Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Childcare Guidance
March 22, 2020

On March 13th, the San Mateo County Health Officer ordered schools to dismiss students from regular school attendance beginning Monday, March 16, 2020. Several days later, the County Health Officer ordered county residents to shelter in place beginning Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Finally, on March 19, the Governor announced a shelter-in-place order for the entire state. Both the county and the state shelter-in-place orders exempt activity as needed to maintain the operation of critical services, including schools and childcare.

The school dismissal and shelter-in-place orders do not direct childcare, daycare, or preschool facilities to remain open or to close. These organizations need to make that decision themselves. However, there is a critical need in the community for childcare, especially for those working in the health care sector and other essential fields.

If childcare, daycare, or preschool facilities remain open, even at a reduced level, they must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer ("stable" means that the same 12 or fewer children are in the same group each day).
2. Children shall not change from one group to another.
3. If more than one group of children is cared for at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
4. Childcare providers shall remain solely with one group of children.

In addition, the following infection control measures should be in place in all childcare settings:

1. Screen children and staff for fever or cough daily, before entering childcare.
2. Exclude ill children and employees (those with fever or cough) from the facility.
3. Any children or staff who develop symptoms should put on a surgical mask, enter a separate room, and be sent home as soon as possible.
4. Ill children or staff should not return to childcare or work until they are well.
5. Children and staff should wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (if hands are not visibly dirty) before and after eating, drinking, touching eyes/nose/mouth, toileting or diapering, and physical contact with each other.
6. Clean high-contact areas and surfaces frequently, using 10% bleach solution or EPA-approved disinfectant, including counters, toys, solution or EPA-approved...
disinfectant, including counters, toys, telephones, and doorknobs. See the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) guidance on cleaning and disinfecting.

7. Staff and children should practice good respiratory hygiene including coughing/sneezing into a sleeve and covering coughs.

Childcare administrators and staff should also review the CDC’s guidance for schools and childcare programs.

Please reach out to the San Mateo County Office of Education if further guidance is needed.

SMCOE contact information
info@smcoe.org or 650-802-5515

101 Twin Dolphin Drive, Redwood City, CA 94065-1064
www.smcoe.org