



COVID-19 Prevention at Early Care and Education Programs Information for Parents & Guardians

Early care and education (ECE) programs, including child care at centers, family child care homes and preschools, are allowed to operate by following the [Guidance for Early Childhood Education Providers](#). This guidance lists rules and recommendations that provide layers of protection to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. ECE providers have been working closely with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to create environments that promote safety for children and staff.

You can help by learning about the COVID-19 safety rules and recommendations, and if your child is old enough to understand, explain what they can expect.

For the safety of everyone, ECE programs require that:

Everyone must wear a mask when indoors.

- All children over age 2 years (24 months), staff, and visitors are required to wear a mask.
 - Masks should be removed during nap time or when children are eating and drinking.
 - Children ages 2 to 8 should be under adult supervision when wearing a mask.
 - Some people should not wear a mask. Children younger than 2 years (24 months) should not wear a mask. People with certain medical or mental health conditions or disabilities should not wear a mask if instructed by their doctor. Mask exemptions at ECE programs that are due to a medical or mental health condition, disability, or hearing impairment must be made by a licensed physician or other medical professional working under a physician license. Self-attestation and parental attestation for mask exemptions are not allowed. Those with a medical mask exemption must wear a face shield with a drape along the bottom to cover the neck area if their condition allows it.
- To learn more about mask wearing visit ph.lacounty.gov/masks.

Children should not attend if they are sick or under isolation or quarantine orders.

- Children who have a fever or show other signs of being sick should not be sent to ECE. For symptoms of COVID-19, see ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare.
- Children may be screened for symptoms and have their temperature taken when they arrive at the ECE program. They will not be allowed to enter if they show signs of being sick. If a child develops symptoms during the day, they will be isolated from others and sent home. Please make sure your ECE provider has your current telephone number in case your child become ill.
- Plan ahead. Have an emergency child care plan in place so that if your child gets sick, they are able to safely stay home.

ECE programs may choose to require additional safety steps

The following steps reduce the risk of COVID-19 through physical distancing, reduced crowding, and increased ventilation. Everyone must follow the rules set by the ECE program. Be sure to check with your child's ECE provider to learn more about the safety steps they have in place.

ECE programs may choose to have:

- **Assigned groups** of children and staff that stay together for most activities throughout the day, including meals and nap times.

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- **Doors and windows open** to increase air flow.
- **Meals and activities outside**, especially activities that have a higher risk of spreading COVID-19. This includes recess and physical exercise, dancing, chanting, and singing.
- **More spacing in classrooms and nap areas.**

How you can help support safety in your child's ECE program

If your child is old enough to understand, tell them what they can expect at their ECE program. This includes explaining that they need to:

- **Wear a mask in crowded outdoor spaces.**
 - This includes while waiting in line to enter, exit, or during recess or meal times when not eating or drinking.
 - Make sure they are wearing their mask properly (see 'Tips on Masks' below).
- **Follow the rules about which groups of children and staff they spend time with.**
 - As well as having assigned groups of children and staff, programs may ask children to sit or stand further apart. They may also have assigned seating especially during activities like eating and drinking when masks are not worn.
- **Keep their distance from others.**
 - Talk with your child about avoiding crowds of other people. They should try to stay at least 6 feet away from others when possible outside the classroom. Show your child what 6 feet looks like.
 - Anytime they are around others and masks are off (such as during meals), they should keep their distance.
- **Practice good hand hygiene.**
 - Everyone should wash their hands often especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Teach children how to wash their hands with soap and water and how to use hand sanitizer properly.
 - Note: Small children should only use alcohol hand sanitizer with adult supervision. This is to make sure they do not eat any or put their hands in their mouth before it dries.
 - Remind them to avoid eating and touching their face with unclean hands.

Tips on masks for children

- The most protective mask is one that your child will be comfortable wearing *over their nose and mouth* at all times indoors. The mask should fit snugly against their nose and chin with no large gaps around the side of their face. It should be made of at least two layers of tightly woven breathable material.
- There are some types of masks that provide higher levels of protection. Learn more at ph.lacounty.gov/masks. Be aware, as the levels of mask protection go up, the harder it can be for your child to comfortably wear that mask all day.
- It is a good idea to have your child test out masks at home to make sure they can breathe comfortably and will be able to wear for the full day at the ECE Program. Have them wear the mask indoors for at least a few hours at a time at home.
- Send your child with extra masks so they can change their mask should it get very soiled or wet.

For more tips, see [Keeping Safe and Preventing Spread for Parents with Children Under 12](#).

Parents and Guardians, learn more about how to reduce your risk and slow the spread of COVID-19 including which situations are riskier, visit ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk.