

School Closure Toolkit: School-administered Before/After Care Programs

4/27/2020

I. Summary

When schools close, program directors must make important decisions to determine if before and after school program should close or stay open. Then, program directors must 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:

- Checklists regarding decisions pertaining to school-administered before/after care programs,
- Best practices for programs that remain open or plan to re-open,
- Guidance for thinking through procedures,
- List of instructional, health, and safety resources for parents and others who care for and educate children.

For questions related to school-based administered child care closures, monitoring requirements, and/or healthy and safety guidelines, please contact Misty Moody, Senior Director of School-based Services at Misty.Moody@tn.gov.

II. Checklist

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

Decide whether to remain closed or re-open program

The recommended first step in making this determination is to consider what guidance is being received from your local health department. In addition, review your insurance and business interruption policies, as well as [guidance](#) from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Child Care Aware has created a [flow chart](#) to help programs make an informed decision. The following checklist can also assist programs in determining whether to remain closed or to reopen:

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 eliminating 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:

- Making hand cleaning supplies readily available
- Encouraging children and staff to stay home if sick
- Planning for digital and distance learning where appropriate
- 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
- Planning ways to continue children services such as meal programs
- Planning for staff, visitors, and children to [wear masks](#).

If there is any changes to your regular programming, please:

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](#). Please notify your program evaluator and/or Misty Moody with your plans of re-opening.

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 or re-opens:

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 (once per hour) 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.
 - [Hand sanitizers](#) should not replace soap and water.

*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 for a minimum of 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid working with unwrapped or exposed food.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Use gloves to avoid direct bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.
- 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:
 - Virtual Farm Tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-FQsNH0fXI>
 - San Diego Zoo: <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>
 - Georgia Aquarium: <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/ocean-voyager/>
 - The Smithsonian: <https://www.si.edu/>
 - The Grand Old Opry: <https://www.opry.com/>
- 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
- Follow Chapter 0520-12-01, Standards for School-administered Child Care rules concerning notifying the CDC as well as family and staff if someone comes into contact or tests positive for COVID-19.

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

For non-Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) programs: 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.

If you are a CCDBG programs and have not completed the necessary back ground checks listed in your contract with DHS, you will need to fulfill this requirement ASAP to ensure there isn’t a disruption of funding.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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*		<i>*Include steps for checking children and staff for signs of illness when then arrive</i>
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*	<i>*Note: It is recommended that field trips be cancelled</i>	

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](#)

Before/After School learning resources:

- Afterschool Alliance: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>
- USDA Team Nutrition Cooks: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cooks>
- Tennessee 4-H Programs: <https://4h.tennessee.edu/Pages/default.aspx>
- TDOE Grantee page: <https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/extended-learning/grantees-corner.html>
- Foundations Inc.: <https://foundationsinc.org/resources/>
- National Afterschool Association: <https://naaweb.org/resources>
- Y4Y: <https://y4y.ed.gov/learn/>