

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

As we all navigate the effects of COVID-19 on our daily lives, it is important for babies, toddlers and young children that child-centeredness continues to be the basis for how we develop our response for children. When all the child's most important adults—parents and practitioners—work together, going to childcare can be a positive experience for everyone.

It is important that we all continue to work very hard to ensure safe operating of Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Age Childcare (SAC) for staff, children and their families.

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

Good handwashing and hygiene practice – is important for all children.



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.

Face coverings



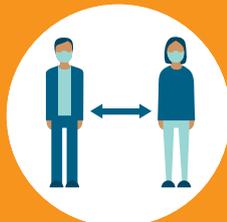
Children in settings are not required to use face coverings.

Adults are generally not required to use face coverings when caring for children.

If a child has symptoms of COVID-19 and the service has arranged for them to be collected, the adult who waits with them will wear a surgical mask.

Parents are asked to wear a face covering if entering the setting or during drop off or collection where social distancing cannot be observed.

Adults will practise social distancing from other adults where practical



Drop off and Collections

Measures should ensure social distance between parents/guardians and staff.

To reduce the likelihood of gatherings at entrances child-friendly social distancing markings should be in place.

Where it is considered necessary for a parent/guardian to enter the service, e.g. to help settle in a new child, social distancing from other adults should be observed in so far as possible.

Operation of Play-pods –



Children are not required to practise physical distancing in ELC/SAC settings but should be organised into play-pods.

Play-pods are small groups who play and learn together.

Play-pods support contact tracing.

Symptoms



The main symptoms of COVID-19 include Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath, Sudden Loss of Sense of Taste/Smell.

Staff/children should not attend the service if:

- o They have symptoms of COVID-19
- o Someone in their household is a confirmed case or has been referred for testing
- o They have been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case
- o They have been advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements

A child with nasal cold symptoms (runny nose or sneezing) can continue to attend their ELC/SAC setting, provided they are otherwise well, have no new cough or temperature and no-one else in the household is a confirmed case or has been referred for testing.

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

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

If the person with symptoms tests positive for COVID-19 public health will be in touch with the service to advise on next steps. **It is not necessary to contact parents or close a play-pod/service unless and until you are advised by public health to do so.**

Communicate openly and often



Talk to parents/guardians regularly and use various ways to keep in touch i.e. 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.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth