



Preschools and Daycares



Version 1, Published March 17, 2020

Using the Tip Sheet

The tip sheet is designed to help you start thinking about potential impacts COVID-19 will have on your organization's mission and operations.

The goal is to prompt discussion in your organization about planning and preparedness efforts you can take now to lessen the spread of the virus, continue essential operations, and extend your operations in ways that can better assist your workforce, clientele, and community efforts to manage the impacts of the Coronavirus.

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We are here to help.

This tip sheet series is created by a team from NDSU's Department of Emergency Management and are provided as a free service. For more information about this effort, contact Dr. Carol Cwiak at carol.cwiak@ndsu.edu or (701) 231-5847.

The Importance of Planning and Preparedness Efforts for Preschools and Daycares

At the time this Tip Sheet is being prepared, it seems inevitable that widespread closures of preschools and daycares are imminent. The closure of these centers will have a significant impact on the workforce and will challenge both employees and employers to reconceptualize their daily work schedules. Many daycares have been able to provide some coverage for school closures



by taking in after school enrollees for full days; albeit, the capacity to absorb additional students in these facilities is limited by space, personnel, and credentialing. Mandated closures of these facilities will have impacts that are profound and far-reaching.

Economic impacts on the industry, which often operates with much thinner profit margins than most businesses (despite the high cost parents lament), will likely result in the permanent closure of some facilities. This could result in a shortage of facilities when closure mandates are lifted. Less apparent, but perhaps more challenging for the children, family, and workers affected, will be the changes regarding structure, routine, and connection. Beyond the care aspect these facilities provide, there are social networks, learning environments, and relationships with other children, care providers, and teachers that will be disrupted. Preschools and daycares are more than the mechanics of the care provided, they are habitats rich with engagement and friends.

Planning and preparedness for these facilities is as much about staying in touch as it is about staying in business. Preschools and daycares will need to find ways to both reimagine the delivery of the less tangible items they provide and to survive in a time when the most tangible elements of their service cannot be delivered.

The tip sheet series is slated to cover preparedness and strategy considerations for over 30 different business, industry, critical infrastructure and community organization types.

The primary repository for these tip sheets is our Facebook page. The tip sheet series will be published throughout the months of March and April 2020. Additional tip sheets will be added beyond that period as they are identified. If you have questions about the areas to be covered by the tip sheets or ideas for additional tip sheet coverage, let us know.



facebook.com/Covid-19-Business-Community-Org-Tip-Sheets-109084464035337/



How are you communicating the risk and protocols in place to create a strong line of defense against spread of the virus?



How are you protecting your workforce and planning for diminished capacity?



How will supply chain slowing or disruption affect your ability to continue operations?

Things to Consider: Status-Open

- What healthy workplace procedures are being instituted?
- Do additional wellness guidelines need to be developed?
- Will there be daily health screenings (e.g., temperature taking) prior to entering the classroom space?
- What protocol is in place for a potential Covid-19 case in a child or worker?
- Do you have a responsibility to report a suspected or known case of Covid-19?
- What protocol is in place for exposure to a Covid-19 case in a child or worker?
- Will workers need additional training to deal with the implications of Covid-19?
- Will children who have been to areas with virus hot zones need to self-quarantine for 14 days before they can return to the facility?
- Will a confirmed case of Covid-19 in a child or worker that has recently been in the facility trigger the closure of the facility?
- How will communication regarding the virus be handled?
- Will more regular updates be provided to parents and staff based on the evolving nature of the threat?
- How will cleaning regimens be enhanced?
- Do food service protocols need to be modified (e.g., paper plates, single use utensils, etc.)?
- Have potential staffing shortages been planned for?
- Will access by visitors and vendors be limited?
- Will items carried back and forth from home be limited?
- Will snacks and food from home be allowed?
- Will there be changes in large group activities, playground scheduling, etc.?
- Will elementary students be accepted during school closures?
- Is the facility equipped with the necessary supplies and staffing to meet the enhanced cleaning, monitoring, and reporting needs?
- Will any off-site services be offered to ill or exposed students (e.g., worksheets, activity packets, web-based connections, etc.)?
- If the facility remains open, how long after a child or worker has had Covid-19 will they be able to return?
- Will there be any accommodations in tuition expectations for children who are absent due to quarantining or extended illness associated with Covid-19?
- Will there be any changes in operational hours due to lack of staff availability, local government orders, or state or federal guidance?
- Will such changes result in tuition changes or other modifications of the original contract?

Things to Consider: Status-Closed

- Will closure regarding direct contact with children result in complete closure of the facility (i.e., can workers be repurposed re: cleaning, facility improvements, etc.)?
- Can workers continue to provide worksheets, activity packets, etc. to parents during closure?
- Is there a way to support web-based interaction between children and their classmates?
- Will updates to parents continue?
- How will closure affect tuition that was paid in advance?
- How will the facility address the loss of tuition?
- Will the facility be able to continue paying workers?
- How will the workforce be maintained during closure?
- How will closure affect vendor contracts and obligations?
- Are there any local, state, or federal programs that will help subsidize losses?
- How will reopening be handled?
- Will there be any rate or contractual changes?
- What types of challenges do you need to plan for after the children (and parents) have experienced an extended interruption?
- How will you prepare the children (and parents) for resumption?

Strategies: Healthy Workplace & Workplace Reintegration

- Implement a variety of healthy workplace strategies, including: increased focus on, and practice of, behaviors that lower disease spread (e.g., wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or cough and sneeze into sleeve, don't touch face, don't shake hands, fist bump, or hug); have hand sanitizer, tissues, and disinfectant wipes readily available; increase frequency of facility cleaning; implement social distancing if possible (at least arm's length apart); promote workplace culture that encourages staying home when sick; offer paid, flexible sick leave that can also be used for care taking of family members (i.e., allow use of vacation pay, flex hours, adding PTO days, etc.); and, subsidize vaccine shots (when available).
- Consider implementing a strong workplace integration policy that details: 1) when workers who have been ill can come back to work (i.e., temperature below 100.4 for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication); and, 2) the number of days a worker must self-quarantine or undertake limited workplace engagement after being exposed to an infected individual.
- Implement a similar policy for children at the facility and their parents who drop them off and pick them up.
- Discourage workers from using shared items (e.g., refrigerators, coffee pots, microwaves, candy dishes, etc.) and shared places (e.g., lounges, etc.).
- Move all food service to children and workers to single-serve, single contact items (e.g., paper plates, single use utensils, etc.); wear gloves when dealing with food items; create distance between children; and, enforce pre- and post-meal handwashing.

- Colleges & Universities
- Houses of Worship
- Financial Institutions
- Preschools & Daycares
- Nursing Homes
- Animal Care & Services
- Trucking Industry
- Grocery Stores
- Food Pantries & Meal Services
- Restaurants
- Fast Food & Delivery Services
- K-12 Schools
- In-home Care Services
- Professional Cleaning Services
- Gyms and Activity Centers
- Event Centers, Museums, Theaters, & Malls
- Retail Stores
- Pharmacies
- Public Transportation
- Funeral Homes & Services
- Critical Services Providers
- Media Services
- Clubs, Social Orgs, & Sport Teams
- Legal & Administrative Proceedings
- Cultural Centers & Non-profits
- Counseling Services
- Delivery Services
- Detention Centers
- Homeless Shelters
- Elections
- Census

Strategies: Communication

- Create a consistent communication protocol and provide regular updates to parents and workers.
- Prepare pre-scripted messages for important messaging regarding illness, closure, and re-opening.
- Identify specific points of contact with key partners and places to go for additional information to inform operational status.

Strategies: Workforce Shortages and Retention

- Increase your workforce depth by establishing a substitute list for workers (be cautious using substitutes who have increased vulnerability to the virus).
- Limit visitor and vendor access to the site. If access is absolutely necessary, limit access to hours that children and most workers are not present and sanitize areas of contact afterwards.
- Develop a strategy to utilize staff to do site cleaning, updates (e.g., painting, decor, etc.), develop activity plans, maintain communications and engagements with children, and other items to help limit the economic impact they will endure during closure and to increase the likelihood of retaining them until the facility can re-open.
- Research and utilize small business planning and stimulus resources designed to sustain and reinvigorate businesses suffering from Covid-19 impacts.
- Maintain contact with the families you serve and facilitate connection between the children, their social network from the facility, and the staff they engaged with to support continuity of care.
- If there was an educational program delivered, attempt to continue the program through materials sent to parents via email, videos in a closed Facebook group, use of Zoom, or other mechanisms that allow for engagement at a distance.

Recommended Resources

CDC COVID-19 Updates, Information, and Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 Global Cases Map and Statistics (Johns Hopkins)

https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html?fbclid=IwAR0n2MaFP8ajO_4LCjvfqOG6Es-JkEi8dfDh5msTy5Nlz9i-6jmKMehXNzw#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6

Quick Start Guide: Pandemic Planning for Businesses

https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/emgt/Quick_Start_Guide_-_Pandemic_Planning_for_Businesses.pdf

Continuity of Infant and Toddler Care

https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/pitc_rationale_-_continuity_of_care_508_1.pdf



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