

in-person field trips, large groups using playground equipment simultaneously, etc.

- Discontinue use of drinking directly from water fountains, [post signs](#) requesting water fountains be used for bottle filling stations only.
- Discontinue in-person activities that involve bringing together large groups of people or activities that do not allow for social distancing (field trips, performances, etc.).
- Limit nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- If meals are typically served family-style, plate each

child's meal to serve it so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils. Avoid serving food from common dishes or with common utensils. [Ensure the safety of children with food allergies.](#)

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.
- Arrange for administrative staff to telework from their homes.



Cloth Face Coverings

There are [exceptions](#), not all children should wear cloth face coverings.



There is growing evidence that wearing face coverings can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially for those who are sick but may not know it. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. Recent studies on types of face coverings suggest that multi-layered cotton face coverings provide good coverage to keep droplets from spreading when we speak, sneeze, or cough. Individuals should be reminded frequently not to touch their face covering and to wash their hands.

Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:

- Children under the age of 2;
- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to

remove the face covering without assistance; or

- Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.

Child care programs are required to:

- Have all workers, all other adults, and all children five (5) years or older on-site wear a face covering when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person, unless the person (of family member for a child) states that an exception applies.
- Visit [NCDHHS COVID-19 response site](#) for more information about the [face covering guidance](#) and to access sign templates that are available in English and Spanish.

NOTE: Younger children may be unable to wear a face covering properly, particularly for an extended period of time. Child care program staff can prioritize having children wear face coverings at times when it is difficult for children to maintain a distance of 6 feet from others (e.g., during pick-up or drop-off, when standing in line). Staff should make sure face coverings fit children properly and provide children with frequent reminders and education on the importance and proper way to wear face coverings. Additionally, small children are more likely to touch their face covering, so caretakers should wash children's hands often.

It is recommended that child care programs:

- Provide cloth face coverings for staff, other adults, and children five (5) years or older and ask them (or their families) to properly launder using hot water and a high heat dryer between uses.
- Face coverings are encouraged for children two (2) years of age and up to the age of five (5), if it is determined they can reliably wear, remove, and handle masks following CDC guidance throughout the day.
- Consider building in time throughout the day when staff and children can take short breaks from wearing cloth face coverings at times and in settings where risk for transmission is lower (e.g., outside, where windows are open, and when people are consistently 6 feet apart).
- Use [strategies](#) to assist children with becoming comfortable wearing face coverings.