



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care



What Families Need to Know About Reopening Child Care

JULY 2020

A Note to Families

Welcome back to child care.

Child care programs across the state have been hard at work understanding the new health and safety requirements and making small but important changes to their operations. Your child will return to a program that is nurturing, educational and, yes, safe.

The health and safety requirements that will be implemented by child care programs were developed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care in partnership with the Department for Public Health, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department for Children and Families, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

This guide is intended to help you understand generally what to expect from your child care provider and how to prepare your child to return. Please understand that while the health and safety standards are the same, each child care program's approach will look a little different.

We are happy to have you back!



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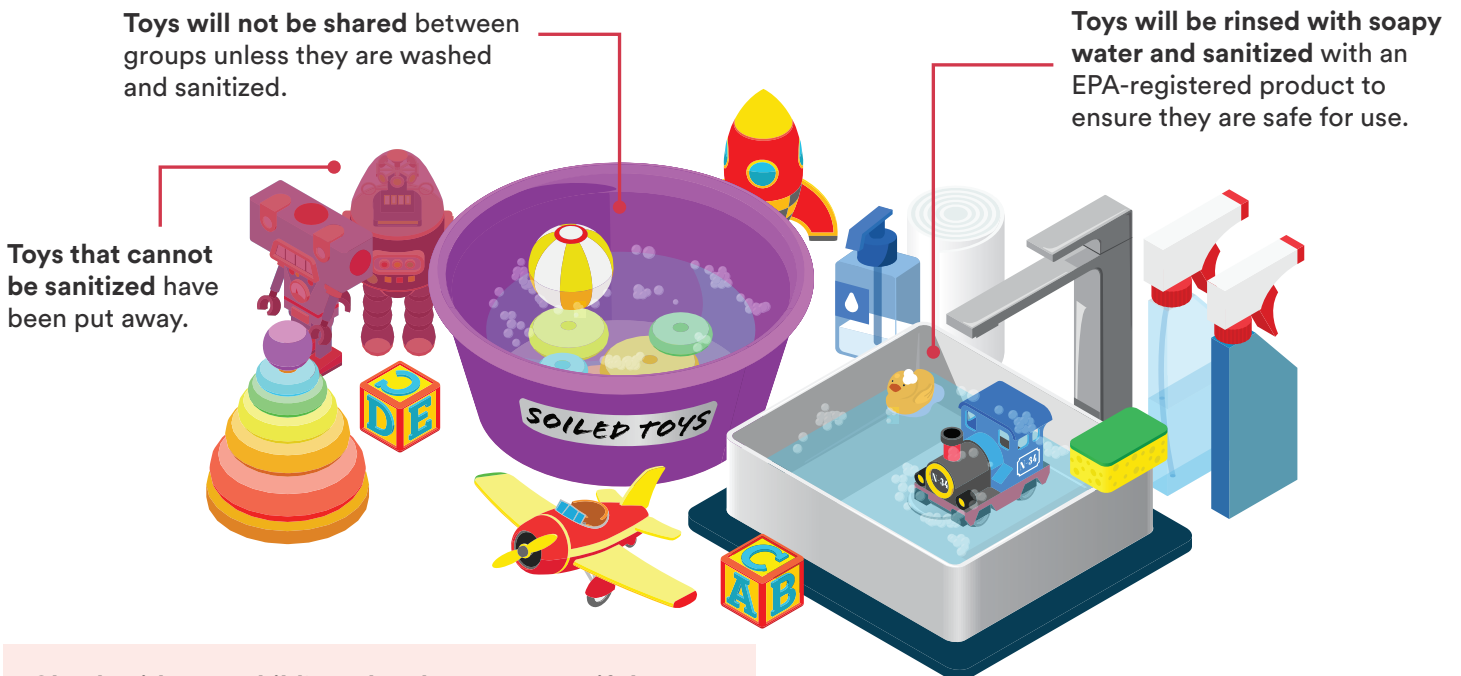
Prepared and Ready

In order to reopen, programs completed and submitted a detailed plan that was approved by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. This plan includes everything from operations and staffing to cleaning, monitoring, and response.



- **Hand washing will continue to be an important part of daily routines.** If a sink with soap and water is not available, staff will provide hand sanitizer with at least 60%+ alcohol and supervise use.
- **New hygiene and health practices have been put in place,** including physical distancing and adult use of face masks and gloves, when appropriate.
- **Programs have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves on-hand,** as well as cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing supplies.
- **Staff have been trained in new health and safety protocols** to ensure everything is implemented safely and effectively.

Children can still engage with the toys and materials that they love, because toys will be cleaned and sanitized more frequently.



Toys will not be shared between groups unless they are washed and sanitized.

Toys will be rinsed with soapy water and sanitized with an EPA-registered product to ensure they are safe for use.

Toys that cannot be sanitized have been put away.

Check with your child's early educator to see if they can bring a comfort item from home like a lovey or blanket.

Activities and Routines

The routines and activities of child care remain mostly the same. Early educators have been busy thinking up creative ways to promote physical distancing while still letting children be children.

Circle time and nap time can still happen, just at a slight distance.

Children are not required to wear face masks, although it is encouraged when children will be in prolonged close physical contact.

Individual play stations and sensory bins will take the place of communal ones.

To the extent possible, children and early educators will remain with the same group each day, and groups will not mix.

Children will still snack and lunch together, and staff have been trained in safe food handling.

Outdoor play, small group playground time, and sprinkler fun are still encouraged!

COVID-19 Symptom Screening

Adults will actively monitor throughout the day for symptoms of any kind, and the following will be in place to keep everyone safe:

- A way for staff and families to self-report symptoms
- A way for families to be immediately notified of possible exposures and/or closures
- A plan for proper isolation and discharge of a child or adult who becomes ill

COVID-19 Symptom Screening List

Check for these symptoms every morning before you drop off your child, and ask yourself if you or anyone in your household has come in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

If any of these symptoms is present, please do not bring your child to the child care program and contact a pediatrician right away.

- COUGH?*
- SORE THROAT?*
- DIFFICULTY BREATHING?*
- GASTROINTESTINAL SYMPTOMS (DIARRHEA, NAUSEA, VOMITING)?*
- ABDOMINAL PAIN?*
- UNEXPLAINED RASH?*
- FATIGUE?*
- HEADACHE?*
- NEW LOSS OF SMELL/TASTE?*
- NEW MUSCLE ACHES?*
- ANY OTHER SIGNS OF ILLNESS?*