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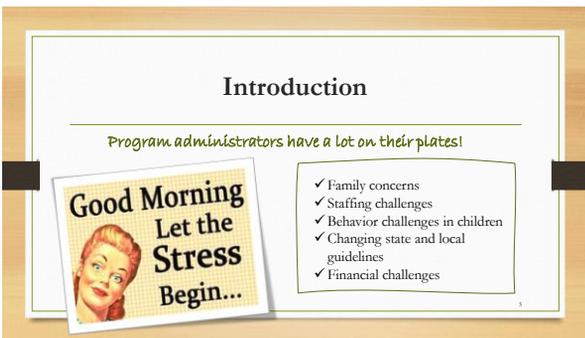
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### First things first:

- ✓ Locate reliable sources of information at the national, state, and local levels.
- ✓ Recognize the complex and dynamic nature of information available on any given day. Be ready to be flexible.



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### Start with critical tasks.



1. Update health and sanitation policies.
2. Strengthen communication systems.
3. Focus on a positive work environment for staff.
4. Develop back-up plans for staffing challenges.
5. Create an emotionally supportive environment for children.
6. Anticipate an uptick in children's challenging behavior.
7. Develop plans for your own self-care.

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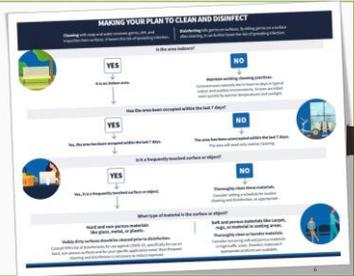
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### 1. Update health and sanitation policies and plan for increased and changing demands.



Source: [https://www.ed.gov/comsumas/2019/score/community/pdf/ReOpening\\_America\\_Cleaning\\_Disinfection\\_Decision\\_Tool.pdf](https://www.ed.gov/comsumas/2019/score/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf)

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**CHILD CARE PROGRAMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

“The purpose of this tool is to assist directors and administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding child care programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.” – CDC.gov

There are many factors that determine best practices for individual programs.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/comnavnet/2019-stccc/community/schools-childcare/Childcare-Decision-Tree.pdf>

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**Consider changes that may need to be made to your existing policies.**

For example, consider pick up and drop off policies.

**CDC Guidelines:**

- “Consider staggering arrival and drop off times and plan to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible. Have child care providers greet children outside as they arrive.
- Designate a parent to be the drop off/pick up volunteer to walk all children to their classroom, and at the end of the day, walk all children back to their cars.
- Infants could be transported in their car seats. Store car seat out of children’s reach.”

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/comnavnet/2019-stccc/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#pickup>

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**Find ways to delegate responsibilities for health and sanitation.**

Designate someone to specialize in these tasks and procedures for them to follow.

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**Review plans for responding to sick children.**



- Plan how you will identify and confirm a child is ill and how families and staff will be informed.
- Identify where a sick child can wait safely for pick up.
- Develop procedures for sanitizing areas where sick children have been.

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**2. Review and strengthen communication systems with families, staff, and your resource network.**



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**Share new policies and procedures with staff and families.**

- Write your plan down and share with staff and families.
- Share changes in procedures with children, when age-appropriate.



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### Review and update family emergency contact information.



- Confirm accuracy of contact forms with families.
- Plan to systematically verify contact information to make sure it is correct.

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### Use familiar two-way communication systems with families.



- If you don't have an existing system, develop one.
- Consider a digital option that would serve the same purpose.

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### Be (even more) alert to adult stress and increased frustration.

Strengthen communication systems with families so you can provide support and share your expertise.

**Administrators might:**

- ✓ Compile a community resource list that you can share with families.
- ✓ Share information with families about common challenges experienced when children are under stress.
- ✓ Make your program a place where parents can feel safe asking questions, and where you can be a resource.



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**Anticipate a potential increase in child abuse and substance abuse in homes related to an increase in parental stress.**

- Review mandatory reporting procedures.
  - Offer retraining for experienced staff and include it as part of your initial training of new staff.
- Use role play and simulations to practice these procedures.
- Review what teachers should do if they feel concerned. Review mandatory reporting policies to confirm that they identify appropriate strategies for confidentiality and guidance to limit information sharing between and among staff.

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**3. Strengthen relationships with staff and focus on cultivating a positive work environment.**



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**Check in with staff more often.**



- Make sure you check in with each staff member at least once a day.
- Provide positive feedback.

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### Revisit sick policies for staff.

- Review sick leave policy with staff, making sure they understand that illness will be handled with compassion *and* that sick people will not be allowed to work.
- Clarify policies regarding compensation for sick leave.
- Communicate staff sick policies with families.



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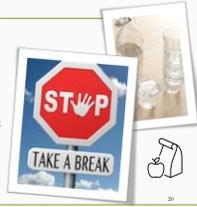
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### Attend to staff health, well-being, and rest.

- Provide scheduled opportunities for employees to eat and stay hydrated.
- In addition to scheduled breaks, consider ways you might offer teachers a break when they have been dealing with especially stressful situations.



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### Provide a place for teachers to rest and take breaks during the day.

- Create a procedure that allows teachers to ask for support in the classroom when they need it.

*Family child care providers, consider who you can ask to help you get regular breaks. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.*



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#### 4. Develop back-up plans for inevitable absenteeism and staffing changes.

*"The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining."*

*-John F. Kennedy*



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#### Look for ways to increase staffing and lower ratios.

**For example:**

- Use staffing pools with other programs.
- Over-hiring additional staff or utilizing floating staff positions.
- Initiate internship programs for new teachers who train in your program.
- Invite students from nearby high schools and community colleges to observe and participate in your program.



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#### Update your orientation and training program for new staff.

- Make sure onboarding procedures are comprehensive and ready to implement when needed. Combine in classroom experiences and out of classroom study, reading, and mentoring experiences.
- Implement a comprehensive phased orientation process for new staff to ensure their success.
- Provide feedback early, often, and from a variety of perspectives.



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**4. Create an emotionally supportive environment for children.**

The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.  
Bruce D. Perry

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**Arrange your classroom to be emotionally supportive.**

A cozy place for children to take a break

A place to watch other children play

Places to be with an adult.

Places to play with friends

Source: <https://www.communitythings.com/inspiration/room-inspirations/roomscapes>

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**Add lots of photos of people children love, posted at eye level.**

Children need to see familiar faces, especially if teachers are wearing masks.

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Add books exploring big emotions.

Books!

Books!

Books!

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Consider the impact of masks on adult communication with children.

- Well-considered strategies to use when children can't see emotional cues from faces covered by masks.

Image source: <https://www.insider.co.uk/news/startup-making-masks-designed-ip-22/29907>

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Consider implementing block scheduling.

- Block scheduling that allows children to sustain interests with fewer transitions.

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**Focus on emotional and social curriculum.**

- A focus on emotional and social curriculum, even if it means spending less time on academics.

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**Provide strength-based feedback on successful emotional and social teaching strategies.**

*Staff who focus on relationships by :*

- ✓ Providing predictable, warm, individualized responses to children.
- ✓ Using the language of encouragement (instead of praise).
- ✓ Responding promptly to children who are upset.
- ✓ Providing time for children to calm down and recover from big emotions.
- ✓ Preparing children for transitions reminders that a transition is coming. Allowing time for children to wrap up their activities and get ready to move on.
- ✓ Helping children make and be friends.
- ✓ Offering plenty of opportunities for dramatic and sensory play.

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**Activities to Add to Your Social-Emotional Curriculum**

Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers	School-Agers
Playing peek-a-boo	Building with soft blocks	Dramatic play	Construction projects with boxes
Sing songs	Water play or other soothing sensory play	Outside play and other ways to use large muscle groups	Playing turn-taking games
Lap time play	Singing familiar songs	Side-by-side art activities	Exploring social and professional roles
Joining babies on the floor	One-on-one play with teachers	Sensory activities like play-dough	Reading books alone or with friends




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### Plan for primary caregiving for children.



**CDC guidelines:**  
"If possible, child care classes should include the same group each day, and the same child care providers should remain with the same group each day."

- We know this strategy also supports healthy emotional development. Now is a great time to focus on it.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/community/schools-children/guidance-for-childcare.html#open>

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### 6. Anticipate an uptick in emotionality and challenging behavior for some children.



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### Encourage the use of security items and other strategies to help children feel connected to their families.

- Consider ways you can safely accommodate children's needs to have security items from home at school.



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### Help staff to expect and accommodate regression and increased emotionality.

Regression is a normal response to stress.

**Examples of regression:**

- Suddenly not able to soothe selves to sleep
- Difficulty following two step directions
- Challenges with controlling impulses, leading to more aggression and less emotional control



*Research shows that most children will return to their previous levels of development as their circumstances normalize.*

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### Prepare to support staff in coping with an increase in challenging behaviors.

- Look for strengths in your staff - pair up teachers who are having struggles to talk with each other and come up with shared strategies to try.
- Continue to check in regularly with staff so you can be aware of new and ongoing challenges.



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### Consider gradual or incremental enrollment when families return to child care.

**Some ideas to consider:**

- Plan a visit before you open. Invite children and their parents to visit in group sizes that meet your state's guidelines.
- Consider a virtual visit.
- Think about incremental returns.



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### 7. Develop specific and continuing plans for self-care in the context of an ongoing crisis.



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### Expect that there will be crises, challenges, and problems.

*Cultivate an attitude of flexibility and resilience.*



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### Create a place of refuge for yourself.



#### ideas for your office:

- ❖ Bottled water, tea, or coffee
- ❖ A comfortable chair
- ❖ Plants (real or artificial)
- ❖ Photos that make you smile
- ❖ Artwork
- ❖ Inspirational quotes
- ❖ Essential oil diffuser
- ❖ A speaker to play music

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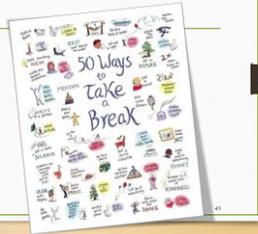
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### Create a self-care checklist.

- For most people a good start includes:
  - ✓ Nourishing food
  - ✓ Plenty of water
  - ✓ Healthy movement
  - ✓ Adequate rest

Don't forget emotional self-care!



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### Keep your own pitcher full.



Image by Kristina Weiss. Source: <https://northmapaths.com/graphics-free-downloads/>

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### Conclusion

- We have offered you more than 30 strategies to consider as you prepare to re-open or settle into the new normal in your program.
- Consider it a toolbox – take what you need most now, and just get started.



When the world seems out of control, taking charge of the things within our control can be empowering!

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**Contact Information**

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Find out more about  
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