

Department of Children and Families
Office of Child Care Regulation
COVID-19 Webinar
Questions and Answers
Updated Aug. 17, 2020

| Provider Question | Department Response |
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| Licensing Standards | |
| When are providers required to report positive COVID-19 cases to the health department/child care licensing? | Due to the nature of the current pandemic, the department is requiring a heightened level of reporting practices on the part of the provider. One confirmed positive COVID-19 case is considered a serious reportable disease, and must be reported to the local health department and the local child care licensing office. If a child care facility, licensed family day care home, large family child care home, or registered family day care home has a confirmed case of COVID-19 for a child(ren) or child care personnel, the provider must report immediately to the local health department, staff, and parent of the enrolled children. Additionally, within one business day the provider is responsible for reporting the incident to the local child care licensing office. (For registered family day care homes, program office must be notified). Confidentiality must be maintained at all times; therefore, providers must not divulge any personal information about the individual who has tested positive and must only include the following information when reporting to child care licensing: Name of provider; DCF license ID number; Date of positive test; Date individual was last in the facility/home; and Date the local health department was notified |
| If I have school age children participating in my program full day as part of their virtual learning, will the screen time limit be extended? | The Department will not cite for the electronic media limit under these circumstances. Licensing staff will make note of the number of school age children observed completing virtual schooling if that activity is ongoing during licensing inspections. |
| When will DCF reopen? in May? | DCF has not closed. Some employees are currently working from home and some are still working in the office. Licensing counselors are still conducting on-site inspections for renewals, complaints, and school readiness. |

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| <p>If someone is out due to furlough and it's been more than 90 days. Do I have to resubmit their background check?</p> | <p>A furloughed employee has not been terminated; they are temporarily on leave due to COVID-19 and are expected to return to work once the operation of the business resumes which must be documented in the personnel file as leave. It is not considered a "break in service;" therefore, the employee will not need to be rescreened prior to returning to work so long as they remain on the provider's roster in the Clearinghouse.</p> |
| <p>We have 10 classes and a three-hour school day to have playground time. We have always had at least 30 minutes per age group. Now, in order to get everyone through and the playground cleaned in between, their time will be significantly less. Is there a time minimum that children must go out?</p> | <p>The licensing rule states outdoor activities must occur "a minimum of twice per day, weather permitting"; however, if your program does not operate a full day then once per day would be sufficient.</p> |
| <p>For monthly fire drills, if we are currently closed, do we just document on the records that we were closed at this time? My license professional has communicated with me and is aware that we are closed.</p> | <p>Correct, providers will not be responsible for completing fire drills during the months that the program is non-operational. Providers must document on the fire drill log the dates that the program was non-operational.</p> |
| <p>Are a second pair of shoes needed for students and staff?</p> | <p>There is no licensing requirement for having two pairs of shoes for students and staff.</p> |
| <p>What are your suggestions for parents that would like to join into your school? What prevention should we follow, or do you think it is safe at this time?</p> | <p>Enrollment practices are an individual business decision. Please review guidance provided by the CDC and local health department for additional suggestions.</p> |
| <p>Do we have to notify DCF if we are going to serve grab and go meals?</p> | <p>No; however, it is highly recommended that providers contact their licensing counselor before adding this service, particularly if the program has not previously offered food services as additional rules may apply.</p> |
| <p>Our license expires in September. When are the renewal packages sent out?</p> | <p>Renewal packets are sent out 90 days before the expiration of the license.</p> |
| <p>If our center is currently closed, can we reopen at any time and if so, who can we open for? Can we open to our own currently enrolled children? Or do we open to frontline workers only?</p> | <p>Providers who have chosen to close may reopen at any time; please contact your licensing counselor when you do so to ensure that the database can be updated with an operational status.</p> |
| <p>If the center re-opens and the children do not attend, are we allowed to close due to lack of attendance?</p> | <p>Yes. A provider can choose to temporarily change to a non-operational status at any time. Please notify your local licensing office when closing and reopening.</p> |
| <p>Still bleach and water or wipes ok?</p> | <p>These are acceptable methods of cleaning and sanitizing. Use as directed by the instructions for use of the cleaning product or wipes.</p> |
| <p>Can we relax the cleaning rule where we are not allowed to clean with children in the room?</p> | <p>Standards for cleaning have not been relaxed at this time. While children are present in the room, general clean-up may occur as part</p> |

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| | of the daily routine. General cleaning refers to cleaning necessary to maintain a sanitary environment but that does not pose a hazard to children, such as wiping the table after lunch, soaking toys in a tub on the countertop, or sweeping. This does not include cleaning with hazardous materials or any cleaning which poses a risk of slipping or falling. |
| What do you consider to be deep cleaning? | Deep cleaning removes dirt/grime from areas that aren't typically covered in daily general cleaning. Cleaning products for deep cleaning require closer attention to ventilation and safety measures to avoid slipping/falling, irritants to eyes/throat, and other health problems. |
| Any way we can push for Florida Shots to also add child physicals? | The Florida Shots system is housed with the Florida Department of Health (DOH). Please share your suggestion with the DOH at: flshots@flhealth.gov |
| Can we ask parents to sign a waiver if they are bringing children to our center during COVID? | This is an individual business decision. |
| How will it affect our license if we reduce hours of care to avoid combining kids and moving staff around? | Providers may choose to reduce the hours of operation at any time. Please contact your licensing counselor and provide the new hours in writing. |
| Is there a limit of total people per facility? | Providers must not exceed the licensed capacity. |
| I have a question from one of my teachers. How do we serve for family style meals if the children have to serve themselves? | This is part of the USDA Food Program which is administered by the Department of Health. |
| Can you please send us the link to inform parents we are Open? | Please contact your local licensing office to ensure your status, whether open or closed, is known to the Department. Parents that are searching for child care are being directed to the Department's provider search: https://cares.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch |
| Are UV light wands an acceptable way of disinfecting toys & high contact surfaces? | Pursuant to the definition of Sanitation in the child care handbook, the application of a chemical sanitizer or use of hot water/steam are the two methods allowable at this time. However, the Department will research this option further for consideration. If you are considering using UV please contact your local licensing office for additional guidance. |
| How do you handle breaks for employees - bathroom runs for children? | Ratio and supervision must always be maintained. For staff bathroom runs and breaks, another child care personnel who has been screened/trained must cover the room in the person's absence. |
| Before the pandemic, we had a director training. We had a deadline to prepare the outside playground fall zones. Has that deadline extended? | Corrective action timeframes have not been extended at this time. However, if there are concerns with meeting requirements, we encourage providers to discuss this with their counselor. |

| Inspections | |
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| Regarding inspections, does everything apply to family child homes as well? | Yes, all guidelines and policies regarding inspections apply to Facilities and Homes. |
| If the school is closed, is the inspector going to do a site renewal inspection? | Renewal inspections will not be conducted if a provider is temporarily closed. The renewal packet (application and fee) will still need to be submitted within normal timeframes. The provider will be set to Provisional and a renewal inspection will be conducted when the provider reopens. |
| If the center is closed and decides to reopen, will we have to wait for a DCF inspection to reopen or just notify our inspector? | Providers do not need to have an inspection prior to reopening. However, we ask that you notify your local licensing office upon reopening. |
| Training/Credentials | |
| For the 45 hours, the only extension is for the exam portion of the 45 hours? | All DCF online courses are still available. The exams are not currently offered because schools are closed, so there is a six-month extension to complete the exam. |
| Are we saying zoom CPR and first aid is okay? | Yes, this option is best used for renewals not necessarily people that are doing the training for the first time. Keep in mind that the requirement to have someone attest to what you have learned is still in place; however, this can be completed virtually by specific providers. |
| Are there director classes online to become a director? | Yes. Online training information can be found on our website on the Training and Credentialing page at https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/training.shtml |
| What about CDA Renewals? | There will be no delay in reviewing and processing director or staff credentials. Our credentialing staff have continued to process applications without interruption. |
| Please advise date(s) when certain test site(s) will open for the 40-hour testing. | Contact your local Training Coordinating Agency for testing information. Contact information can be found on the Department's website under Child Care Contacts. https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/contacts.shtml |
| Any extension of date regarding expirations of Director's credentials in Summer? | Currently there are no extensions for renewing the staff or director credential. |
| Can you start a new director certification or is it just to finish current ones? | Yes. There are several online director credential classes available. |

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| Is there any contingency for 10-hour in-service hours for furloughed staff? | No. All in-service requirements must still be met at this time. |
| Will September 21st be long enough for exams, or do you think they will get fully booked too quickly? | The Sept. 21, 2020, date for completion of exams is written in the Secretary's emergency order. We will review at a future date to determine if an amendment to the emergency order is needed. |
| Can we ask for training costs to be waived? People are out of work and no Unemployment or PPP yet. How do they pay for the \$10 per course? | Training fees are not being waived. |
| Any delays with the submission of Directors Credential renewals? I have submitted mine which expires in June. | There will be no delay in reviewing and processing director or staff credentials. Our credentialing staff have continued to process applications without interruption. |
| Governor's Executive Order (EO) 20-91 Issued April 3, 2020 – April 30, 2020 | |
| Staying in one area, does that include not going to the playground? | Providers may use their playgrounds, but groups should not be combined on the playground. Create a schedule for groups to use the playground equipment and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched in between groups using the area. See the CDC guidance for further information regarding cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection. |
| As we reopen after the Emergency Order, what are the recommended ratios we stay within? | DCF will update providers with information regarding changes to the Executive Order when we receive it. At all times, providers must comply with the staff-to-child ratios outlined in the statute/rule-handbook. The public health emergency as declared by EO 20-51 remains in place. |
| We had a sheriff come to our door and say we cannot use the playground. What happens if we are reported for using the playground? | Some counties have specific ordinances for their citizens. Providers must follow any local orders that are in place. Please contact your local law enforcement office if you have questions about the ability to use your playground. |
| The Governor's Executive Order expires April 30th? Does this mean that the 10 per classroom is going back to regular capacity? | The Governor has created a task force to help determine the next steps for the state. At this time, the limit to groups of 10 remains. We recommend that providers continue to limit the group size for the time being. |
| If outside schedules are off due to one group outside at a time, is that ok? | Providers should have schedules that reflect the changes made to accommodate the new activity times. |
| Will we get a noncompliance if we are over one or two children in the room? | The recommendation to maintain groups of 10 or less is not a licensing requirement by DCF. |

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| <p>What are people doing at the end of the day with combining?</p> | <p>It is recommended to keep groups separated and not intermingle or combine them. If your program must combine groups due to staffing needs, try to do it in the same way each day using the same staff.</p> |
| <p>Please clarify “to the extent possible.” How are we to decide which children stay and which we can serve? And how long will this be?</p> | <p>“To the extent possible” means to the best of your ability. Each provider is different and will need to evaluate their physical space and staffing to determine how to best implement the recommendations made. Determining who and how many children you can serve is a business decision that will need to be made by each individual provider.</p> |
| <p>When you open do you have a teacher in every classroom so that the group is never combined?</p> | <p>Yes, if possible. If your program needs to combine at the beginning of the day try using the same groupings (i.e., classroom 1 & 2 and classrooms 3 & 4) with the same staff person.</p> |
| <p>Would staff who work in a group home qualify for first responders?</p> | <p>The list of essential workers is included in the Governor’s Executive Order and is provided from the US Department of Homeland Security. Group home staff are considered essential workers pursuant to these documents.</p> |
| <p>For the limitation of group size, how long is that going to be a requirement?</p> | <p>The limitation of group size to no more than 10 is part of the Governor's Executive Order. It is recommended that child care programs continue to limit the group size for the time being.</p> |
| <p>How do we manage siblings in different age groups? If we have a family with an infant, toddler and preschooler - and they are in three different rooms... what happens if they are in contact with the virus?</p> | <p>This is a business decision that a provider would have to make. Licensing ratios will allow for mixed age groups if the provider chooses to keep the sibling group together to limit the number of additional children/staff exposed if the family is exposed to the virus. Consider the development of each child to see if this is appropriate and safe for everyone in the group.</p> |
| <p>Governor’s Executive Order (EO) 20-112 Issued April 30, 2020 Effective as of May 4, 2020</p> | |
| <p>Are providers required to continue with the group size of 10?</p> | <p>Although this is not a licensing standard, the Department recommends that child care programs continue to limit the group size to the extent possible for the time being as a best practice.</p> <p>In addition to the Governor’s statewide EO the Department has learned that some counties have issued local orders that are more restrictive. Providers are encouraged to check for any local orders for your county to ensure compliance.</p> |

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| | Please be advised that local law enforcement (not licensing) is enforcing EO requirements and that a violation of the order is an arrestable offense. |
| Are providers allowed to divide larger classrooms into smaller rooms? If so, what do I need to do? | Yes, this is a possibility if an appropriate stable wall/barrier, as defined in the facility handbook, is used. Please contact your local licensing office for assistance as this would require a licensing visit to remeasure and update your floor plan. Additionally, approval from the fire department would be required to ensure that the newly created rooms have the appropriate ingress/egress for evacuation purposes in case of an emergency. |
| Local Licensing Agencies (LLA) - Broward/Hillsborough/Palm Beach/Pinellas/Sarasota: DCF directly regulates providers in 62 of the 67 counties statewide. The five counties with Local Licensing Authority are Broward, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Pinellas and Sarasota. | |
| We got an email saying that the playgrounds were closed in Pinellas are they now open? | Please contact Pinellas County Child Care Licensing at: 727-507-4857 |
| Our local licensing stated we did not have to conduct fire drills. I'm guessing because of the social distancing rule. Also, the governor has stated we are not allowed to use our playgrounds. | Please contact Pinellas County Child Care Licensing at: 727-507-4857 |
| The annual training for PCLB per year is still being required during your renewal or will that be waived? | Please contact Pinellas County Child Care Licensing at: 727-507-4857 |
| Office of Early Learning (OEL) - VPK/SR | |
| Did I understand correctly, the SR inspection is at the same time as your renewal inspection, so once per year? | Correct, School Readiness inspections occur once a year - for licensed providers this is done during the renewal inspection. |
| Are summer VPK programs allowed under these guidelines? | Please contact your Early Learning Coalition for information on summer VPK programs. |
| How do we find out what schools may be in a 3-mile radius? Our ELC had a provider meeting and they said it would be a good idea to find out SR & VPK providers. Our school is closed however we have some families currently that work as dispatchers, police families and in the healthcare. We would like to help out with referring? | If your local ELC has made recommendations or suggestions, please reach out to them for further clarification. |
| Have you cleared it with VPK and SR that provisional licenses will not delay our applications and contract renewals? | Please contact your local ELC for information on SR contracts. |
| What are the incentives for childcare facilities parents using the first responder's assistance program? | Please visit OEL's website: www.floridaearlylearning.com/covid-19-resources |
| Child Care Food Program | |
| Where can I go to find out about the food program guidelines during this period? | Please contact the Department of Health. www.ccfp@flhealth.gov |

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| Food Program: Can we use previous months % (needy, non-needy, reduced) for reimbursements without filing a waiver. | Please contact the Department of Health. www.ccfp@flhealth.gov |
| Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html | |
| What are we to do if a child or family member is determined to have COVID? Who and how long to quarantine? | If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the child care program, it is recommended that providers contact the county health department for guidance and next steps. Maintaining the same children and staff in each group daily is important so if someone tests positive you will know who was in contact with that person and what areas need to be deep cleaned. |
| What is the position on children wearing masks? | The CDC encourages the use of masks/face coverings if possible. Please note that the guidance states that "cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation." |
| How does the six-foot social distancing rule apply in classrooms? | The CDC's social distancing strategies include staggering playground times, activities, separate groups in a room, and six feet apart at naptime, if possible. Also consider placing children head to toe during naptime to reduce potential for viral spread. |
| If you do curbside drop off and pick up to help prevent parents coming into the facility - have you seen any parent "push back" from this? | The Department is not aware of any providers receiving push back from parents for following the CDC guidance. |
| We need the steps of who we call if we have a suspected exposure to COVID or a positive case of COVID with staff or child. Will we get a handout? | If a case of COVID-19 is suspected in a child care program, providers should immediately notify their local health department as well as parents, staff, and other relevant contacts. In addition, the facility should temporarily close and follow disinfecting procedures as outlined by the county health department and the CDC. |
| Are teachers over 60 expected to work? | The CDC recommends that individuals at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 consult with their doctor to assess their risk and determine if they should stay home or not. |