
Child Care During the Pandemic
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated June 1, 2022

Providers

Access to Child Care

Q: Who can access child care?

A: Any parent may access child care.

Q: If my jurisdiction has implemented stricter guidance than the state, can I operate my child care with the guidance given to the rest of the state (e.g, serve all parents, increase capacity, etc.)?

A: MSDE provides guidance based on MSDE/MDH guidance found here: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs>. However, child care programs must follow their local jurisdiction's restrictions if more stringent, including following guidance from their local health and education offices.

Q: I have not reopened. How do I reopen?

A: Family and Center-based child care programs interested in reopening may contact their licensing specialist.

Operating a Family or Center-based Child Care Program

Q: How do I create a plan to safely reopen and operate my family or center-based child care program?

A: The [COVID-19 Maryland Child Care Build-A-Plan Tool](#) helps center-based and family child care providers develop a plan for their program to follow state regulations and guidance, use best practices to limit the spread of COVID-19, and make decisions that are feasible and work best for their program. The Build-A-Plan Tool guides providers through different areas of health and safety practices, provides concrete guidance and examples of how strategies can be implemented, and generates a customized PDF document to share with staff and families. To create your own plan, please go to: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/5782461/Maryland-Child-Care-COVID-Response-Preparedness-Plan-copy>

Q: How can I purchase food and supplies in bulk?

A: The Maryland State Department of Education has worked with several other agencies to connect with many of the large grocery stores and big box stores across Maryland to request

assistance with child care providers having access to purchasing above the limits on certain items and to have access to stores during non-peak hours. Some of the big box stores have also agreed to allow child care providers to use the store without a membership. Most of the stores contacted are willing to work with child care providers, but in different ways. Please use this [letter](#) to contact the manager of your local store to explain the letter and discuss the options they have for you to purchase needed food and supplies. You must have your child care license or registration in addition to the letter when going to the store.

Q: How do I get Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other medical and emergency supplies?

A: Providers should purchase medical and other emergency supplies through regular purchasing practices and supply chains.

Q: Are there capacity limits in child care?

A: Yes. Class sizes in child care programs should follow the ratios in COMAR as long as they can continue to follow the MSDE/MDH health and safety guidance. Previous restrictions due to the pandemic have been lifted.

Q: Can I provide unlicensed friend and neighbor care in my home?

A: No. However, a family child care home is not required to be registered if the provider is (a) a relative of each child; or (b) a friend of each child's parent or legal guardian and the care is provided on a non-regular basis of less than 20 hours a month (COMAR 13A.15.02). Family and friend providers wishing to continue to provide child care services should contact their regional licensing office to become a licensed family child care provider. Information on licensing can be found here: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing>.

Q: What health and safety guidance should I follow?

A: All child care providers must adhere to the MSDE/MDH guidance based on CDC guidance, which can be found on our website: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs>.

Q: Can I accept children in the Child Care Scholarship program?

A: Only licensed child care programs participating in Maryland EXCELS may accept vouchers from families in Child Care Scholarship program, and the program must be at Levels 3, 4 and 5 receive tiered reimbursements. Unfortunately, MSDE does not have funding to expand the child care scholarship program for school age students, regardless of whether they are from income-eligible families. If school-age children need child care during the school year, the child care scholarship can only be used for before and/or after school care. Only a 1 Unit or 2 Unit child care scholarship will be issued for school-age children during the school year. To find out more about the Child Care Scholarship program, see

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>.

CARES and Other Pandemic Relief Funds

Q: Will I receive a 1099 for Child Care Stabilization Grant funds, and do I need to pay state and federal taxes on this income?

A: Yes, you will receive a 1099 for the pandemic relief grant funds. Child care providers that receive a grant have a reporting obligation on Form 1099-G if the amount is above \$600. Therefore, you would need to file 1099-Gs to avoid penalties for failure to file (Internal Revenue Code Section 6721) or failure to furnish (§6722).

Additional Information

Q: Where can I find additional information?

A: Additional information can be found on our website <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org>. You may also e-mail us at earlychildhood.msde@maryland.gov or call us at 410-767-0100.