

To: Indiana School Superintendents and Principals

From: Dr. Jennifer McCormick, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Date: March 24, 2020

Subject: Caring for School Age Children of Essential Workers

States across the country are taking various approaches to support essential workers and their families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Based upon the review of current executive orders and procedures being implemented across the United States, we recommend the following: allowing closed schools (at least one school per Local Education Agency) to provide care for children of emergency workers who are critical to the response of COVID-19. Our recommendation includes first responders, medical professionals, and other professionals whose work is essential for the general community to stay healthy and safe. This includes children of workers who provide access to food and/or work in the general supply chain for goods, services, and other basic needs. Under this order, schools would be encouraged to provide care to, at a minimum, district-enrolled students aged 12 and under who are children of essential workers. (Essential Businesses and Operations as defined in Executive Order 20-08.)

While we may not know children's roles in transmitting the virus, we do know they display similar symptoms if infected. Because of this, we would recommend every location has access to school nurse services. All child care providers should immediately institute the practice of checking the temperature of each child when they enter the child care facility before the parent leaves. If the child presents with a temperature of over 100.4, the child should not remain at the child care facility and return home with the parent. Children who have had symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea should remain home for at least 24 hours after the last episode, and should be fever-free for at least 24 hours without being given fever-reducing medications. Staff should discuss any other potential symptoms the child is experiencing and confirm there is no knowledge of direct exposure to COVID-19. Additionally, school staff should be checked and screened prior to entering the school to begin work. Families should be informed of these procedures in writing.

Schools should provide a safe environment which includes:

- Collecting adequate records for a child's health history, immunization, allergies, and emergency contact information,
- Adjusting their daily schedules to allow for one hour per day for deep cleaning when children are not present using CDC-approved cleaning supplies and other safety supplies,
- Providing adequate supervision by school staff not in high-risk categories for COVID-19 (e.g. 60 years of age) through agencies already contracted by the school to provide school-age programs and services (e.g. YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, AYS, etc.),
- Maintaining groups of eight children or less with two staff members, to maintain 10 individuals for group gatherings,
- Maintaining consistent groupings of children when possible,

- Practicing social distancing between and among staff and children (i.e. minimal physical contact with and between staff and children while providing care and maintaining a safe and appropriate physical distance).
- Keeping groups of students in separate areas of the building, when possible, to reduce contact of large groups. This may include separate entrances, eating areas, and restrooms.

If a positive case of COVID-19 has occurred for a child or caregiver, the facility must temporarily close to facilitate cleaning. Those who are direct contacts should self-isolate. The facility should complete deep cleaning and sanitizing of the child care facility in order to rapidly reopen.

If your school is interested in hosting a child care program for essential workers during COVID-19, please contact Nicole Norrell, FFSA Office Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL) phone (317) 234-3313, or by email Nicole.Norvell@fssa.in.gov.

Guidance for child care from FFSSA and OECOSL can be found at this link:

https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/Child_Care_Updated_Guidance_032020.pdf