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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Releases Detailed Guidelines for the Phased Reopening of Child Care, Camps and Summer Recreational Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

6/01/2020

Executive Office of Education

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

MEDIA CONTACT

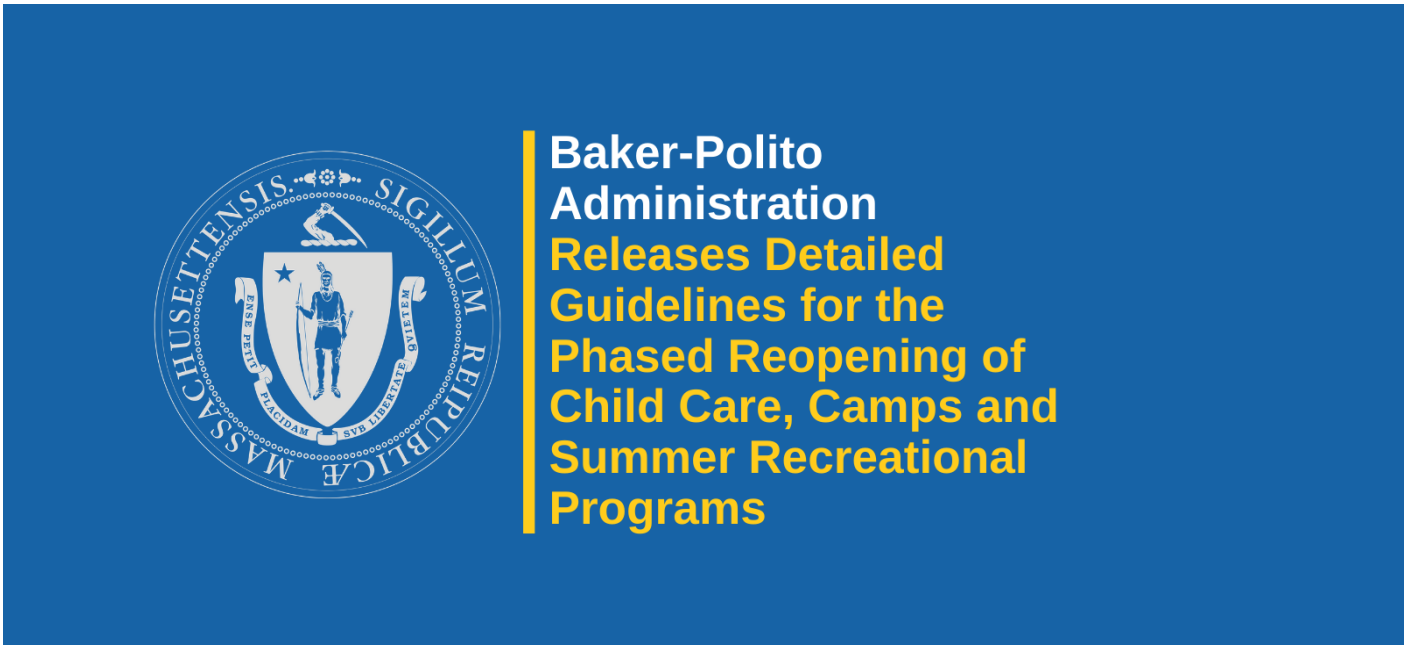
Colleen Quinn, Communications Director, Executive Office of Education

Phone

(617) 979-8352 (tel:6179798352)

Online

Colleen.Quinn@mass.gov (mailto:Colleen.Quinn@mass.gov)



BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today released health and safety requirements that apply to the reopening of all child care programs, recreational camps and municipal or recreational programs not traditionally licensed as camps as part of the phased reopening of the Commonwealth.

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) assembled a Health and Safety Working Group and solicited input from thousands of child care providers from across the Commonwealth, as well as consulted with medical experts at Boston Children's Hospital, to develop the **Massachusetts Child and Youth Serving Programs Reopen Approach: *Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety.*** (https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1591036172000/Min_Req) These requirements must be

implemented to protect the health and safety of all children, families and staff and minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Child care programs licensed by EEC will be required to submit plans to the department to be approved once Phase II reopening begins. The Department will provide templates for submission as the process is launched and will utilize an attestation approval process. In order to mitigate the impact of business interruptions caused by fluctuations in family demand and changes in group sizes outlined in the health and safety guidelines, EEC will provide grants to programs that currently receive CCDBG subsidies through the first two months of reopening. More details on the reopening process and child care provider grant program will be released shortly.

Recreational camps and municipal or recreational youth programs not traditionally licensed as camps may open during Phase II. Residential camps and other overnight stays will not be allowed until Phase III.

Some highlights of the Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety include:

Preparedness Planning: Prior to reopening, all programs must develop plans for daily health screenings and ways to identify children and staff who are sick, symptomatic, or who become exposed to coronavirus. Programs must also have a plan in place to handle possible closings, staff absences, and gaps in child attendance, as well as determine how to communicate with staff, parents, local boards of health and others.

- Programs must screen all staff and children with a temperature check, before they are permitted to enter the child care space. Programs must establish one entry point to ensure no one is allowed in the building until they pass a health screening.
- Parents must wear masks or face coverings when picking up and dropping off their child on a staggered schedule and will be met at the door by staff.

Face Coverings: Children over the age of 2 should be encouraged to wear a face covering, at the discretion of parents or guardians, if they can safely wear, remove, and handle masks. Certain exceptions are detailed in the guidance. Masks do not need to be worn while playing outdoors if children are able to keep 6 feet apart.

- Children should not wear masks while eating, drinking, sleeping, or napping.

Staff members are encouraged to wear masks or cloth face coverings at all times when caring for children and interacting with parents and families. If possible, the department recommends staff wear transparent masks to enable children to see facial expressions, which is important for child development.

Programs are asked to make additional changes to their operations, including canceling field trips and not holding activities involving attendance of multiple groups. Non-essential visitors, including parents and volunteers, will be restricted from entering the premises of child care programs.

Group sizes and staffing: Group sizes must be restricted to a maximum of 10 children, with a total of 12 individuals including children and staff in each room. Consistent with pre-Covid operations, the infant-to-staff ratio is smaller, with 7 infants to 2 staff members and a maximum of group size of 9.

- Children must remain with the same group each day and at all times while in care. Siblings should be kept in the same group, when suitable.
- Groups must not be combined at any time.
- The same staff must remain with the same group of children each day. Staff should not float between groups either during the day or from day-to-day, with some limited exceptions.

Group transportation should only be provided during the phased reopening when there is no other option to transport children to and from the program. Programs intending to provide transportation services should follow detailed **guidance.** (https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1591036172000/Min_Req)

For summer day camps: Campers and counselors will need daily health screenings, including temperature and other checks for signs and symptoms of illness. Camps will need plans in place for when a staff member or child becomes sick.

- Camp spaces will need to be prepared to ensure physical distancing.

- Camps will need to have at least two health services staff on site at all times.
- Other protocols require campers and counselors to stay together in their groups and staff will not be able to move between groups either during the day or from day-to-day, unless needed to provide supervision of specialized activities such as swimming.
- Snacks and meals should be brought from home, pre-packaged, or ready-to-serve in individual portions to minimize handling and preparation. When this is not feasible, staff must prepare and serve meals. No family-style food service.
- Parents must wear face coverings and camps must develop safe pickup/drop off procedures to maintain social distancing.
- Camps may not take campers on field trips or for other offsite travel.

For the full document and Frequently Asked Questions about the minimum requirements click **here** (https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1591036171000/FAQ_Min_Req).

On May 18th, the Baker-Polito Administration released Reopening Massachusetts, the Reopening Advisory Board's report, which details a four-phased strategy to responsibly reopen businesses and activities while continuing to fight COVID-19.

VIEW THE FULL REPORT (/doc/reopening-massachusetts)

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Media Contact

Colleen Quinn, Communications Director, Executive Office of Education

Phone

(617) 979-8352 (tel:6179798352)

Online

Colleen.Quinn@mass.gov (mailto:Colleen.Quinn@mass.gov)

Brooke Karanovich, Media Relations Manager

Phone

617 573 1834 (tel:6175731834)

Online

Brooke.Karanovich2@state.ma.us (mailto:Brooke.Karanovich2@state.ma.us)

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While Massachusetts' students rank first in the nation on many educational measures, the Executive Office of Education strives to strengthen the foundations of education reform, empower schools and educators, and develop pathways to college and careers so all students in the Commonwealth can succeed, regardless of their zip code.

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Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and the Baker-Polito Administration are working to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak and keep Massachusetts residents safe and healthy.

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