



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Issued March 18, 2020

Joint Guidance for Superintendents from the NC Department of Public Instruction and the NC Department of Health and Human Services for the Operation of School-Based Emergency Child Care during the COVID-19 School Closure

This guidance will be updated regularly with new information as it becomes available.

Service Description

Temporary, emergency, out-of-school child care provided in designated public schools during the COVID-19 school closures.

Selecting Public School Sites

Superintendents should consider designating public schools as emergency out-of-school child care site to meet specific community needs. Superintendents should consider the following public-school locations:

- Schools located near hospitals and other health care facilities
- Schools with open school health centers
- Schools that have served as shelters in past emergencies
- Schools with before- and after-school program supplies and facilities
- Schools with existing community partners
- Schools with programs that are licensed by the Division of Child Development and Early Education

Working with Community Partners

Superintendents are encouraged to work with community partners, such as before- and after-school providers, child care providers, child care resource and referral agencies, and other community organizations to ensure capacity to provide emergency out-of-school child care and meet specific community needs. Connect with your local child care community to determine available capacity before opening school sites.

Child Participation

Participating children must be at least age 5 and currently in kindergarten through age 12.

Priority includes public school students with parents or guardians who are first responders, hospital staff, front-line healthcare providers, nursing and adult group home staff, child care program staff, food service staff, and others working to keep our communities safe and healthy as we respond to COVID-19, as well as children who are homeless or in unstable or unsafe living arrangements.

These are guidelines for participation for high-priority families to help respond to the COVID-19 emergency. LEAs may designate other high-priority families and children as needs and capacity allow.

Operational Criteria at the School Level

Public school sites selected to provide emergency child care are required to include the following program components:

- Cafeteria staff and operational cafeteria
- Custodial services
- Administration staff for operational/registration purposes
- Care providers (teacher assistants and other appropriate school staff and/or staff provided by community partners), keeping in mind background checks and liability for service providers
- Practices to reduce COVID-19 exposure, including hand washing, frequent cleanings, social distancing practices and compliance with CDC guidance on no mass gatherings of more than 50 people
- School nursing staff (routine medication, healthcare procedures, screening for COVID-19)
 - Access to first aid and care supplies
 - Physical space for separating ill children from general population
 - See additional information about securing nursing services below
- Age appropriate programming
- Plan to address emotional/mental health needs of participating children
- Access to resources for on-line learning (space, connectivity, and tech support)

Health and Safety Requirements

Refer to the [Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Guidance for Child Care Settings March 16, 2020](#)

MINIMUM SITE Requirements

- Emergency communications plan in place
- Staff/Child ratio of 1:25 - no more than two groups per space (if using gym/cafeteria/multipurpose room); Total of 50 children
- 25 square feet per child indoors
- Developmentally appropriate materials and activities
- Lockable hazardous product and medication storage

- Outdoor activities
- Developmentally appropriate activities for the children and established program routine. It is important for children who have experienced a major disruption in their lives to have a sense of known routine.

STAFFING Requirements

- All staff must meet current Criminal Background Check qualifications
- One person who has current CPR and First Aid certification must always be on the premises
- All staff must complete emergency information paperwork ([DCDEE Sample](#))

CHILDREN'S RECORDS Requirements

- Emergency information and application on file, and permission/authorization to get medical treatment ([DCDEE Sample Application](#))

SUGGESTIONS FOR SECURING NURSING SERVICES FOR PARTNER CHILD CARE SITES

- District superintendent or local health director request for assignment of school nursing staff (dependent on employer of local school nurses)
- Identification of a partner agency that might provide nursing staff
- Written agreement identifying agency responsible for salary and liability protection