Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Child Care
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated October 15, 2020

Providers

Access to Child Care

Q: Who can access child care?
A: Any parent may now 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 local jurisdiction restrictions if more stringent, including 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 and complete a Child Care Verification of Reopening form.

Operating a Family or Center-based Child Care Program

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 use their $800 or $1,600 grants to purchase medical and other emergency supplies through your normal purchasing practices and supply chains. The federal process for ordering cloth face masks is open for all organizations/facilities. It is not necessary for entities to reach out to local Emergency Management offices as they can go directly to the established website to submit orders without an approval authority. Feel free to widely distribute the link below to those in your jurisdiction looking to order cloth face masks.
https://asprwgpublic.hhs.gov/aspcc/facecover/Pages/default.aspx

Q: Are there grants to help new programs purchase cleaning and PPE supplies, as well as ongoing disinfecting?
A: Yes. New programs will receive a one-time grant of $800 for family child care providers and $1,600 for center-based child care providers. The last day to qualify for these grants is October 31, 2020. Please note, it may take up to four weeks to receive the grant payments.

Q: Are licensed child care programs now opening eligible for the $2,000 grants that were given to EPCC providers previously?
A: No. These grants were only available to providers who were approved to serve essential persons as of April 24, 2020.

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.

Q: Can I provide unlicensed family, 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: Can I serve the maximum group size in spaces in large rooms sectioned off by half-walls, partitions, and other barriers?
A: Yes. You may use large rooms sectioned off by half-walls and other barriers if that is how you operated previous to COVID-19. You must continue to adhere to MSDE/MDH guidance. Children in these classrooms should be kept away from the half-wall and other barriers separating the classrooms as often as possible so there is minimal contact.

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.

Additional Information

Q: Where can I find the plan for child care in Maryland during the COVID-19 pandemic?
A: Maryland Together: Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Child Care can be found at https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org.

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.