



## Office of Children and Family Services

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

SHEILA J. POOLE  
Commissioner

March 5, 2020

Dear Provider,

In February, OCFS shared information about a new coronavirus (COVID-19). At the time, there were no cases in New York State. Since then, some cases have been confirmed. While the risk remains low, the situation is changing rapidly. This letter contains important reminders and things to consider regarding the operation of your childcare program.

The OCFS Health Care Plan (HCP) contains valuable information regarding infection control practices. Please take this opportunity to review your plan with staff and parents. Consider highlighting the following information:

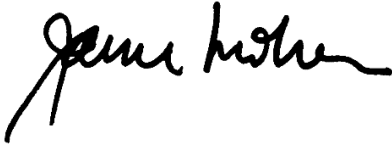
- What is your program's exclusion policy? Remind parents of the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- What is your plan for children who become ill while at your program? Contact parents and create a comfortable space for the ill child (separate from the group when possible) while maintaining competent supervision.
- Update contact information for children and staff and keep lines of communication open.
- Reinforce the importance of performing and documenting daily health checks. Review the signs and symptoms of illness and communicable disease with staff and ensure checks are being performed whenever a child shows signs of illness or injury. Detailed instructions are provided in Appendix A of the HCP.
- Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 30 seconds. When soap and water are not available, and hands are visibly soiled, individual wipes may be used in combination with hand sanitizer. The use of hand sanitizer on children under the age of 2 years is prohibited.
- Perform routine substantial cleaning of the childcare program. Review Appendix E of the Health Care Plan for information about cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.
- Determine what level of staff absenteeism will disrupt staff/child ratios and plan for alternative coverage. Reach out to your licensor/registrar for guidance.
- If a child or staff member is identified with COVID-19, the childcare program should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when the individual should return to the program and what additional steps are needed. A directory of local health departments can be found at: [https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/)

In the event your childcare program becomes directly impacted by COVID-19, contact your regulator immediately for assistance. OCFS has the ability to waive non-statutory requirements to support your program's operation. Each situation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and consideration for a time limited waiver should be initiated by contacting licensor/registrar.

With each passing day, new information regarding COVID-19 prevention, and response continues to unfold. OCFS encourages you to stay up to date by checking the NYS Department of Health website (<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>) regularly.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and well-being of children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janice Molnar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Janice Molnar, Ph.D.  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Child Care Services