

REOPENING CHILD CARE IN ILLINOIS:

More Children and Families Will Be Returning to Child Care in Phases 3 & 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan

Greetings Illinois families of young children,

On Tuesday, May 5, 2020, Governor JB Pritzker released the [Restore Illinois Plan](#) which details a phased approach to allow for a safe re-opening of Illinois. As Illinois reopens and many residents begin to return to work, child care programs are encouraged to reopen to serve families as part of Phases 3 and 4 of the reopening plan. While some of you served as essential workers and never stopped sending your children to child care settings, the guidance may be new for others. We have created this document with responses to frequently asked questions to keep you informed about what the next phase of Illinois' reopening will look like in regards to child care.

Is it safe for my child(ren) to return to child care?

- Emergency Child Care Programs that remained open since March to serve the children of essential workers have been following [Guidance for Childcare Programs](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and [Daycare Guidance](#) issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to keep everyone safe. Children's safety is our main priority. Therefore, child care centers and homes opening in Phase 3 and 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan have been advised to follow all safety guidelines from the IDPH and CDC.
- To date, Illinois has not seen significant transmission of COVID-19 in child care settings, which is encouraging evidence that child care can be provided safely. To ensure continued safety within child care programs as we reopen, [Reopening Child Care in Illinois Guidelines](#) have been developed and shared with providers across the State. A [Resources to Support Providers through COVID-19](#) webpage has also been created to support providers as they reopen.
- We ask that families keep playing their part to maintain compliance with ongoing public health guidance--using face coverings, washing hands regularly, and practicing social distancing. The CDC's, [Keep Children Healthy During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#), has additional information for supporting children's safety.

What should I expect? What safety measures are in place for my child(ren) to return to child care?

- Listed below are some of the new safety measures you may see at your child's program. For more detailed information, refer to the [Reopening Child Care in Illinois Guidelines](#).
 - Adjusted pick-up/drop-off procedures: Child care homes and centers may limit the number of adults who drop off children and/or have a staggered timeline for families to limit the number of people present at any one time.
 - Daily health checks for all children, caregivers, staff, and visitors: You may be asked questions about how you and your child(ren) are feeling and have your temperatures taken. Anyone showing signs of illness or having a fever of 100.4° or above will be asked to stay home to ensure the safety of everyone.

- Providers will be sanitizing high touch areas more often to lessen the potential spread of germs.
- Face coverings will be worn by all staff and children over the age of 2 to the extent possible. You will also be asked to wear a face covering when entering the center or home.
- Preparedness plans: Programs will be expected to have a plan in place in the event that a child or staff member becomes sick.
- Additional center-based guidelines: Staff will be limited to working with one group of children. Playgrounds can only be used by one group at a time with time provided to sanitize equipment between groups. Children and staff may either change shoes upon arrival or wear shoe coverings while indoors.
- Child care capacity guidelines:
 - Homes: As child care homes normally operate at a smaller capacity, they can return to their regular minimum child capacity based on their licensing and staff (3-10 children), while still implementing recommended safety measures.
 - Centers: Child care centers will reopen in phases with enrollment limitations, which includes a limitation of 8 infants and 10 children during the initial 4 weeks. See the [Restore Illinois Child Care Guidelines](#) for detailed information.

How can I help my child(ren) with this transition?

As child care reopens children will need support in understanding and navigating the changes before they return to care. Children should know they may have new friends, they (when appropriate) and their teachers will be wearing masks, and they may have a different schedule/routine. Children will also spend more time washing their hands and keeping their space clean. We have included below several resources that can help to support you and your children at this time.

- Children and their friends, new and old
 - [Being or welcoming a new friend](#) (Daniel Tiger)
 - [Staying connected with old friends](#) (Sesame Street)
- Understanding mask wearing
 - [Social Story: We wear mask read aloud](#) (YouTube)
 - [Social story about social distancing](#) (YouTube)
 - [Printable story: Seeing people wear masks](#) (available in Spanish)
- Different schedule/routines
 - [Helping children cope with change and stress](#) (Bright Horizons article)
 - [Interactive activities and article](#) (Sesame Street)
- Handwashing and staying healthy
 - [How to wash your hands videos and activities](#) (Sesame Street)

For more resources, the Governor's Office of Early Child Development created an [Emotional Well-Being Toolkit](#) and a [COVID-19 for Families web page](#) with resources for children, families, and caregivers.