

CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE® CREDENTIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Insights, Perspectives and Best Practices as Child Care Environments Re-open

The CDA® Advisory Committee provides insights, perspectives, and best practices to CDAs and other early childhood professionals who are facing what it means to re-open their learning environments in the midst of the COVID-19 health crisis.

The members of the committee are:

- **Patty Berron**, Mission, Texas: CDA for 29 years at an early childhood education center
- **April Bramble**, Ellenwood, Georgia: CDA for two years at a center
- **Keisha McClendon**, Atlanta, Georgia: CDA Professional Development Specialist™, held a CDA for seven years, and currently works at a Head Start center
- **Charvella McKaye**, Columbus, Ohio: Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Development and Education, Columbus State Community College; oversees CDA preparation program
- **Jenny Sanchez**, Miami, Florida: CDA for 25 years at a preschool center

The [CDC](#) guidelines are seen as the rules by which all child care providers should follow: Child care providers should also regularly check state and local government websites for specific details.

Rules to Adopt

- **Drop off procedure:** Child care providers can meet parents at the front door. Parents should not come inside the center for drop off.
- **Check-in process:** Child care providers should check-in each child.
- **Read temperatures:** Check temperature of all children.
- **Ask health questions:** Inquire if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or has been exposed to anyone at home with COVID-19. Also determine if anyone in the family or at home is a caretaker for someone with COVID-19.

Best Practices

- **Hold virtual meetings:** Meetings with parents and children allows time to answer questions and explain new procedures. You may consider holding a meeting for parents and another meeting with parents and children.
- **Place posters outside the center:** Allows parents to be aware of guidelines prior to entering the building.

- **Give each child their own supplies:** At this time sharing is discouraged. Each child should receive their own box of pencils, crayons scissors, etc.
- **Remove highly touched items:** Items such as pillows, blankets should be removed from classrooms and other heavily touched items.
- **Keep personal items at home:** Ask parents to keep personal toys, games, water bottles, etc. at home.
- **Distribution of meals or snacks:** Food should no longer be served in a family style of dining.
- **Sanitize classroom:** Each room must be sanitized at the end of the day.
- **Explore social-emotional learning:** Keep in mind that this is a stressful time for both children and adults. The American Red Cross offers training on how to create an ideal environment for young learners during traumatic events. In addition, center directors should encourage staff to be aware and monitor their mental health and make them aware of the options available should there be a need.
- **Inform parents of consequences:** Be prepared to inform parents that if they chose not to comply with health guidelines that the center will need to ask the child not to attend, for the overall well-being of the child care community.
- **Considerations for smaller classrooms:** Providers may need to make tough decisions regarding classroom size. Some providers have decided to give priority to those children entering kindergarten in the fall. Children with IEPs and special needs are also being given priority space in many instances.

Fun Ideas

- **Be creative:** Think of engaging ways to turn new rules into fun games. This will help to prevent children from becoming frustrated with constant reminders to follow the guidelines.
- **Demonstrate proper mask etiquette:** The use of dolls to demonstrate how to wear a mask is a fun and effective way to convey the importance of wearing a mask correctly.
- **Convey the importance of wearing a mask:** Use age appropriate examples that are relevant to young children. For example, remind them just like Superman needs to wear his cape, you need to wear your mask.
- **Communicate with a mask:** It's hard to see a smile under a mask. Teach children ways to express themselves with a mask. They can have expressive eyes with a wink or raised eyebrow. Perhaps share a few emotion words in sign language.
- **Make what is old, new again:** Create new lyrics for familiar songs, such as Old MacDonald. Here is an example of updated verses: "I protect you wearing my mask, Ee i ee i o. You protect me wearing your mask, Ee i ee i o."
- **Encourage new ways to convey feelings:** Children may be accustomed to hugs, but they are no longer appropriate in the classroom. You can teach children to air hug, hug a teddy bear or hug themselves.
- **Create fun social distance areas:** Children can sit in the middle of hula hoops, carpet squares that are six feet apart. Children can't share toys but can play with similar toys six feet apart.

Additional Online Resources

American Red Cross

- Psychological First Aid Online Course: www.redcross.org/take-a-class/coronavirus-information/psychological-first-aid-online-course
- How to Talk to your Kids about Coronavirus: www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-how-to-talk-to-your-kids.html?fbclid=IwAR1vGnWzVI6kuN4F4ZYO3maj_a13Qetsig68nR8-RS15YtAbO7Dez9nAq8
- Dealing with Stress During COVID-19 (Spanish): www.redcross.org/cruz-roja/obtener-ayuda/tipos-de-emergencias/consejos-de-seguridad-para-coronavirus/lidiar-con-el-estres-durante-el-covid-19.html
- Stay Safe As Your Community Reopens: www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/stay-safe-as-your-community-reopens.html

Autism Little Learners

- www.autismlittlelearners.com/search/label/COVID-19?fbclid=IwAR24cPmu7jq9g_AaJugzwmMFZNHPIK4rduF2_WP6FYw4w2r7HwOva7rCy_Y&m=1

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- Spanish: <https://espanol.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Committee for Economic Development

- Resources to support child care providers during COVID-19: www.ced.org/coronaviruschildcare
- Policy brief about the ECE workforce investment tax credit: www.ced.org/reports/early-learning/pathways-to-high-quality-child-care (includes national and state infographics)
- ECE workforce tax credit toolkit: www.ced.org/toolkits/early-childhood-workforce-tax-credit
- Digital engagement toolkit in support of ECE workforce: <https://www.ced.org/toolkits/early-childhood-workforce> (includes PSA and video)

Ready.gov

- Resource page: www.ready.gov/coronavirus
- Spanish: www.ready.gov/es

World Health Organization

- COVID-19 Resource Page: www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
- Spanish: www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019