

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDANCE AND HEALTHY PRACTICES FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

El Rancho School in coordination with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Department of Education (CDE) developed this information regarding social and physical distancing for our child care center.

We are committed to supporting our child care providers who continue to provide quality care for the children of families working on the frontlines against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Essential workers include health care workers, emergency personnel, and first responders battling against this health crisis and those providing the vital services that we depend on daily, such as utilities. They also include employees from a wide range of businesses, such as grocery stores, gas stations, and hardware stores.

Child care providers deliver care and supervision for our essential workforce and play a key role in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 within our communities. This provides guidance by public health regarding social and physical distancing and healthy practices to prevent exposure to the virus. This guidance should be followed until June 30, 2020, or an earlier date upon written notice from the Department, after which time previous licensing rules and guidance shall apply. Child care providers must comply with more rigorous requirements if ordered by federal, state governments.

Social and Physical Distancing: Social and physical distancing is a practice recommended by public health officials to slow down the spread of disease. It requires the intentional creation of physical space between individuals who may spread contagious and infectious diseases. It additionally requires canceling or postponing the number of gatherings and group activities, reducing all group sizes, and maintaining six feet of distance between every individual, as much as possible. Specific to child care it is important to adhere to the following distancing guidelines:

- Children will remain in groups as small as possible not to exceed ratio and capacity requirements of 1 teacher to 10 students. It is important to keep the same children and teacher or staff with each group and include children from the same family in the same group, to the greatest extent possible. Siblings in the preschool will remain together while K-6th siblings will stay together in another area.
- Extending the indoor environment to outdoors, and bring the class outside, weather permitting is where we will spend a good part of the day. Circle time/morning meetings will be outside, and teachers will pull small groups of students for lessons outside.
- Opening windows to ventilate facilities before and after children arrive will be common practice.
- Arranging developmentally appropriate activities for smaller group activities and rearrange furniture and play spaces to maintain 6-foot separation, when possible is being practiced.
- We are finding creative ways to use yarn, masking tape, and other materials for children to create their own space.

•El Rancho School is implementing screening procedures for all staff and children. All students must be walked into school. We will meet you just inside the school gate. You will notice that the gate that is normally locked, will be open from 6:30-9 AM and 3-6 PM, which are our busiest times of day as parents are dropping off/picking up their child. We will be asking all individuals about any symptoms (primarily fever, cough, difficulty breathing or other signs of illness within the last 24 hours) – that they, or someone in their homes, might have. We will also ask individuals if they have had any exposure to another individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases.

•We are following procedures daily for self-screening for all staff and children. This should include taking temperatures before arriving to work or beginning care.

•We are training our staff about the new screening procedures and to notify caregivers about self-screening. We ask caregivers to screen themselves and children daily, prior to coming to your facility. Caregiver must also notify the school if children have taken any fever reducing medications in the prior 24 hours.

•If anyone has a temperature of 100.4°F/38°C or higher they must be excluded from the facility. It is recommended as a best practice to take children’s temperature each morning only if the facility uses a no-touch thermometer. The no touch thermometer needs to be wiped with an alcohol wipe after each use. If the facility uses a thermometer requiring a touch-method (under the tongue or arm, forehead, etc.), it should only be used when a fever is suspected. Thermometers must be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.

•We will be monitoring staff and children throughout the day for any signs of possible illness. If staff or a child exhibit signs of illness, follow the facility procedures for isolation from the general room population and notify the caregiver immediately to pick up the child.

•We have implemented and will enforce strict handwashing guidelines for all staff and children. There are posted signs in restrooms and near sinks that convey proper handwashing techniques.

•El Rancho School has implemented strategies to model and reinforce social and physical distancing and movement.

- oUse carpet squares, mats, or other visuals for spacing.

- oModel social distancing when interacting with children, families, and staff.

- oRole-play what social distancing looks like by demonstrating the recommended distance.

- oGive frequent verbal reminders to children.

- oCreate and develop a scripted story around social distancing, as well as handwashing, proper etiquette for sneezes, coughs, etc.

- oExplain to children why it’s not healthy to share drinks or food, particularly when sick.

- oPractice frequent handwashing by teaching a popular child-friendly song or counting to 20 (handwashing should last 20 seconds).

- oTeach children to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough inside their elbow.

- oModel and practice handwashing before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing, after playing outside, and after using the restroom.

During Drop Off and Pick Up

•Conduct visual wellness checks of all children upon arrival and ask health questions when concerned.

- oAsk caregivers and parents to meet at the facility entryway for pick-up and drop-off of children whenever possible.

- oExplain to parents and caregivers that all visits should be as brief as possible.

- oAsk parents or caregivers to enter and exit the room one person at a time to allow for social and physical distancing.
- oAsk parents and caregivers to wash their own hands and assist in washing the hands of their children before drop off, prior to coming for pick up, and when they get home.
- oAsk parents and caregivers to bring their own pens when signing children in and out.
- oHave hand sanitizers, out of the reach of children, near all entry doors and other high traffic areas.
- oHave multiple toys and manipulatives accessible that are easy to clean and sanitize throughout the day.
- oLimit the amount of sharing.
- oOffer more opportunities for individual play and solo activities, such as fine motor activities (i.e., drawing, coloring, cutting, puzzles, and other manipulatives).
- oPlan activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children.
- oStagger indoor and outdoor play and adjust schedules to reduce the number of children in the same area.
- oDesignate a tub for toys that need to be cleaned and wiped after use.

Meal Times

- Utilize more tables to spread children out or use name cards to ensure adequate spacing of children.
 - oPractice proper handwashing before and after eating.
 - oUse paper goods and disposable plastic utensils when possible, following CDC and CDPH COVID-19 food handling guidelines.
 - oImmediately clean and disinfect trays and tables after meals.
- Stop toothbrushing during class. Encourage parents and caregivers to regularly brush teeth at home.

Bathroom

- Use this time as an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper handwashing.
 - oSanitize the sink and toilet handles before and after each child's use.
 - oTeach children to use a tissue when using the handle to flush the toilet.
 - oWash hands for 20 seconds and use paper towels (or single use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly.

Personal Items - All personal items should be labeled and kept in a separate bag to ensure personal items are separate from others. During this time, personal toys should be kept at home until further notice.

Napping - Space cots 6 feet apart from each other. Arrange the head of each bed alternately, in opposite directions, to lessen the possible spread of illness between children from coughing or sneezing.

Note: The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenging and fluid situation. Federal, state and local orders and guidance may change frequently. Please refer to the Child Care Licensing Webpage for up-to-date information and resources. The licensee should adhere to the local public health department's orders and guidelines for providing a healthy and safe child care environment. The licensee should also incorporate policies and procedures provided by CDSS, California Department Public Health, California Department of Education, health care providers, and other essential government authorities. Please also check Governor's Office COVID-19 Updates and your local county public health department for the most current updates and requirements.

Flyers:

How to Talk to Young Children about Social Distancing

Stop the Spread of Germs

What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others