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Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

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Child Care Setting Restriction FAQs

On March 18th, Governor Evers and Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm [ordered](#) new restrictions on the size of child care settings. Under the order, child care settings may not operate with more than 10 staff present at a time and may not operate with more than 50 children present at a time. These restrictions go into effect at 8am on Thursday, March 19th.

Child care settings are encouraged to prioritize their services for essential workers, including first responders and health care providers to help minimize disruption to vital services.

Which facilities fall under this order?

Under the order, “child care setting” means all licensed and certified child care providers caring for any age or ages of children up to 18 years of age.

Are staff who are volunteering exempt under this order?

No. “Staff” means paid or unpaid adult rendering services or providing support to the function of a child care setting.

Are child care settings that remain open under this order subject to any other restrictions?

Child care settings operating under this order must follow the Department of Families [guidance order #2](#) or any order superseding that order. Additionally, child care settings must comply with all other state statutes and administrative rules, as modified by the [Emergency Order for the Department of Children and Families Administrative Rule Suspension and Emergency Orders](#) issued March 15th.

How should parents and guardians drop off or pick up their kids?

To the extent possible, parents and guardians must practice social distancing of at least 6 feet from other adults and follow all other Department of Health Services public health guidance while picking up and dropping off children at the child care setting.

Are child care settings that have 10 or less staff and 50 or less children able to close?

Yes. Voluntary closure beyond the requirements of this order is permitted and left to the decision of individual providers. All programs should continue to use their emergency pandemic plans and stay in contact with their county health departments.

Why are certain child care settings remaining open when schools are closed and there are mass gathering restrictions?

Many healthcare, sanitation, emergency response, and other essential workers will not be able to perform their job duties without access to reliable child care. Additionally, children are at a lower risk of serious complications from COVID-19 [than the elderly and those with serious chronic medical conditions](#).

How long will this order remain in effect?

The order will remain in effect for the duration of the public health emergency and will be re-evaluated as updated information becomes available.

How will this order be enforced?

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 252.25 violation or obstruction of this order is punishable by imprisonment, fines, or both.