School Closure Toolkit: School-administered Childcare

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I. Summary

When schools close, program directors must make important decisions and take swift action to ensure the wellbeing of students, families, and staff. The purpose of this document is to help program directors think through those decisions and action steps. The document includes the following:

- Checklist for decisions pertaining to school-administered childcare programs, including public, private, and school-age programs
- Best practices for programs that remain open
- Guidance for thinking through schedules and procedures
- List of resources for parents and others who care for children

For questions, please contact Darlene.DelRe@tn.gov, Assistant Commissioner of Early Childhood Education, or Misty.Moody@tn.gov, Senior Director of School-based Support Services.

II. Checklist

Below is a brief checklist program directors should consider during periods of closure.

☐ *Decide whether to close the program*
Note that Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) programs will close if their district schools close. For programs run by private entities, the directors of those programs will need to make individual decisions about whether to close.

The recommended first step in making this determination is to consider what actions schools serving similar populations and communities that are licensed by the Department of Human Services are taking. In addition, review your insurance and business interruption policies, as well as guidance from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

☐ *Consider implications for working families, and provide mitigation strategies and resources*
Will keeping the program open provide a needed service (e.g., by prioritizing care for families most in need, including people required to work on COVID-19 response)?

☐ *Evaluate the risks associated with staying open, and communicate clearly to families*
Will keeping the program elevate risks for children, families, and/or educators (e.g., by leading to large gatherings)?

☐ *Create procedures to ensure compliance with regulations and guidance*
If the program stays open, does it have the capacity to adhere to CDC guidelines that include, but are not limited to:
- o Making hand cleaning supplies readily available
- o Encouraging children and staff to stay home if sick
- o Planning for digital and distance learning where appropriate
- o Being prepared to temporarily dismiss or close schools and cancel events if cases of COVID-19 arise, which includes short-term dismissal for cleaning and contact tracing if you have a case and longer dismissals if you have substantial spread in your area
- o Planning ways to continue children services such as meal programs if closure occurs
- o Working with your local health department for guidance on closures and re-openings

In the event that the program closes:

☐ *Notify the TDOE*
When closures are necessary, notify Misty Moody, Senior Director of School-based Support Services using the School-Administered Child Care Closure/Change [form](#).

☐ *Communicate closures to staff and families*
- Plans for handling tuition
- Date when the closure will begin and the anticipated date for re-opening
- Processes for ongoing communication, including when and how families can expect updates
- Any logistical considerations (e.g., families who need to pick up essential belongings left in the building)
- Plans for meals and feeding programs or notification of local community-based feeding programs https://schoolmealfinder.hoonuit.com/?filter_state=tn
- Provide families with suggested home activities and resources to support continuity of learning. Suggested resources can also be found and shared from the department website at the following link: https://www.tn.gov/education/health-and-safety/update-on-coronavirus.html

☐ *Communications for staff should include:*
- Plans for handling compensation/payroll
- (If applicable) Opportunities for taking on work tasks not related to childcare*
- (If staff are working offsite and receiving compensation during the closure) How staff should spend their time when schools are closed*
- (If applicable) Resources for unemployment https://www.tn.gov/workforce/unemployment.html, including COBRA coverage
- Processes for ongoing communication, including when and how they can expect updates

*The *Staffing* school closure toolkit contains ideas for alternative work tasks for hourly staff, as well as resources for supporting employees who are working from home.

In the event that the program stays open:

☐ *Create an operations plan* (*see, "Recommended Schedules and Procedures," below*)
- Any changes to staffing, including increasing or decreasing capacity
- Any changes to policies around who the program will serve (e.g., currently enrolled families, additional families in need of childcare during the closure)
- Any changes to schedules (e.g., open fewer/more days)
- Any changes to procedures (e.g., drop off and pick up procedures, reducing crowds and close contact)
- Plans for maintaining a safe and sanitized space in accordance with CDC guidelines

☐ *Communicate updates to staff and families*

- Urging families to stay home when possible
- Key information from the operations plan (*see checklist item above*), including any changes to enrollment, schedules, or procedures that affect them, as well as plans for maintaining a safe and sanitized space
- Processes for ongoing communication, including when and how families can expect updates

III. Best Practices

Sanitization

- Ensure all staff and children wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently throughout the day, before and after meals, and after using the restroom
- Encourage staff and children to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue away, and wash their hands
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, ideally every 30 minutes, but at least 1–2 times during the day; see the CDC's disinfection [guidelines](#). Surfaces that should be cleaned regularly include the following:
  - Toys: For toys that a child might place in their mouth, use 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water. Wipe down toys and allow to air dry.
  - Nap mat covers and blankets: Change daily and launder according to CDC disinfection guidelines
  - Tabletops and hard surfaces: Use a solution of 1 part bleach to 3 parts water. Clean before and after every meal and activities.

*Track expenditures and keep all receipts for cleaning supplies and other expenses related to COVID-19 in the event funds become available to support these costs.

Food Preparation

The Food and Drug Administration [recommends](#) the following safety measures during food preparation:
- Wash hands and wash and sanitize all food contact surfaces and utensils frequently
- Wear disposable gloves
- Clean and sanitize counters and condiment containers often

Social Distancing

- Avoid large gatherings ten (10) or more people and practice social distancing of 6 feet apart
- Cancel field trips and consider virtual field trip opportunities
- Consider changing from in-person to virtual methods if continuing to hold classes
- Limit child grouping by, for example, staggering lunch times or having children eat in individual classrooms
- Limit visitors as much as possible

Monitoring

- Check the temperature of children, staff, and visitors upon arrival using a thermometer that does not touch the skin
- If a child exhibits symptoms of illness, immediately quarantine the child and request immediate pick-up
- If a staff member exhibits signs of illness, send them home immediately

Communication

When communicating with families and staff, include the information from the communication checklist above.

- Urge staff to stay home when sick and high-risk staff members to stay home
- Urge families to stay home whenever possible
- Post symptoms of COVID-19 around the building

IV. Recommended Schedules and Procedures

Certified Capacity

During this period of school closure, school-administered childcare programs will be allowed to exceed their current certified capacity (located on their certificate) to provide childcare for families in need, such as healthcare workers engaged in COVID-19 response. This temporary allowance will be in place from March through May 2020.

If programs decide to increase capacity, they will be required to follow the relaxed ratio and maximum group size charts below:

Minimum Child-to-Staff Ratios (March–May 2020)

Ages of Children	Ratio
3 years	16:1
4	18:1
5	24:1
6 and up	29:1

Maximum Group Sizes (March–May 2020)

Ages of Children	Maximum Group Size
3	33
4	37
5–6+	No maximum

Background Checks

If additional staff members are required, directors will need to complete an abbreviated background check for each adult needed. The background check should include a review of public records and a copy of the prospective staff member's driver's license.

Recommendations

Below are some recommendations for programs that remain open:

- Identify ways to serve high-need families and encourage others to keep their children at home
- Consider relaxing tuition costs and timelines for families that do keep their children at home
- Address the questions in the template below when developing an operations plan for the program:

Example:

Procedure	Adjustments	Next Steps
Drop off by parent/guardian	Have parents/guardians drop off their children at the entrance instead of going to the classroom	• Establish drop-off location at the entrance; include sign-in sheet and posted signage for parents • Assign staff member(s) to drop-off duty • Communicate the new procedure with families via listserv by [date]

Template:

Procedure	Adjustments	Next Steps
Drop off by parent/guardian		
Check in process*		*Include steps for checking children and staff for signs of illness when then arrive
Breakfast		
Morning routine		
Cleaning procedures and rotations		
Centers (cleaning, social distancing)		
Class activities		
Snack time		
Nap time		
Food preparation		
Lunch		
Playground (cleaning, social isolation)		
Pick up by parent/guardian		
Field trips*	*Note: It is recommended that field trips be cancelled	

V. Resource List

Below are several resources for parents and others who care for young children to facilitate ongoing learning during the closure period.

COVID-19 Resources for Children and Families
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf
- NPR—Just for kids: A comic exploring the new coronavirus: https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus
- National Association of School Psychologists: Talking to children about COVID-19 (available in multiple languages): https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource

Standards and Development
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: https://www.naeyc.org/
- Birth to 48 months: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/standards/tnelds/std_tnelds_birth-4yo.pdf
- 4 year olds: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/standards/tnelds/std_tnelds_4yo_2018.pdf

School-administered Child Care Rules

https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0520/0520-12/0520-12-01.20180801.pdf

More Learning Resources
- Ducksters (social studies): https://www.ducksters.com/
- Science Buddies: https://www.sciencebuddies.org/stem-activities
- Scholastic: https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/25-ways-get-kids-writing/
- Readworks (Note: requires signing up for an account): https://www.readworks.org/
- GoNoodle (physical, academic, and social-emotional health) - https://www.gonoodle.com/
- ABCmouse (reading, math, science, art; free 30-day trial): https://www.abcmouse.com/abt/homepage?8a08850bc2=S2861478214.1584482199.0861&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIw4-ilMCi6AIVC3iGCh21CQ9DEAAYASAAEgItovD_BwE
- Starfall (Note: requires signing up for an account): https://www.starfall.com/h/
- ABCya.com (math, reading, science, and more): https://www.abcya.com/

- Growing Book by Book: https://growingbookbybook.com/
- Kids Activities: www.kidsactivities.com
- We are Teachers—Free online learning resources for teaching your students virtually: https://www.weareteachers.com/free-online-learning-resources/
- Kid Central TN (resources for parents and caregivers): https://www.kidcentraltn.com/content/kidcentral.html
- Ready Rosie https://www.readyrosie.com/
- Epic! online books for children - https://www.getepic.com/
- www.getepic.com is an online library free for 30 days with tons of great books
- www.Play.prodigygame.com (math) Prodigy
- www.knanacademy.org (math) Khan Academy
- mysterydoug.com (Science) Mystery Doug
- www.typingclub.com (writing) typing club
- www.squigglepark.com (Reading) squiggle Park
- www.storylineonline.net (reading) Storyline
- www.historyforkids.net (social studies) History for kids
- kids.nationalgeographic.com (Science) National Geographic
- Storyline Online: www.storylineonline.net
- Mysteryscience.com
- Zearn.org (math)
- PBSkids.org
- cpb.org
- www.mymissnina.com
- www.petethecatbooks.com

Sample Learning Activities

Children learn best through guided instruction and open-ended opportunities to investigate, play, and discover. Concrete, hands-on experiences provide deeper learning. The following chart proves an overview of instructional opportunities for supporting the continued learning and growth of pre-K children.

Foundational Oral Language and Literacy Skills	Description	Resources for Additional Ideas
Read books to and with children: 15 minutes twice a day	Read aloud printed and/or digital books. • Use different voices for characters and add sound effects to bring the story to life. • Read the book the first time through for enjoyment • During the second reading of the book, pause and ask your child	Online story resources: https://www.123homeschool4me.com/stories-for-kids/ https://justbooksreadaloud.com/ https://www.storylineonline.net/ *Parts of a Story*, by Jack Hartmann

	questions about the story. Consider "what if" questions that allow them to think how characters might react differently if something changed in the storyline. Also ask them about how characters might feel. Sequencing events (what happened first, second, third) and predicting what happens next is also a favorite way to interact with a book.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_nePjWXecQ
Rhyming activities: 10 minutes twice a day	Choose a nursery rhyme or other poem from the resource links to read to and with your child. Call attention to words that rhyme, those that have the same ending sounds. Give your child a "shopping bag" to shop the room(s) for two items that rhyme. When child returns with items, say the names of the objects and decide together if they are rhyming words. Repeat for as long as child remains interested.	Additional resources: https://www.education.com/game/match-rhyming-words/ https://www.education.com/game/match-rhyming-words/ https://earlylearningideas.com/rhyming-picture-cards/
Sound-only exploration game: 15 minutes a day	Choose 5–6 toys or household objects with names that begin with different initial or beginning sounds (cup, ball, pen, sock, and fork). Name each object emphasizing the beginning sound: - Cup (cup, ccuupp, the first sound in cup is /c/ - Ball (ball, bbaallll, the first sound in ball is /b/ - Pen (pen, ppeenn, the first sound in pen is /p/ - Sock (sock, ssoocckk, the first sound in sock is /s/ - Fork (fork, ffororkk, the first sound in fork is /f/ Then say, "I spy an object that begins with the /s/ sound". Child picks up sock, and repeats, "/s/ sock." Continue playing the sound game with remaining objects. If child wishes to continue to play, start with new toys or objects.	Additional resources: Fundation Letter Cards ABC: https://youtu.be/2MMiie4vNwk

	Take a "Sound Walk" outdoors and walk until you hear a sound, stop, and tell what sound you hear.	
Sound/letter recognition: 15 minutes a day	In a sealed, plastic sandwich or storage bag, place a non-toxic gooey substance (school glue, pudding, icing, etc.). Allow children to write the letters of their name, initial sounds of objects, etc. on the surface of the bag. Children also enjoy matching pictures of objects to initial letter sounds. Play this Back-to-Back Sound Game: On old envelopes or scrap pieces of paper, write a letter on each paper or envelope. Place these in front of child who is sitting on floor. Review what sounds each letter represents. For example, say, "This is the sound /s/ and this is what "s" looks like when we write it as a letter." Repeat for each letter sound. Then sit back to back with child on the floor. Say a sound aloud and ask child to choose which letter in front of them represents that sound when we write it. Repeat for each letter. Continue playing as long as child remains interested.	
Dramatic and pretend play: 60 minutes a day	Choose toys or other items around the house to represent ideas, characters, and objects to tell an original story or reenact a familiar story. Allow children to dress up as characters. Old cereal boxes, socks, and paper plates can be transformed into puppet faces.	Example of dramatic play: *The Bakery* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXqyum4YeEc
Writing: 15 minutes a day	Set up a space with crayons, markers, and/or pencils with scrap paper for children to draw/illustrate favorite events from a story read to them. Ask children to describe the message or story they wrote.	Additional writing resources: https://www.123homeschool4me.com/alphabet-printables
Math Concept Exploration	**Description**	**Resources for Additional Ideas**

Oral counting to 30	Practice counting throughout the day during wait times, transitions between activities, or washing hands	https://www.education.com/game/counting-pizza-party/ All I Want to do is Count (Pre-K Counting Numbers): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7ZkiSHbbzA The Number Rock: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PA3RsVVdh8
Counting and cardinality memory game: 15 minutes a day	On folded pieces of scrap paper, write numerals 0–12. Place folded numerals inside a sock, basket, hat, bag, box, or other container. Ask child to take a folded paper out and look at the numeral without telling what numeral he/she has. Then, the child goes and brings that "many" toys or other objects for you to see. Child counts the toys/objects and shows you the numeral. Verify the quantity and numeral match-up. Repeat as long as child remains interested.	How to Represent Numbers - Jack Hartmann: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAQ2HTqTl2w
Exploring, recognizing, describing shapes: 10 minutes a day	Shape hunt: Walk your child around the house and see how many circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles he/she can find. Example: the door is a rectangle.	Additional Resources: Sesame Street - Elmo Sings about Circles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPROADxPfjU Sesame Street - Grover & Rosita Triangles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDqChRDPnZc Sesame Street – It's Hip to be Square: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdcHzquaMh8
Addition and subtraction to 10: 15 minutes a day	Create addition and subtraction story problems using buttons, toys, coins, socks, etc. For example, "4 socks are dirty and need to be washed and are in the basket. 2 more socks were added to the basket. How many socks need to be washed now?" Repeat as long as children are interested.	Additional Resources: Ten Frame Song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLiwP_hxdQc I Can Say My Number Pairs 10 - Math Song for Kids - Number Bonds - Jack Hartmann: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ch7KzI3n2Zk What Numbers Make 10 - Learn to Add - Kindergarten Addition Song - Math for Kid -Jack Hartmann: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBkpC29_GaI
Music/Art/Movement	**Description**	**Resources for Additional ideas**

Sing/dance/move	Between activities or during TV commercials, get up and sing and dance.	Movement Video: Go Noodle: I'm Still Standing https://family.gonoodle.com/activities/im-still-standing Freeze Dance Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UcZWXvgMZE
Work-outs	10 jumping jacks • 5 push ups • 5 squats • 5 sit ups • 5 jumps Repeat 2-3 times	
Yoga poses and stretches	Show picture of a yoga pose and see if child can create and hold the pose	https://zensationalkids.com/resources/free-tools-for-students/
Science	**Description**	**Resources for Additional ideas**
Learn all about animals		Switcheroo Zoo--Watch, listen, and play games to learn all about animals www.switcheroozoo.com
Social Studies	**Description**	**Resources for Additional ideas**
Learn about geography and animal facts		Nat Geo for Kids—Learn all about geography and fascinating animals www.kidsnationalgeographic.com