

Summer 2020 Guidance for Family Child Care Networks & Affiliated Providers: Overview

Note: *This guidance applies to all DOE Family Child Care Networks and affiliated providers that offer year-round services, regardless of the age groups or program models offered.*

Introduction

On Tuesday, July 7, the New York City Board of Health voted to lift the child care closure order, and authorized group child care and school-based child care programs operating pursuant to Health Code Article 47 or Article 43 to resume in-person services beginning Monday, July 13. In response, the DOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is issuing guidance to support center-based programs with re-opening. Per city and state health guidance, **family child care providers are permitted to operate in-person services so long as they are able to do so in a way that is safe and healthy for children and providers. At this time, the DOE is encouraging providers who feel prepared to re-open to do so.** The guidance below is intended to support Networks and affiliated providers that provide year-round services to eligible children and families as providers begin to safely re-open.

This guidance is intended to align to and supplement the current [New York State Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care and Day Camp Programs](#) (“NYS June 2020 guidance”), which is subject to change. **Prior to re-opening, all NYC early childhood programs, including family child care programs, must train their staff in the [NYS June 2020 guidance](#), complete an affirmation online, and complete and post the [NYS Business Reopening Safety Plan Template](#)** (in addition to updating existing safety plan). Networks and affiliated providers should also continue to check www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus for updates, as requirements may change as we learn more about COVID-19 and the best ways to reduce transmission and keep New Yorkers safe.

Many of the typical requirements for family child care programs will remain in place, while others will need to be modified during this time. Networks and affiliated providers should still refer to the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Regulations. However, where expectations differ, Networks and affiliated providers should adhere to this guidance document, the most recent guidance issued by New York State, and the most recent guidance issued by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). **All guidance is subject to revision and approval by City, State and Federal regulatory and funding agencies at any time.**

Additionally, please note:

- While family child care programs affiliated with a DOE Network to provide year-round services may resume in-person services at any time, programs **are not required** to reopen on July 13.
- All year-round programs, including affiliated family child care providers, **should plan to provide some level of in-person early care and learning services this summer**; please review this guidance document for more details.

- The DECE is hosting a [mandatory webinar for all EarlyLearn program and Family Child Care Network leaders](#) **Thursday, July 9 from 10:00-11:30am** to review this guidance and important next steps for programs. You can register for this webinar [here](#); it will also be recorded, and we encourage you to share with all staff.
- The FCCS team is hosting a [mandatory webinar for all Family Child Care Networks](#) on **Friday, July 10 from 1:30pm-3pm** to review FCC-specific guidance and important next steps. You can register for this webinar [here](#).
- As an attachment to this guidance document, we have provided a [Family Schedule Needs Sample Survey](#) for programs to assess their families' needs and interest in **three different learning models**
 - Full-time in-person learning;
 - Full-time remote learning; and
 - Blended learning (a combination of in-person learning and remote learning)

The DECE will share more information in the coming days on how Networks should prioritize children and families for in-person services in the event that it is not possible to provide in-person services to every family that wants it. **Networks or affiliated providers should not communicate to families which learning model they will be receiving until the DECE shares this information on priorities for in-person services.**

- Family Child Care Networks and affiliated providers must carefully review all guidance issued by the DECE. **Affiliated providers must complete a [reopening readiness checklist](#) with a Network staff member prior to resuming DOE-funded in-person services.**
 - If Network is not able to complete these checks, the checklist may be self-certified by the affiliated provider, but it must be submitted to the DECE and Network before in-person services resume.
 - Networks must support affiliated providers in understanding and determining readiness to reopen.
 - All affiliated programs will receive a virtual or in-person visit from a Network staff member over the coming weeks.
- The DECE will release additional guidance to Family Child Care Networks (FCCNs) and affiliated providers in the coming days

The DECE's mission, vision, and commitment to quality, as described in our [Early Childhood Framework for Quality \(EFQ\)](#), will remain the same as we resume in-person services. At the same time, it is our shared responsibility to recognize and respond to the collective and individual trauma experienced by the NYC early childhood community as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the disproportionate impacts that the pandemic has had on Black and Latino/a/x communities. The DECE recognizes that the needs of each family, program, and community are different. Additionally, we know that young children learn through play and in the context of relationships with caring adults. In times of stress and change, it is even more important that we support young children with safe, nurturing and predictable environments. As such, we intend to provide as much flexibility to programs

as possible to decide how services will be structured in an trauma-informed and equitable way, while maintaining and implementing necessary new health and safety standards.

Supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of your staff, children, and families is extremely important during this time. See [here](#) for free digital mental health resources for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. All New Yorkers can also connect with counselors at NYC Well, a free and confidential mental health support service. NYC Well staff are available 24/7 and can provide brief counseling and referrals to care in more than 200 languages:

- Call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355)
- Text “WELL” to 65173
- Chat online at www.nyc.gov/nycwell

We value your input and want to be an effective resource for your program during this challenging time. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact us at fccsupportteam@schools.nyc.gov.

Key Upcoming Dates

- **Tuesday, July 7:** NYC Board of Health votes to lift the child care closure order
- **Wednesday, July 8:** DECE releases two guidance documents to Family Child Care Networks
 - Overview Summer 2020 Guidance for Family Child Care- **this document**
 - [Family Schedule Needs Sample Survey](#)
- **Thursday, July 9:** DECE holds a kickoff webinar for all EarlyLearn program leaders and Family Child Care Network leaders based on content from the documents listed above
- **Friday, July 10:** DECE holds a kickoff webinar for Family Child Care Networks
- **Monday, July 13:** Article 47 and Article 43 child care programs can resume in-person services, if they are able to comply with [NYS June 2020 guidance](#)
- **Monday, July 13:** FCCNs begin the FCC readiness check process
- **Wednesday, July 22 (5pm):** Deadline for programs to apply for [New York Forward Child Care Expansion Incentive Temporary Operating Assistance Program](#) (CARES 2)
- **Wednesday, August 5:** Last day for programs to begin providing in-person services and still be eligible for the [New York Forward Child Care Expansion Incentive Temporary Operating Assistance Program](#) (CARES 2)
- **Thursday, August 13:** Last day for contracted EarlyLearn center-based programs and DOE-affiliated FCC programs to resume providing some level of in-person services, or to seek an exemption from the DECE, to continue to receive funding from the DOE

Key Operational Parameters

Enrollment & Learning Models

- All DOE Network affiliated family child care providers will be expected to provide services, in some form, to **all** eligible children and families **currently enrolled** in their programs. **Networks should not drop any children or families from affiliated provider program’s rosters at this time.**

- **The needs and preferences of enrolled families will likely be different, and the services provided by affiliated providers will need to reflect those differences.** Some families may not be able or ready to send their child to a program for in-person learning; other families may need a full day and full week of care; and then there may be families who are able to accommodate a more flexible schedule.
- Affiliated providers may serve enrolled children and families through **three potential learning models:**
 - Full-time in-person early care and learning
 - Full-time remote learning
 - Blended learning (a combination of on-site and remote learning opportunities)
- In a child’s early years, learning is most impactful when it takes place in person. **All affiliated family child care providers should plan to provide some level of in-person learning services this summer.** We anticipate that most programs will provide a combination of the learning models listed above, depending on families’ needs, group size requirements, and staffing limitations.
- Networks in collaboration with affiliated providers must continue to provide remote learning services to all currently-enrolled children until they resume in-person services. Networks must continue to support affiliated providers and families with remote learning services.
- Affiliated family child care providers that want to be eligible for the [New York Forward Child Care Expansion Incentive Temporary Operating Assistance Program](#) (CARES 2), will need to **apply to the grant by Wednesday, July 22 at 5pm** and plan to resume some in-person services by Wednesday, August 5.
- In order to continue to receive payment from the DOE for contracted services, **Network affiliated family child care providers are expected to resume some level of in-person learning services, or seek an exemption, before August 13.**
- **Affiliated providers that are unable to meet this expectation can request an exemption from the DOE. Exemption requests should be sent to fccsupportteam@schools.nyc.gov.** Possible rationales for being unable to resume in-person services may include:
 - Affiliated provider has no currently-enrolled families who want in-person services at this time
 - Affiliated provider is unable to offer in-person services due to health conditions or other constraints
 - Affiliated provider has facility health and safety issues that will not allow for in-person services (e.g., planned construction that has been delayed due to COVID-19)

- Affiliated provider cannot meet new health and safety expectations due to facility or space issues
- To maximize in-person learning opportunities for currently-enrolled children, affiliated providers may request flexibility in their operating hours for in-person service, **including providing fewer than the usual 10 hours per day**. Affiliated providers should contact Network to request this flexibility and must clearly communicate operating hours to families and the DECE
- **Affiliated providers should provide in-person services to as many currently enrolled income-eligible families as possible**, given family needs, group size requirements and staffing limitations. The DECE will issue guidance shortly on how programs should prioritize children and families for in-person services in the event that it is not possible to provide in-person services to every family that wants it.
- **The DECE will share additional guidance to FCCNs currently operating as DOE Emergency Child Care Networks (FCC-ECCs)** about enrollment implications and next steps.
- **With the support of Networks, affiliated providers should be prepared to implement changes if the public health situation in NYC worsens, and in accordance with State and City guidance.** It is possible that if multiple individuals connected to a specific affiliated provider become ill, or there is a widespread community outbreak of COVID-19, affiliated providers may need to transition to a fully remote learning model for a period of time.

Program Staffing

- **Program staff who are feeling ill should not come to the program.** Affiliated providers should have substitute staff available on short notice if a staff member is not feeling well.
- Affiliated providers will need to create a staffing plan that allows for staffing to be consistent, to the greatest extent possible.
- New health and safety protocols must be factored into each affiliated program's staffing plan, including:
 - Affiliated providers must appoint a staff member to oversee daily staff and child health checks and track all people entering the program.
 - Affiliated providers must identify a staff member to clean and disinfect throughout the day, especially in common areas such as shared bathrooms, onsite playgrounds or outdoor play equipment, and on frequently touched surfaces.
- **Affiliated provider must have the following documentation on-site for all staff:**
 - All affiliated providers must maintain a primary contact number and two [emergency contacts](#) for program staff.
 - Affiliated providers must have documentation on site ensuring appropriate security clearances for all program staff.

- Current Medical Form
- Affiliated providers, program staff, volunteers, families, and essential visitors must read and sign the [Child Care Employee Volunteer, Parent, Child and Essential Visitors Health Screening One-Time Attestation](#)
- Evidence of training in [child abuse and maltreatment identification](#), reporting and prevention.
- At least one person certified in CPR and First Aid must be onsite at all times.
- In alignment with the [NYS June 2020 guidance](#) and DECE policy, maximum group size and staff:child ratios in FCC programs will be as follows, until further notice:

Group Family Day Care Ratio: 2:12:4 (One lead affiliated provider and one assistant provider required)	
Age of Children	COVID-19 Reconfigured Ratio (2:12:3)
Under 2 years (24 months)	2 adults to up to 4 children
2 years to 3 years	2 adults to up to 8 children
School Age	Up to 3

Family Day Care Ratio: 1:6:2 (One lead affiliated provider)	
Age of Children	Min. Ratio
Under 2 years (24 months)	1 adult to up to 2 children
2 years to 3 years	1 adult to up to 4 children
School Age	Up to 2

- **Children should stay in stable groups not to exceed the maximum group size above.** For the most part, there is not an expectation that young children will maintain physical distancing within their stable groups. However, during certain activities (e.g. meals, naptime), NYS health requirements mandate more physical space between children.
- **Adults should maintain a physical distance of 6 feet from each other, whenever possible.** Additionally, adults should avoid congregating in groups, whenever possible (e.g., during drop-off and pick-up routines, staff meetings, and breaks).

- For public health reasons and to support responsive caregiving, children should have consistency in their in-person and remote-learning learning, such that the same staff members are regularly assigned to the same group of children.

Blended Learning

- Depending on families' needs, group size requirements, and staffing limitations, programs may need to offer a **blended learning model** to some currently-enrolled children and families. This could include:
 - Split schedule with **alternating days** (i.e., in-person learning services on Monday and Tuesday and remote learning services on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday); or
 - Split schedule with **alternating weeks** (i.e., one week in-person and the next week remote)
- Remote learning activities can be planned and shared in advance with families and do not need to be delivered live. Please see the guidance [Guidance for FCC At Home Learning](#) for information and suggestions on how program staff can effectively support remote learning. Additionally, [these suggestions](#) can support Network staff and affiliated providers in reflecting on their remote learning experiences to inform their communications and planning. Families are also encouraged to visit the [Learn at Home: Early Childhood](#) for additional resources to support them in engaging their children in fun, educational experiences at home.
- Affiliated providers, with the support of Networks, are expected to have **at least two remote interactions** per week with each currently-enrolled family that is participating in the fully remote learning model (per [this guidance](#)).
- Affiliated providers, with the support of Networks, are expected to have **at least one remote interaction** per week with each currently-enrolled family that is participating in the blended learning model.
- Networks should consider **equipment and materials necessary for remote learning**, and supply materials for affiliated providers and children who may not have these resources at home. Examples may include art supplies, manipulatives, books, etc.

Health & Safety (more detailed guidance to be shared with Networks and affiliated providers in the coming days)

- Programs should review the [DOHMH Reopening Checklist for Child Care Program Guidelines](#), as they will be expected to meet all requirements outlined in this document, in addition to the provisions outlined in Part 416 and Part 417 of the OCFS Regulations Part 416.
- Upon re-opening to provide in-person services (5 to 10 days prior to resuming any child care, **programs should flush all faucets for at least 10 minutes. Flush cold water from all outlets first, and then flush hot water.**

- The following documents should be completed for all children **before resuming in-person learning**:
 - Families must read and sign the [Child Care Employee Volunteer, Parent, Child and Essential Visitors Health Screening One-Time Attestation](#)
 - Families must complete an [Emergency Reservation Form](#) for all children attending the program, prior to resuming in-person services.
 - Programs must have current medical forms on site for all children resuming in-person services. If they do not have a current medical form, **families must complete and submit a [current medical form](#) (within 12 months of the date of entry)**.
 - Proof of completed Immunizations, based on the age.
 - Children must meet at least the [provisional requirements](#) (1 dose from each series) to begin on-site services, and continue to obtain vaccinations based on the “catch-up” schedule.
 - Families must give written consent for program staff to act and obtain appropriate health care in the event of an emergency
 - If applicable, families should provide an individualized health care plan indicating specific emergency medications (i.e., an epinephrine auto-injector, asthma inhaler and/or nebulizer) to be administered for the child
 - If applicable, children must have an [Allergy Response Plan](#) identifying their allergy(ies) and detailing the steps that need to be taken
 - Additionally, the required OCFS enrollment forms must be completed by families. A copy of the forms must be kept on site and maintained at the Network.
- **Staff must wear face coverings at all times** when interacting with children or families onsite, both indoors and outdoors. Reusable face coverings are strongly encouraged as they are best for the environment, most sustainable over time, and easier to disinfect.
- The DECE will share additional guidance in the coming days about children and face coverings.
- Affiliated providers must serve meals non-family style. **No food should be shared.** Recently, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) granted a nationwide waiver for non-congregate feeding which allows CACFP Sponsors to continue serving meals to children and adult participants individually. This option will allow **all currently-enrolled children to continue to receive nutritious and well-balanced meals and snacks daily, even when they are not on-site**. As a CACFP-participating child care program, if affiliated providers would like to use this option to continue feeding their regularly enrolled children, please follow [this guidance](#) for options, how to obtain approval, and general requirements for non-congregate feeding and logistical considerations, and complete [this application](#).

- Affiliated providers must identify a **private, enclosed area for isolating anyone who becomes ill while onsite**. Additionally, affiliated providers must designate specific entrances and exits, and create distance and directional markers inside and outside of the program to support physical distancing.
- **Daily health checks should happen for children, affiliated providers, and program staff before and upon arrival**. Child health checks must be documented and done before families leave in the morning (unless done remotely before arrival). Staff checks should also be documented and completed upon staff's arrival for their shift. Consider using these resources to document the [child health checks](#) and [staff health checks](#)
- If an **affiliated provider, program staff member or enrolled child tests positive for COVID-19**, programs must immediately notify Network, the DOE at fccsupportteam@schools.nyc.gov , and notify the NYC Test and Trace Corps at CovidEmployerReport@nychhc.org with the following information.
 - Full name of individual with positive test result
 - Program name, address, and phone number;
 - Date program was informed of positive test results; and
 - Date individuals with positive test results were last in program building.

Programs must also follow [existing communicable disease reporting processes per DOHMH](#).

- **Upon notification of a positive affiliated provider, program staff or child test result at a contracted program:**
 - The DECE will inform the Network and affiliated provider of any required next steps and will share letter template(s) for the affiliated program to use to notify staff and families (while maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive health information).
 - The Test and Trace Corps will direct any individuals who test positive for COVID-19 to isolate at home, and will also attempt to interview all diagnosed individuals (or their family members, in the case of young children) to identify close contacts who were potentially exposed. These close contacts will be directed to get tested and isolated based on their exposure.
- **There is no testing requirement for affiliated providers, program staff or children who have previously tested positive to return to a program after their quarantine is complete.** However, NYC recommends that all New Yorkers receive COVID-19 diagnostic testing whether or not they have symptoms or are at increased risk. It is not currently recommended that people who previously tested positive get retested, unless advised to do so by public health guidance or their health care provider.
- In the event that a parent/guardian of a child must be isolated because they have tested positive for, or exhibited symptoms of, COVID-19, the parent/guardian must be advised that they cannot enter the site for any reason, including picking up their child.

- If the parent/guardian – who is a member of the same household as the child – is exhibiting signs of COVID-19 or has been tested and is positive for the virus, utilize an emergency contact authorized by the parent to come pick up the child. **As a “close contact,” the child must not return to the program for the duration of the quarantine.**
- If the parent/guardian– who is a member of the same household as the child – is being quarantined as a precautionary measure, without symptoms of the virus or a positive test result, staff should walk out or deliver the child to the parent/guardian at the boundary of, or outside, the premises. As a “contact of a contact” the child may return to the program during the duration of the quarantine.
- If a child or their household member becomes symptomatic for COVID-19 and/or has a positive test result, the child must quarantine and may not return or attend the program until after quarantine is complete.
- Per [State guidance](#), all travelers entering New York who have recently traveled within a state with significant community spread **are required to quarantine for a period of 14 days.**
 - The requirements of the travel advisory do not apply to any individual passing through designated states for a limited duration (i.e., less than 24 hours) through the course of travel
 - The designated states with significant community spread **will be conspicuously posted on [the State DOH website](#) and will be updated weekly.** Programs should check the website frequently as the information will change as often as daily, as rates of COVID-19 transmission increase or decrease.

Network Staffing

- **Networks should plan to continue employing all staff currently on their DOE budgets,** but they may need to make adjustments to their current staffing plan.
- **Network staff are expected to follow the HR policies put in place by their employing program,** including any accommodation processes for staff with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19.
 - Any staff who receive accommodations to work remotely should be tasked with continuing to support affiliated providers remotely, support children and families with remote learning and blended learning models, and other work that may be done remotely. Networks should ensure that any staff working remotely have devices and internet access needed to perform their responsibilities. Networks must contact their budget analyst to determine if they are able to account for these additional expenses using their current budget.
 - Networks may need to reassign tasks to allow staff to continue remote work (which may include remote learning activities) while other staff fulfill in-person responsibilities.

- Networks are not required to provide in-person support to affiliated providers, however Networks must maintain regular communication with affiliated providers and should continue to provide supports remotely (i.e. virtual monitoring checks, coaching, etc.)

Next Steps for Family Child Care Providers

All Family Child Care Networks and affiliated providers should use the guidance above, along with the [DECE Health & Safety Guidance for Family Child Care Programs](#), the [NYS June 2020 guidance](#), and the [DOHMH Reopening Checklist for Child Care Program Guidelines](#) to plan for summer services that will best meet the needs of your children, families, and staff.

Critical steps for Networks to take now to support this planning include to:

- Join DECE for a [mandatory webinar for all EarlyLearn program and Family Child Care Network leaders Thursday, July 9 from 10:00-11:30am](#) to review this guidance and important next steps for programs. You can register for this webinar [here](#); it will also be recorded, and we encourage programs to share with all staff.
- Join DECE for a [mandatory webinar for all Family Child Care Networks Friday, July 10 from 1:30pm-3:00pm](#) to review guidance and important next steps for Networks and affiliated providers. You can register for this webinar [here](#).
- **Distribute the [Family Schedule Needs Sample Survey](#) to each currently enrolled family** as soon as possible. Families should be asked to complete a separate survey for each enrolled child.
- **Gather information on the needs of all staff members** on your DOE budget, including any staff who may seek accommodations based on your program's HR policies.
- Direct all **affiliated providers and program staff with outdated medical forms** to schedule physician appointments now.
- **Share information about medical and vaccination requirements with all currently-enrolled families**, and support families with referrals and community resources.
- **Encourage all adults affiliated with the program to get tested for COVID-19**, even if they have no symptoms. It is especially beneficial for program staff to be tested prior to supporting in-person learning. More information about the free COVID-19 diagnostic test, and a map of available testing sites, is available [here](#).
- Prior to resuming in-person services, all Networks must train their staff in the [NYS June 2020 guidance](#), and ask affiliated providers to complete an affirmation online, and complete, and post the [NYS Business Reopening Safety Plan Template](#) (in addition to updating their existing safety plan).

Next Steps for the DECE

Together with our partner agencies, the DECE commits to share additional guidance to support networks' planning for the fall, including guidance on:

- Program funding and budgets
- Any priority groups for in-person services
- Enrollment and eligibility determination
- Blended learning implementation, including the use of remote learning devices
- Implementation of site's existing curriculum
- Supporting staff, children/families, and learning using a trauma informed approach
- Further health and safety expectations

Additionally, we commit to continuing to share best practices learned from our Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) and Emergency Child Care Centers (ECCs and FCC-ECCs) that have been providing care to the children of first responders, health care providers, transit workers, and other essential personnel since March.