

HHS Monitors COVID-19, Provides New Guidance to Child Care Facilities

NEWS RELEASE

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

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AUSTIN – Texas Health and Human Services is providing updated guidance to the almost 17,000 regulated child care operations throughout the state – including new screening requirements for staff and visitors – as the agency continues to closely monitor the evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

“Protecting the health and safety of children in the settings we regulate is paramount,” said David Kostroun, HHS Deputy Executive Commissioner of Regulatory Services. “We are taking these proactive measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 and safeguard children and their families.”

Effective immediately, all current child care providers will implement the following guidance, consistent with new requirements in accordance with state law, federal guidance, and Gov. Greg Abbott’s recent disaster declaration:

- Prohibit any person except the following from accessing an operation:
operation staff; persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff; professionals providing services to

children; children enrolled at the operation; and parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the operation.

- Require pickup and drop-off of children outside of the operation, unless its determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter an operation.
- Before allowing entry into the operation, screen all individuals listed above, including taking the temperature of each person upon arrival at the operation each day, and deny entry to any person who meets any of the following criteria:
 - A temperature of 100.4°F or above;
 - Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and low-grade fever;
 - In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19; is under investigation for COVID-19; or is ill with a respiratory illness; or
 - In the previous 14 days has travelled internationally to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission. For updated information on affected countries, visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/travelers/index.html>
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/travelers/index.html>).
- Ensure that each child is provided individual meals and snacks. Do not serve family style meals.

Because this situation is rapidly evolving, child care providers are highly encouraged to contact the Child Care Licensing (CCL) team at MSC@hhsc.state.tx.us. CCL is prepared to answer questions, provide technical assistance, and grant regulatory flexibility to operations when needed to protect children in care.

Stay up-to-date on the latest guidance to providers by visiting the HHS COVID-19 page.