

DCFS, Illinois Board of Education, IDHS, and Governor Pritzker have chosen to not close licensed community-based childcare.

From United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) re Coronavirus disease (COVID-19):

**What parents should know. How to protect yourself and your children.
Should I take my child out of school?**

If your child is having symptoms, seek medical care, and follow the instructions from the health care provider. Otherwise, as with other respiratory infections like the flu, keep your child well rested at home while symptomatic, and avoid going to public places, to prevent spread to others.

If your child isn't displaying any symptoms such as a fever or cough – and unless a public health advisory or other relevant warning or official advice has been issued affecting your child's school – it's best to keep your child in class.

Instead of keeping children out of school, teach them good hand and respiratory hygiene practices for school and elsewhere, like frequent hand washing (see below), covering cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or tissue, then throwing away the tissue into a closed bin, not touching their eyes, mouths or noses if they haven't properly washed their hands.

<https://www.unicef.org/stories/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-what-parents-should-know#should-take-child-out-school>

From Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Dept. of Human Services (IDHS): Parent Assurance: "Licensed providers provide care that meets health and safety standards each day."

Please consider below in deciding to send your children to childcare or to keep them home:

Why DCFS Licensed Childcares are Generally Safer than Home Care

Licensed Centers do these things that are uncommon at home:

1. Monitor *proper thorough* 20 second hand washing (face as needed) before and after meals, after sneezes or wiping nose, coming in from outside, using bathroom, etc.
2. Assure adults do the same.
3. Use only single-use throw-away paper towels to dry hands; no common-use family towels;
4. Use step-opening trash cans to avoid hand contact;
5. Sanitize tables before and after meals;
6. Sanitize toys/ surfaces children touch regularly for children under five; more often for children under age three.
7. Sanitize all dishes/ eating utensils in 3-step process measuring water temperature, using proper bleach solution, etc. in 3-section sink or using a super-hot commercial dishwasher -- not the type used in homes;
8. Take children outside daily for gross motor exercise and fresh air while reducing germs inside. Close weekends allowing more resistant viruses/ germs to die. (Homes *without* children during the day are freer of germs when the family arrives.)
9. Bar all smoking in and near the site.
10. Serve at least 3 balanced dietician-approved meals per day prepared, in sanitary kitchen setting monitored by Health Department (and closed if not in compliance).
11. Contract RN to monitor monthly in infant-toddler centers; for all age groups, full-time licensed professional educators trained in health issues guide licensed teachers trained similarly.
12. Abide by Building Code requirements of square feet per floor area of natural light and ventilation. Childcare Code requires almost two to three times more space per child than public or private schools.

The above considerations apply more to flu and colds than to COVID-19, because children's bodies are largely resistant. There is *so far no evidence* that children with **asthma** are more likely to contract COVID-19, although flu and colds are still a threat to all ages with or without medical conditions.

However, if you or your children or any family members show signs of illness, keep children at home and consult doctor for further instructions.

Do not assign grandparents (high risk vulnerability to COVID-19) or other children (unfamiliar with sanitation, safety and health issues) to care for young children.

Keep well,

Peter Porr, Educational Specialist and Run-Hao Hu, Director of Children's Services

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