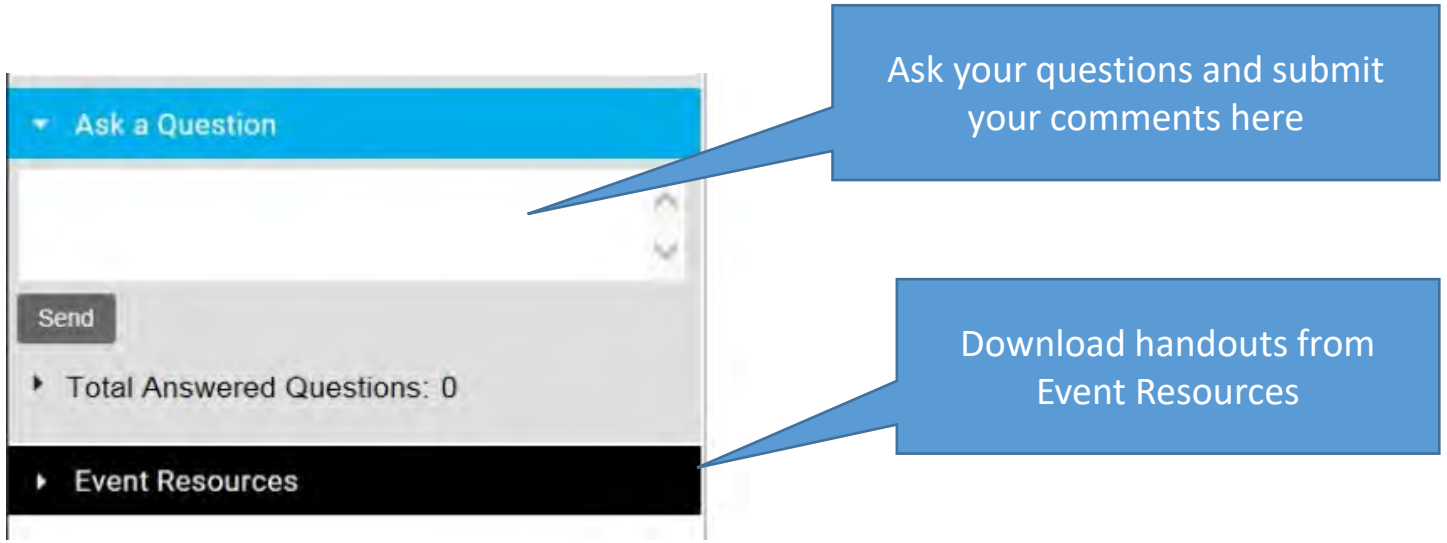
Caring for Children with Special Healthcare Needs During COVID-19

Ask the Expert Series

May 27, 2020

Please use the left side bar to ask questions, submit comments, or download handouts.



Email your questions to health@ecetta.info.

Certificate Information

Participants will receive an email with a link to download the certificate of attendance, at the end of either the live event or on-demand viewing.

For questions about certificates: webcasts@hsicc.org

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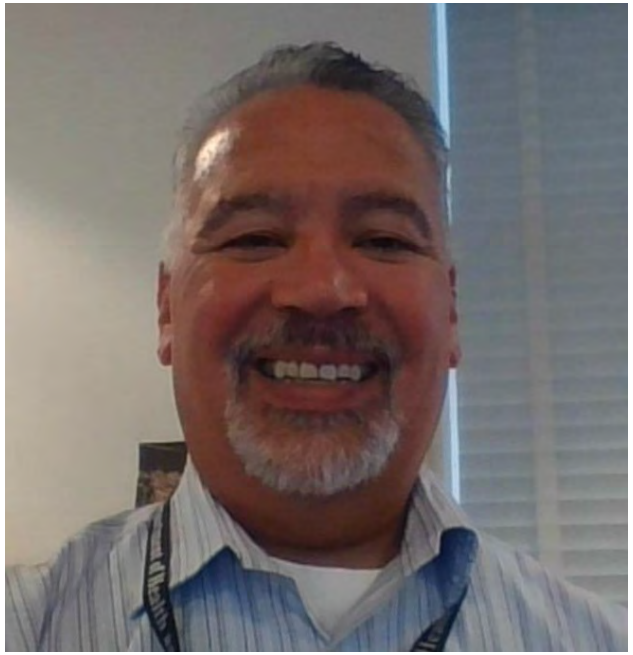

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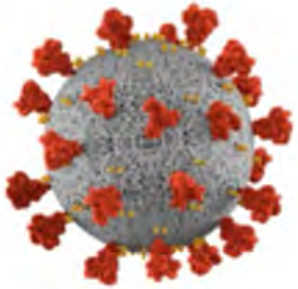
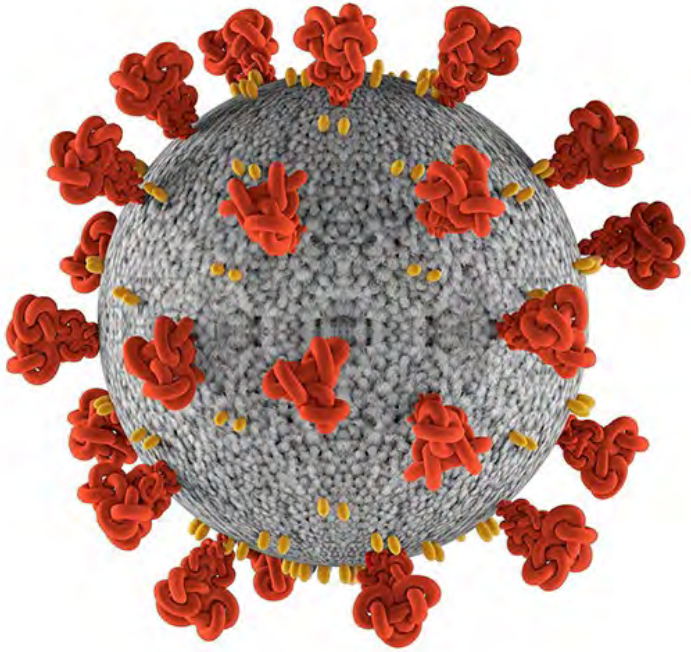
Today's Topics

- What we know about COVID-19
- CDC Guidelines for Child Care Programs
- Challenges faced by families of children with special health care needs
- Supporting individual health, developmental and behavioral needs
- Self-care

Managing COVID-19

- Rely on evidence-based resources!
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - American Academy of Pediatrics
- Know how it spreads
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, social distance in public
- Wash your hands
- Cloth face cover to protect others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect





Health Disparities & Vulnerable Populations

COVID-19 is another example of how health disparities play out in the U.S.

- Based on early data, COVID-19 is impacting African American, Latin and Native American populations at a disproportionate rate.
- Vulnerable populations are more likely to be a part of the workforce deemed essential and may not have access to PPEs.
- Longstanding inequities contribute to the crisis in vulnerable populations.
- Head Start programs have an important role to play in addressing disparities among their populations.

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The purpose of this tool is to assist directors and administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding child care programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Should you consider opening?

- ✓ Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?
- ✓ Are you ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?
- ✓ Are you able to screen children and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

ALL YES →

ANY NO → **DO NOT OPEN**

Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

- ✓ Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and employees wearing a cloth face covering, as feasible
- ✓ Intensify cleaning, sanitization, disinfection, and ventilation
- ✓ Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible. For family child care, monitor distance between children not playing together and maintain distance between children during nap time
- ✓ Adjust activities and procedures to limit sharing of items such as toys, belongings, supplies, and equipment
- ✓ Train all employees on health and safety protocols

ALL YES →

ANY NO → **MEET SAFEGUARDS FIRST**

Is ongoing monitoring in place?

- ✓ Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of children and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible
- ✓ If feasible, implement enhanced screening for children and employees who have recently been present in areas of high transmission, including temperature checks and symptom monitoring
- ✓ Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home
- ✓ Plan for if children or employees get sick
- ✓ Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
- ✓ Monitor child and employee absences and have a pool of trained substitutes and flexible leave policies and practices. For family child care, if feasible, have a plan for a substitute caregiver if provider or a family member in the home gets sick
- ✓ Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area

ALL YES → **OPEN AND MONITOR**

ANY NO → **MEET SAFEGUARDS FIRST**

CDC

cdc.gov/coronavirus

CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs and Considerations for CSHCN

- Social distancing strategies
  - Group children and providers, cancel events, limit mixing of children, naptime spacing, work from home
- Adequate staff to child ratio
  - Plan for substitute caregivers
- Drop off and pick up procedures
  - Hand hygiene stations, staggered times, designated parent
- Screening procedures at arrival
  - Plan screening method, reliance on PPE alone is less effective control and more difficult to implement
  - Fever is defined as 100.4° F (38.0° C), ask about symptoms and history of exposure

CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs and Considerations for CSHCN

- Providing physical care
  - Diapering, washing, feeding, holding
- Hand hygiene
- Food preparation and meal service
- Cleaning and disinfection
  - *Caring For Our Children National Standards*
  - Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts, surfaces, toys, bedding, devices from home
- Face coverings for staff and older children

Communication is Key

- Talk with parents about any special health care needs
  - Families know their children best!
- Encourage parents to talk to you about how their children are coping
- Coordinate with providers if available (ST, OT, behavior therapists)
- Social determinants
  - Are families' basic needs being met?
  - Help coordinate with community resources

Individualized Planning

- Review and update care plans
  - Contact information
  - Allergies, medications
  - Preferences, other special needs, details about routines and activities
- Asthma action plans
  - Manage asthma carefully according to plan

At Risk Populations

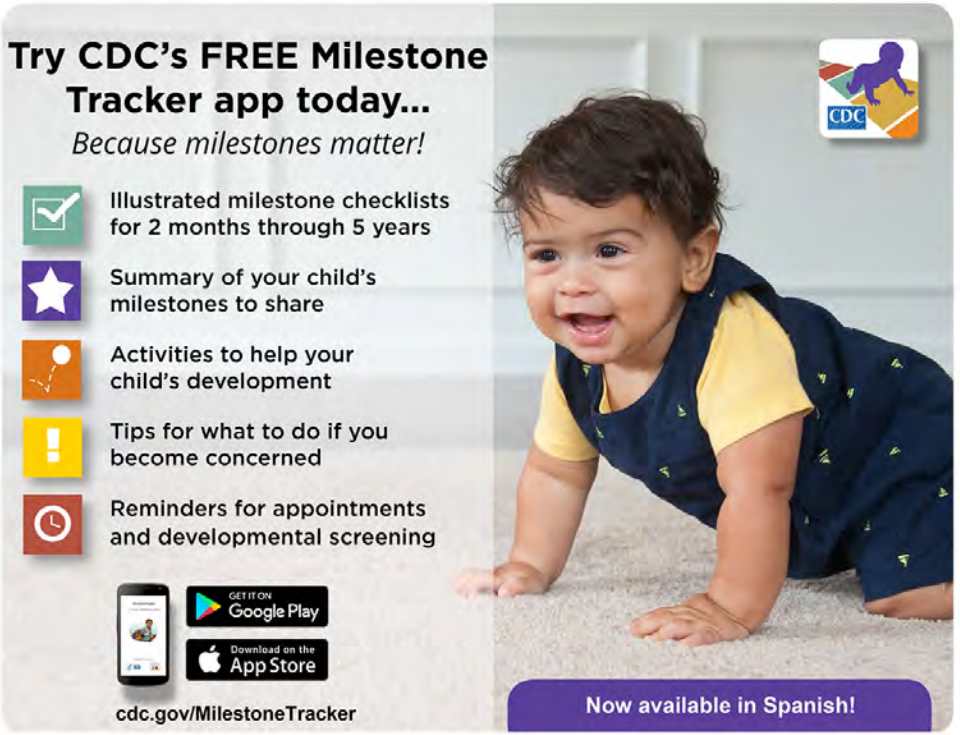
- Parent's should talk with their child's health care provider and child care program to help determine individual risk
- People at higher risk for severe illness
  - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised, severe obesity (BMI 40 or higher), diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease
- Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)

Challenges Faced by Families

- Coping with the different normal while working, now teaching and acting as care coordinators for children with special health needs
- Internet access
- Access to services and providers
  - Telehealth by phone and video
- Access to testing centers
- Medications and medical supplies
- Working with pharmacies

Access to Services During COVID-19

- Healthcare
  - Immunizations
- Education
  - Variable access to virtual learning, services and supports
  - IDEA – IFSP and IEP
  - Evaluations
- Therapies
- Behavior Supports
- Keep monitoring child development!
  - Refer when concerns arise!



Help Children Understand COVID-19

- Young children and children with developmental delays often have concrete thinking and beliefs
- Children of all ages may have misunderstandings
- Be calm and reassuring
- Give simple and developmentally appropriate answers
- Use visual supports
  - Social stories, children's books, videos

Behavior is Communication

- Children have limited ability to communicate, especially about complicated feelings and stressors
- May see increased moodiness, trouble sleeping, may be clingy, seem distracted, might have increased outbursts, aggression or self aggression
- Don’t take behavior personally and avoid labeling the child for the behavior
- Seek to understand the behavior, remain calm, be understanding and offer comfort

Routine, Routine, Routine!

- Visual schedules
- Keep kids busy and engaged
- Keep moving
- Schedule stress reducing activities
  - Exercise, deep breathing, yoga
- Provide choices when possible so children have some sense of control

Self-care

- Children will react to your level of stress
  - You are coping with your own risks as an “essential worker”, financial stress, role as a parent, home school teacher, short order cook, etc.
- Take a break from the news
- Exercise, healthy eating and sleep
- Meditate, deep breathing
- Make time for activities you enjoy
- Connect with your friends and loved ones

Be flexible, be creative, empower parents, and be forgiving.

Resources

National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

- Responding Positively to Your Child's Behavior
- Implementing Physical Activities with Children in Mixed-Age Groups (webinar recording)
- COVID-19 and the Head Start Community: Health and Hygiene

CDC

- CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open
- Child Care Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- CDC Milestone Tracker App

HealthyChildren.org

- COVID-19: Information for Families of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs
- 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Radio MD

- How the COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts Kids with Special Healthcare Needs

Ask the Experts Series Schedule

May 5	Caring for Children in Group Settings During COVID-19: A Follow-up Conversation
May 8	Keeping Our Children Well During COVID-19
May 15	Keeping Our Children Safe During COVID-19
May 19	Helping Parents Manage Stress During COVID-19
May 27	Caring for Children with Special Health Care Needs During COVID-19
June 2	Social Distancing in Early Care and Education: Feasible or Impossible?
June 9	Addressing the Mental Health Needs of ECE Staff During COVID-19

Check the ECLKC upcoming events page for dates and registration links
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/upcoming-events

MyPeers

A Collaborative Platform for the Early Care and Education Community

MyPeers is a virtual learning network where you can brainstorm, exchange ideas, and share resources with early childhood colleagues from across the country. It was created by the Office of Head Start (OHS) to help you connect and learn with people who share your interests and program responsibilities. These informal connections can be a great source of encouragement and insight.

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-collaborative-platform-early-care-education-community

Welcome Back

Select the button below to access the login page.

Access MyPeers

Register to Learn More About MyPeers

Select the links below to join a webinar. You don't need to sign up for MyPeers before joining us for any of these sessions:

- MyPeers Orientation
- Making the Most of MyPeers

Create an Account

New to MyPeers?
Sign up for your free account.

Once you've joined, you will be able to add new communities to meet your specific needs.

Join

National Center on Early Childhood Health & Wellness Contact Information

Email: health@ecetta.info

Website: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health

COVID-19 Health Information: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/physical-health/coronavirus/health-hygiene