



December 26, 2024

Dear Provider:

Preventing and effectively responding to illness plays a key role in ensuring the well-being of the children in care and maintaining a healthy environment for all. With colder weather approaching, it's important to remember that respiratory virus infections such as COVID- 19, seasonal influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can be dangerous in young children. Please take the time to read through this letter, review helpful reminders, and remember to share the information with the adults in your program.

Handwashing

Handwashing is an easy and effective way to stop the spread of germs. Staff and children should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for 20 to 30 seconds. Handwashing must occur at the beginning of each day, before and after handling food or eating, after toileting or changing a diaper, when coming inside from outdoors, after contact with any bodily secretion or fluid, after handling animals, and whenever needed to help prevent the spread of germs.



Sanitizing



All rooms, equipment, surfaces, supplies, and furnishings accessible to children must be cleaned and then sanitized using an EPA registered product. This should be done in a manner consistent with the program's approved Health Care Plan.

Health Checks

It's important to recognize early signs of illness and respond promptly. Children may appear well at arrival and develop symptoms of illness throughout the day. In accordance with your program's Health Care Plan, perform daily health checks upon a child's arrival at the program and whenever a change in the child's behavior and/or appearance is noted. Parents must be notified immediately of any change in the child's condition or if the necessary care exceeds what your program can safely provide. If a parent cannot be reached or if the child's condition warrants, emergency medical treatment must be obtained without delay by calling 911.



Health Care Plans



Now is a good time to review your program's Health Care Plan. Train staff to be familiar with symptoms of illness and communicable disease, as well as the exclusion criteria listed in Section 1 of the Health Care Plan. Remind staff and parents of the importance of staying home when sick.

Immunizations

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) encourages the public to remain up to date on vaccines and to avoid close contact with people who are sick. [Click here](#) for more information on immunization requirements for regulated child care attendance.

The mandatory annual Day Care and Preschool Immunization Survey is expected to open on February 3, 2025. Please visit the Health Commerce System (HCS) at <https://commerce.health.state.ny.us/> to make sure you can log in and that your email address is up to date. If you do not yet have a HCS account, please email OSAS@health.ny.gov for information on how to get signed up before the start of the survey. DOH will send an email with instructions when the survey opens. Please note, **a separate survey for group family day care (GFDC) will open later in the spring**. If your organization is a GFDC, please follow the instructions above to get set up in HCS and DOH will send an email to let you know when your survey will open.

For the most up-to-date information on respiratory virus infections visit: <https://www.health.ny.gov/> and <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/about/>

Wishing you healthy and happy days ahead!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nora Yates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nora K. Yates
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services