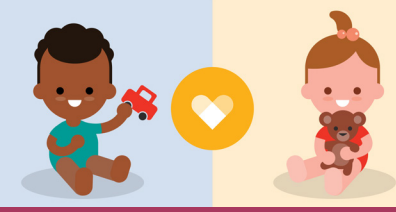


Navigating child care during a public health emergency



As Wisconsin reopens and parents head back to work, families are starting to assess their child care needs. This guide has been developed to help families navigate making decisions around enrolling their child in a group or family child care program, finding safe, high-quality care, and staying safe in the months ahead.

Am I ready to consider out of home care for my child?

The first step is determining whether or not your family is physically and emotionally ready to have your child back in a group or family child care setting. Questions you should consider include:

- Is our household healthy? Are we medically vulnerable in any way?
- How is our state and county doing?
 - Monitor the CDC COVID-19 website and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website for the latest information
- Is child care available to meet my needs?
 - Visit the department's COVID-19 Child Care map
- Will outside child care improve our ability to cope or will it add stress?

I am ready to find a child care program! How will they keep my child safe?

Every child care program is required to have health and safety measures in place and an emergency plan. While interviewing child care programs, questions you should ask, and expected responses, include:

- How many teachers/caregivers and children will be interacting with my child?
 - Expect small groups and limited mixing among groups
- How is the environment prepared to promote social distancing?
 - Expect increased spacing, one or two children per activity, distance during nap time and meals, no activities that may harbor or increase the spread of germs, and outdoor activities to the extent feasible
- What safety procedures are in place to detect and prevent illness?
 - Expect to drop off and pick up children outdoors, family members to wear masks and maintain social distance or stay in car, staff to evaluate and record data about children's health and their own upon arrival and throughout the day
 - Expect routine hand washing, possible use of gloves and/or masks for adults and children over the age of two
- What cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be followed?
 - Expect very frequent cleaning and sanitization
- How will food be prepared and served to ensure safety?
 - Expect staff to prepare and/or distribute separate meals to each child in a sanitary manner
- How will the program communicate any health and safety issues or concerns with me?
 - Expect regular updates that are accessible to parents and families



My child is enrolled in care. How should we prepare to return?

If your child has been enrolled in care before, things may look and feel different. Discuss and plan for the following:

- Assure your child that their teachers/caregivers and friends will be there to play and learn as always. Remind them you will come get them when it's time to go home!
- Changes will be happening; be clear with your child about what to expect. Some examples of what might be different include:
 - Changes to drop-off and pick-up protocols, including temperature checks
 - Removal of shoes from home and no backpacks or other items from home allowed
 - More frequent hand washing
 - Possible wearing of masks or gloves

What might the future look like as we continue to fight COVID-19?

It is everyone's responsibility to help keep our communities safe and healthy. As we continue to navigate this public health emergency, prepare for the following possibilities:

- Keep your child at home if they are sick with any illness.
 - Report symptoms to the child care program.
 - Contact your health care provider for advice on when it is safe to return to child care.
- Understand your child care program's plan for community spread of illness and/or confirmed case exposure.
- Your child's child care program may temporarily close.
 - Confirm payment expectations for families in the event of a closure or extended absence.
 - Talk with your employer about sick leave and telework options if you need to stay home with your child. Consider having a back-up child care plan.



For more child care resources, visit
dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families