



Office of Children and Family Services

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

SHEILA J. POOLE
Commissioner

November 14, 2022

Dear Provider:

As the cold weather creeps in, cases of respiratory viruses creep up. Respiratory virus infections such as COVID-19, seasonal influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can be dangerous in young children. To help keep New Yorkers healthy, Governor Hochul recently launched a public awareness campaign warning of the triple threat posed by these respiratory illnesses. The campaign includes resources and videos outlining the steps to take to protect yourself and your family. To view the clips, click [here](#). The New York State Department of Health (DOH) released a Health Advisory Notice in September encouraging the public to remain up to date on vaccines, and to avoid close contact with people who are sick. For the most up to date information on respiratory virus infections visit: [DOH RSV](#).

This letter contains important reminders on how to prevent and respond to illness in your child care program. Please take the time to review the regulations regarding health and infection control and your program's Health Care Plan, and be sure to share all of this information with staff and families.

Handwashing

Handwashing is an easy effective way to stop the spread of germs. Staff and children are required to thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for a duration of 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 or disinfected, using an EPA registered product, as needed to protect the health of children, and in a manner consistent with the program's health care plan approved by the Office.

Health Checks

Often children seem fine at arrival but develop symptoms of illness as the day progresses. Perform daily health checks in accordance with your program's Health Care Plan 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 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 the time to review your program's Health Care Plan. Ensure staff are 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 they are sick.

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) released a [Health Advisory Notice](#) in September encouraging the public to remain up to date on vaccines, and to avoid close contact with people who are sick. For the most up to date information on respiratory virus infections visit: <https://www.health.ny.gov/> and <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>.

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 Yates
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services

Attachment

