



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



## **PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY**

March 13, 2020

### **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Childcare Guidance**

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Today Marin County Public Health [recommended closing schools to students](#) in Marin County for at least two weeks beginning Monday, March 16, 2020. Although we recognize that school closures will have adverse social and economic effects on our community, this decision is informed by increasing community spread of COVID-19 in the Bay Area. Schools offer opportunities for community spread and children coming home from school, including daycare, preschools, and childcare programs, can pose a risk for intergenerational transmission. One of our primary goals is to protect Marin's significant population of seniors.

### **This advisory addresses childcare, including family childcare programs, daycare, preschools, and childcare programs.**

We recognize that 1) some childcare facilities may continue to assemble small groups of students and that 2) some families will need to make alternate childcare arrangements, which can be challenging in this environment.

We recommend childcare administrators and staff review U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidance for school settings](#). The following guidelines are intended to reduce the chance of COVID-19 exposure in these situations:

- 1) Childcare ideally should be provided in the child's home, by household members, without exposure to other children or ill individuals.
- 2) Group childcare should be prioritized for use by essential service employees and those who would otherwise not be able to work.
- 3) Group childcare should:
  - a. Be in stable groups of 12 or fewer children ("stable" means that the same 12 or fewer children are in the same group each day). Children should not change from one group to another.
  - b. If more than one group of children is cared for at one facility, each group should be in a separate room. Groups should not mix with each

other. For example: meals, playground time, and toileting activities should be separate for each group.

- c. Childcare provider(s) should also remain solely with one group of children (providers should not move from group to group or room to room).

4) Infection control measures:

- a. Screen children and staff for fever or cough daily, before entering childcare.
- b. Exclude ill children and employees (those with fever or cough) from the facility.
- c. Any children or staff who develop symptoms should put on a surgical mask, enter a separate room, and be sent home as soon as possible.
- d. Ill children or staff should not return to work or childcare until they are well.
- e. Children and staff should wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (if hands are not visibly dirty) before and after eating, drinking, touching eyes/nose/mouth, toileting or diapering, and physical contact with each other.
- f. Clean high-contact areas and surfaces frequently, using 10% bleach solution or EPA-approved disinfectant, including counters, toys, telephones, and doorknobs. See California Environmental Protection Agency's [guidance on using disinfectants at schools and child cares](#)
- g. Staff and children should practice good respiratory hygiene including coughing/sneezing into sleeve and covering coughs.

During this time, parents should keep children home if they are sick until a fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine; seek medical care immediately if symptoms, such as a high fever or difficulty breathing, become more severe; cover coughs with a sleeve or tissue; keep tissues and “no touch” trash cans close by; wash hands often and keep soap dispensers filled; clean frequently touched surfaces routinely; and if desired, wear a face mask if you are coughing or sneezing. In addition, the CDC has released guidelines for creating a household plan of action related to the virus.

**Additional Information**

World Health Organization (WHO)  
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>

Marin Health and Human Services  
<https://www.marinhhs.org/coronavirus>

Sincerely,

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