

Governor Phil Murphy

# NJ DCF Announces Safety Guidelines to Reopen Childcare Centers

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## ***Safety Standards Will Protect Children, Staff and Families as New Jersey Continues Reopening Strategy***

**TRENTON** – Following Governor Murphy’s signing today of Executive Order No. 149, which will reopen childcare centers in the State of New Jersey beginning June 15, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families today released specific operating guidance for centers in order to preserve the health and safety of children, staff and the families being served.

“This is an important step forward in New Jersey’s reopening strategy, ensuring a safe, stable and seamless childcare infrastructure for New Jersey’s returning workforce, not just those designated as essential,” **said NJ DCF Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW.** “And it probably comes as welcome relief for parents who did not know how they were going to juggle summer care or childcare needs with their job responsibilities. But in order to be able to take this step safely, we have to move forward in a planful and methodical way to support centers and camps in reducing the likelihood of spreading the virus.”

The childcare safety guidelines, which were posted on the NJ DCF website ([https://www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus\\_licensedchildcare.html](https://www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus_licensedchildcare.html)) and will be communicated to all licensed childcare centers in the State of New Jersey, would require centers to abide by certain safety guidelines as a condition of reopening. Among the safe guidelines for childcare centers:

- Centers will be required to screen children and staff each day, prior to entry into the center. Anyone exhibiting symptoms or with a fever over 100.4 will be prohibited from entering the center.
- Class and group sizes will be limited, and groups must be spaced out throughout the center. Staff members will not be able to move between groups.
- Staff will be required to wear cloth masks, and children over the age of 2 will be encouraged, whenever feasible, to wear masks. Masks will not be required when they would inhibit an individual's health. Masks for children under the age of 2 or during nap-time will be prohibited as they may pose a suffocation hazard for young children.
- Childcare centers will be required to engage in enhanced cleaning and sanitation practices.

Licensed childcare centers will be required to file an attestation form with the Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, indicating that they plan to reopen and will follow the prescribed safety guidelines, modeled after best practices and standards released by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health organizations. Office of Licensing inspectors will begin to visit licensed childcare centers beginning June 15 in order to support centers in implementing safety guidance.

“New Jersey’s childcare centers are among the best in the nation, held to some of the most stringent standards of care,” **said Commissioner Beyer.** “We know that this has been a hardship on many of them, as

 Back  
to top

they have had to curtail business operations unless certified as an emergency childcare center. We also recognize that these necessary closures were hard on our working families and their children. Childcare centers aren't just a critical part of our state's economy, but they also provide critical social and emotional supports to so many young families.

"A lot is being asked of them now, but we really couldn't ask for a community of providers better suited to rise up and meet these challenges head on," **added Commissioner Beyer.**

## Governor Phil Murphy

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[Statements on Legislation](#)

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