

Guidance on Childcare Centers

Email from Governor John Carney:

This is an uncertain time, and Delawareans have understandable questions about the potential impact of [coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) on their families and communities.

We've repeatedly heard versions of this question: *Why would the state close schools, but recommend that childcare centers remain open?*

The current guidance from the Delaware Division of Public Health on childcare centers is that it is safe for them to stay open. The guidance from the CDC is the same. These are controlled environments. We know who comes in, and who goes out. Children are not a high-risk population for infection or serious illness – though they can transmit the virus to high-risk populations.

While the same can also be said for schools, I directed Delaware public schools to close from March 16-27 because there is significant uncertainty around spread of the virus, and how long this outbreak may last. Schools need this time to plan for the possibility of extended closures. They need to make sure they can provide learning opportunities in the event of extended school and business closures. They need plans to deliver meals and other social services that children and families rely on – and will continue to rely on – in the event this lasts for weeks or months. Over the next two weeks, state officials will help school leaders develop those plans.

We need this pause in our K-12 schools, and keeping childcare centers open during this period will help us prepare for what comes next. Closing childcare centers today would have significant impacts on Delaware workers and families, including our state's front line health care workers, and ultimately make it harder for us to respond to the outbreak.

Let's be clear: every decision we make is intended to protect Delaware families. To that end, we are relying on our experts

at the Division of Public Health, and the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, for day-to-day guidance, and up-to-the-minute advice.

If at any point the guidance shifts and we believe there's a risk that indicates closure, we will move to close childcare centers. That day could come tomorrow. It could come next week. It may never come. But today, we are asking centers to stay open based on the guidance.

We are also working hard to make sure that childcare workers continue to get paid in the event of closures.

Delawareans can help us fight the spread of this virus. Wash your hands. Cover your cough. Stay home as much as you can, and don't go to work if you feel sick. We will get through this – and the precautions you take will help.

Sincerely,

Governor John Carney