

Advice during COVID-19

Advice for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare settings

As Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Age Childcare (SAC) services begin to return to normal, it is important for babies, toddlers and young children that child-centredness continues to be a basis for how we develop our response for children. When all the child's most important adults—parents and practitioners—work together, going to ELC and SAC can be a positive experience for everyone.

Everyone will need to remain vigilant and continue to follow Public Health guidance.

Here's what we need to know to keep everyone safe:

Symptoms

No child or adult should enter a service if they (or any member of their household) have any symptoms of COVID-19.

Symptoms include: a fever, a new cough, shortness of breath, loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Symptomatic? Stay home, self-isolate, phone your GP.

If a child or staff member develops symptoms in the service:

- Move them to an isolation room/space 2m away from others
- Arrange for them to go home
- Advise that they should contact their GP
- Clean the room after they leave



Face coverings

Face coverings must be worn at all times, except when caring directly for children.

You must put your face covering on if you step away from the children to talk to another adult, moving around the service e.g. for breaks / cover and when sitting in designated break areas.

If you feel more comfortable wearing your face covering all the time, that's okay.



Social distancing

Social distancing between adults should be maintained during breaks, outside the work environment, including travelling to and from the service as well as while staff are on duty.

If staff rooms are small, consider staggering breaks.

Pay attention to parent drop off/collection, consider staggered times and alternative entry/exit points.

Limit contacts at all times, not just during work.

Limit unnecessary staff contact on site – e.g. physical staff meetings/manager-checks in rooms.



Play-pods

Play-pods are an alternative to social distancing for children.

Children should be consistently cared for in their assigned play-pod.

Your play-pod structure should be maintained both indoors and outdoors.

Movement between play-pods must only occur where absolutely necessary.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, staff should try to practise social distancing from other staff within a play-pod.



Good handwashing and hygiene practice are important for everyone

Talk to and support children to wash their hands regularly.

Talk to and support children so they know to ask for and use a tissue to cover coughs or sneezes or to cough or sneeze into their elbow.



Communicate openly and often

Talk to parents/guardians regularly and use various ways to keep in touch, e.g. video calls, private messages.

Talk to the children in your care and remind them that they should talk to grown-ups if something makes them happy/sad or they feel sick.

