crowding: Modify learning stations and in-classroom activities, use available space, and stagger schedules to have fewer children in each area as much as possible.



M. Nap Time: At nap time, ensure mats or cribs are spaced out as much as possible and have children sleep head to toe.



N. Ventilation Improvements: Use as many ways to bring in fresh air or improve air filtration as possible, such as opening windows, going outdoors, using child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows, or using portable air cleaners with HEPA filters when feasible and safe. This also may include opening windows on ECE transportation vehicles.



O. Outdoor Play Spaces: Being outdoors reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19. Prioritize outdoor activities whenever possible. Avoid crowding. Follow routine cleaning of outdoor areas.



cdc.gov/coronavirus