

Department of Human Services Provides Guidance for Parents with Children Returning to Child Care

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Human Services (DHS) today released a [Frequently Asked Questions guide](#) for families in need of child care and parents with children that will be returning to a child care facility in counties moving to the yellow or green phase of reopening. DHS has [previously](#) issued guidance to child care providers in counties that have moved to the yellow phase.

“As parents return to work and child care opens more broadly, there is likely some anxiety about broadening their children’s social circles. We want to be sure that we are providing the most up-to-date information for families who need child care during this health crisis,” said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. “We know that essential workers and parents whose offices are reopening still need to have a safe place for their children to go while they are at work, and we are committed to helping parents and reopening child care providers navigate this new normal.”

All child care facilities that reopen must closely follow [CDC guidelines for child care centers](#). For those counties still in the red phase, all child care facilities operating outside a residence are required to submit a waiver to DHS’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) if they intend to remain open.

Workers who need child care in yellow and green-phase areas can find child care options here: www.findchildcare.pa.gov. Child care facilities in this phase are able to, at their discretion, open without a waiver. Families who need assistance paying for child care can apply for Child Care Works, Pennsylvania’s subsidized child care program at www.compass.state.pa.us or by contacting the Early Learning Resource Centers that serves their community at www.raiseyourstar.org.

All child care staff, regardless if they are in a red, yellow, or green-phase county, are required to wear masks. Children and youth do not need to wear cloth face coverings in child care, youth programs, or camps. Face coverings for children are still recommended by the CDC when feasible, especially for older youth, particularly in indoor or crowded locations. Children will be screened during drop off, which may require having their temperature taken to ensure they are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the facility. Parents will be notified and advised to seek medical attention should a positive COVID-19 case be confirmed at a child care facility.

Parents who are concerned about the health and safety of their child while in care or whether their child care is following CDC guidelines can contact [OCDEL’s Child Care Certification Regional Office](#) in their community to report concerns.

The Wolf Administration is supporting child care providers affected by COVID-19 as they prepare to reopen or expand operations. Recently, a first wave of \$51 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act [was announced](#) to help child care providers as they reopen. A second wave of this funding will be issued later in the summer following [completion of a study](#) by OCDEL and Penn State Harrisburg’s Institute of State and Regional Affairs examining the effects of COVID-19 on child care providers.

Visit the PA Department of Health's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.