

COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Facilities

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)/Maryland Department of Education (MSDE)

On May 19, 2021, we released the Maryland Department of Health (MDH)/Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) updated COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Facilities. Below is further clarification regarding parent visitors, field trips and commencement events.

The guidance can be found at:

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/covid_guidance_full_080420.pdf

Parent Visitors

The Guidance discusses limiting any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or Organizations. The MDH/MSDE continues to recommend that only essential visitors who must perform essential functions for a child in care or the childcare program should enter the childcare facility. Essential visitors include:

- Direct service providers such as support professionals, paraprofessionals, therapists, early intervention specialists, and others with specialized training/certifications who provide services for children with disabilities and special needs;
- Childcare licensing specialists when monitoring compliance with licensing regulations;
- Parents/guardians in certain specific situations (ex. breastfeeding);
- Maintenance workers servicing the building/home (ex. HVAC, plumbing)

However, the MDH/MSDE understands the importance of parent/guardian engagement and recognize that COVID-19 case rates are dropping and there are increasing numbers of adults vaccinated. Therefore, childcare programs may choose to allow 1 parent/guardian to accompany their child(ren) to the classroom at drop off and also pick up their child(ren) at the classroom at the end of the day IF the program is able to ensure that the other children in the classroom are appropriately supervised and that all parents/guardians:

- Have a negative temperature and symptom screening upon arrival to the building;
- Consistently wear a face covering;
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet from all staff and children at all times; AND
- Do not remain inside the building for more than 15 minutes total in one day.

It is the responsibility of the childcare program to monitor this procedure.

Field Trips

The guidance states that indoor field trips are not recommended. Outdoor field trips are allowable if they are limited to one cohort at a time and there is no mixing or interaction with

any persons outside the childcare program (e.g., nature walks). The same guidance for wearing face coverings and physical distancing at the childcare program applies on field trips.

Culmination Events

The Guidance discusses limiting any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or Organizations. The MDH/MSDE continues to recommend childcare programs continue to find the safest way to celebrate the culmination of children's preschool or kindergarten experience. For example, a program may want to hold a virtual event. A program may want to schedule an event for one family and the child at a time.

If childcare programs would like to hold a culmination event for children and their families, they may hold an event for a limited number of persons outside. Events should include staff and children from only one cohort/classroom at a time. The number of family visitors should be limited, and family members should sit together with at least 6 feet distancing between family groups. All participants must follow the additional recommendations in the guidance, including use of face coverings, and staying home when sick.