

# Transitional Pandemic Requirements and Best Practices for Licensed Child Care Centers

Transitional pandemic rules are licensing requirements established as Ohio transitions out of temporary pandemic child care for the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care centers must follow all licensing requirements in addition to the following exceptions and additions outlined in the transitional rules. Also, centers must follow all guidelines set by the Governor of Ohio or the Director of the Ohio Department of Health.

This document summarizes the transitional rules, best practices, and any associated tips.

\*Please note that “employee” includes all administrators, employees and child care staff members (CCSM). These requirements and all new procedures established by the program should be reviewed with all employees.

## Updated ratio:

### Transitional Rule:

Age Group	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infants	1:4	6
Toddlers	1:6	6
Preschool	1:9	9
School-Age	1:9	9

### Rule Reminders:

- Updated ratio and group size limitations must be followed during routine trips.
- All rules regarding background check requirements must still be followed.

### Best Practices:

- Review back-up staffing plan that ensures background check requirements are followed.
- Maintain stable grouping:
  - Same group of children each day.
  - Same staff with same children each day.
  - Keep siblings together, when possible.
  - Keep children whose parents/guardians have the same employer together, when possible.
  - Groups should not be combined at times when fewer children are present, even if appropriate staff/child ratios are maintained.

**Tip:** Revise the daily schedules to ensure outdoor play/indoor large motor play at staggered times.

## Handwashing:

### Transitional Rule:

- Follow all handwashing procedures pursuant to rule 5101:2-12-13, with the following additions:
  - All employees shall wash their hands upon entering a classroom and prior to leaving for the day.
  - All children shall wash their hands prior to leaving for the day.
- Centers may use non-permanent sinks to meet the handwashing requirements.

### Rule Reminders:

- Hand sanitizer should be kept out of the reach of children.
- Only children 24 months and older may use hand sanitizer.

### Best Practices:

- Employees and children should frequently wash their hands.
- Teach children and employees appropriate handwashing practices.
- Require anyone entering the program to wash and/or sanitize their hands.
- Wash hands carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash hands after coughing, sneezing, or using a tissue.
- Wash hands after water activities.
- Provide a hand washing/sanitizing station at the program's entrance.

### Tip:

- Create a sanitation backpack that includes items such as cleaner, sanitizer, gloves, paper towels, and/or a small trash bag to take when you are caring for the children outside.
- Teach children a 20-second song to sing as they wash their hands.
- Please see "Portable Sinks in Child Care" for additional information at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
- Communicate with families about the new handwashing practices in place in the program so they can reinforce with their children as well.
- Display handwashing posters to encourage proper washing, available on the provider pandemic page: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
- Watch YouTube videos with the children about proper handwashing: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.
- Require employees to watch a video on proper handwashing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWmok9avzr4&feature=youtube>.

## Screening:

### Transitional Rule:

- Take the temperatures of all employees and children prior to or as soon as they arrive each day.

### Rule Reminder:

- Centers may not use mercury thermometers.

### Best Practices:

- Incorporate social distancing while screening or use physical barriers to minimize exposure.
- Ask parent/guardian to confirm the child does not have shortness of breath or cough.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees who conduct screenings.
- Conduct health screening of any visitors to your program.
- Request parents/guardians and/or visitors wear a mask at arrival and screening.
- Request that children not eat, drink, or have physical activity immediately prior to screening.
- Teach employees how to:
  - Take a temperature.
  - Read a thermometer.
  - Sanitize a thermometer.
  - Properly put on and take off PPE.
- Modify drop off and pick up to ensure social distancing. Examples:
  - Stagger times.
  - Curbside drop-off and pick up.
  - Request same parent/guardian drop off and pick up child.
  - Provide physical guides (6 ft apart), such as tape on ground, for waiting in line.

### Tips:

- Remind parents/guardians to keep their child home when they are sick.
- Communicate with families about the new temperature screening process you have in place. Have them talk with their child prior to arrival about this new process.
- Talk with the children during the day about the new temperature taking process that will happen every day when they come.

## Exclusion:

### Transitional Rule:

- Immediately send home any child or employee who has a temperature of 100° F or higher.
- Individuals sent home shall not return until they have been fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.

- If the individual who had the fever has had known contact with someone confirmed or probable to have COVID-19, they must complete isolation or quarantine procedures for COVID-19 in coordination with the local health department prior to returning to the center.
- The above requirements also apply to anyone whose temperature is taken after arrival.
- If employee or a child tests positive for COVID-19, they must complete isolation or quarantine procedures for COVID-19 in coordination with the local health department prior to returning to the center.

**Rule Reminder:**

- If a child meets exclusion criteria after arrival at your program, they must be properly supervised (within sight and hearing) until they are taken home.

**Best Practices:**

- When a child meets the COVID-19 exclusion criteria:
  - Isolate the child in a separate room or space until they are taken home.
  - Put a mask on the child, if possible.
  - CCSM supervising the child should wear a mask and protective clothing and should wash hands often.

**Tips:**

- Review and test emergency contact numbers.
- Communicate with families about the program's isolation and discharge process.

**Notification:****Transitional Rule:**

- If an employee or child enrolled in the center tests positive for COVID-19, the program shall:
  - Notify ODJFS by the next business day in OCLQS as a serious incident, and
  - Notify their local health department by the next business day.

**Best Practices:**

- Work with the local health department to determine next steps to protect the children and employees in your program. This may include notifying families and deep sanitation of the program.

**Tip:** If a child or employee tests positive for COVID-19, use the JFS "Sample Parent Communication for Positive COVID-19 Test" in the Transitional Pandemic Child Care Toolkit:  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

**Dividers:****Transitional Rule:**

- If centers need to divide a room into smaller spaces to serve multiple groups of children, dividers may be used if they meet the following requirements:
  - At least 6 ft high.
  - Made from nonporous material or material which may be sanitized.
  - Meet requirements set by:
    - Department of Commerce.
    - Local building department.
    - State Fire Marshal.
    - Local fire safety inspector.

**Best Practices:**

- Please see “Using Dividers to Create Separate Spaces in Child Care Settings” at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

Please find additional best practices and tips at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.