

Spanish Summary of City of Austin Guidance for Open Child Care Programs Last updated: July 14, 2020

Child care programs must operate in accordance with:

- This City of Austin Guidance for Open Child Care Programs,
- The [Emergency rules from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#), which include many of the guidelines from the state's [Open Texas Child Care Checklist](#), and
- The [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) released by the Centers of Disease Control.

In addition, child care programs located in the City of Austin must comply with the guidelines in this document. To the extent possible, programs should also follow the recommendations in this document. The latest local information on COVID-19, including local control orders, can be found at this City of Austin web site: www.austintexas.gov/covid19.

GUIDELINES

How to contact Austin Public Health, the local health department

- Child care programs must call the Austin Public Health Nurse Line at 512-972-5560 to report laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 among children or staff.
- Programs may also call the Austin Public Health Nurse Line at 512-972-5560 to ask questions about suspected COVID-19 cases or exposure in child care programs.
- The Nurse Line staff will advise child care programs on next steps regarding COVID-19 cases, suspected cases, or potential exposure.

Notification of COVID-19 Cases

- When a confirmed case has entered a program, communicate with staff and parents about closure decisions, possible exposure, and guidance from Austin Public Health on quarantine or isolation measures.
- Plan to include messages to counter potential [stigma](#) and discrimination.
- Maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Face Coverings

- It is required that the following people wear fabric face coverings:
 - All child care staff
 - Parents and guardians dropping off and picking up children
 - Children over the age of 10

- Face coverings should not be worn by:
 - Children under age 2
 - People who cannot take off the coverings without assistance
- Teachers should use their best judgement to determine if children should remove face coverings when playing outdoors, especially on very hot days

Temperature checks

- Deny entry to any adult or child with a temperature greater than 99.6°F per the City of Austin Medical Authority.
- This temperature threshold, which is lower than that recommended by the CDC, should be followed.

Enrolling New Children in Care

- When enrolling a new child in the program, child care programs shall use the forms in Appendix A to collect information from parent/guardians about whether their child was in care within the last two weeks in another child care program, and about the health and exposure status of their child.
 - It is recommended that the new program contact the program/center the child was in previously to verify whether or not they have had a recent closure due to COVID-19.
- Child care programs shall not begin caring for a newly enrolled child until the criteria on the “Health Screening Questions for Newly Enrolling Children” form in Appendix A is met.

Signs required

- Child care programs shall post:
 - At least one face covering sign at or near each entrance;
 - At least one Austin Public Health “Help Prevent Disease” signs at each entrance and on each restroom door (available for download and print at: <http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Health/General%20Hygiene%20Flyer%20Final2-1-eng-051120.pdf>); and
 - Where information for workers is customarily posted, at least one sign in English and at least one sign in Spanish that explains the requirement to wear a face covering.

Health and Safety Plan required

- Child care programs must prepare and implement a health and safety plan that explains how the program is operating to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.
- An electronic or hard copy of this plan shall be shared with staff, parents, and guardians, or at a minimum, be provided to them upon request.
- Child care programs must post signs displaying the requirements of the health and safety policy or plan at or near each entrance to provide clear notice to employees, customers, and visitors at least of the face covering requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Testing

- It is strongly recommended that staff with new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID- 19 seek a COVID-19 test.
- Persons with health insurance are encouraged to seek testing through their healthcare provider.
- Enrollment for free public testing can be found at www.austintexas.gov/covid19. Click on the “Take a Self-Assessment” link to begin enrollment.

Group Sizes, Gatherings & Events

- It is strongly recommended that child care programs:
 - Not exceed the ratio and group size limits specified in the [Minimum Standards Health Protocols Check List for Child Care Centers](#)
 - To the greatest extent feasible limit group sizes to no more than 10 people, including children and adults
 - Not hold group gatherings, events, or assemblies
 - Not invite outside visitors or guests whose presence or service is not essential

Field trips

- It is strongly recommended that child care programs:
 - Not take field trips to locations where children will come in contact with large groups of people or many people crowded together
 - Consider planning walking field trips rather than trips requiring transport in vehicles
- Walking trips to nearby outdoor natural spaces are a safer option than field trips to indoor locations

Transportation

- If transport is provided, in addition to the state Minimum Standards Health Protocols, it is strongly recommended that staff:
 - Screen all passengers before they enter the vehicle
 - Follow the same screening protocols used for people entering the child care program
 - Follow guidance from the American Camp Association that could also pertain to child care regarding [Transportation To or From](#) programs and [Travel by Bus or Van](#).

Appendix A- Parent verification forms for:

- **Previous Child Care Information for Newly Enrolling Children**
- **Health Screening Questions for Newly Enrolling Children**

Previous Child Care Information for Newly Enrolling Children

Austin Public Health requires that this document be completed when children are being newly enrolled in care with a licensed, registered, or listed child care program located in the City of Austin to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

1. Has your child been in care in another child care program within the last two weeks?

- Yes
 No

2. If you answered yes to question 1, please provide:

Name of the program: _____

Program phone number: _____

3. If you answered yes to question 1, has there been a closure of your child's classroom or the entire child care program due to cases of COVID-19 within the last two weeks?

- Yes
 No

By signing and dating below, I verify that the above information is true and correct, and I give permission for the child care program in which I am enrolling my child/children to contact my child's/children's previous child care provider to obtain information regarding closure due to COVID-19.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Health Screening Questions for Newly Enrolling Children

Austin Public Health requires that this document be completed when children are being newly enrolled in care with a licensed, registered, or listed child care program located in the City of Austin to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

1. **Does the child you are enrolling currently have any signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection or COVID-19, such as cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, muscle aches, loss of smell, loss of taste, vomiting, and/or diarrhea?**

- Yes
 No

If yes, your child may not begin care in this child care program until:

- at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications),
- the individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND
- at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

2. **Has the child had close contact* in the last 14 days with someone who:**

- Has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19?
- Is under investigation for COVID-19, or
- Is ill with a respiratory illness?

- Yes
 No

If yes, the child should not begin care in the program until after completing a 14-day quarantine period from the last date of exposure. If the child becomes symptomatic, the child should not begin care until criteria listed above under #1 are met.

By signing and dating below, I verify that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

* For COVID-19, a [close contact](#) is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.