



March 21, 2020

Dear Illinois Parents and Families,

In response to the public health emergency Illinois is facing as a result of the spread of COVID-19, Governor Pritzker has announced the following closures for child care centers, child care homes, and early education programs in Illinois:

- Effective March 21, 2020 *all* child care centers licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), as well as legally license-exempt centers outside of schools, will be closed.
- Effective March 21, 2020 *all* child care homes licensed by DCFS will be closed.
- Early education programs in public and private K-12 schools are required to remain closed while the K-12 schools are closed. This covers any early childhood program for children ages birth through five located in public schools or in private schools.

The State is mindful that child care is a critical emergency service that is necessary for essential workers currently required to work to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Illinois. For this reason, effective March 21, 2020 and for as long as the public health emergency continues, emergency child care will be available to essential workers in both homes and centers.

*Who is an essential worker? [Essential workers](#) are outlined in [Governor Pritzker's Stay At Home Order](#).*

These emergency child care sites will be the only child care legally allowed to operate during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Emergency child care will not be available for parents and guardians who are not considered essential workers. We know that this is an incredibly trying time for families, especially those with young children. Governor Pritzker's number one priority is protecting the health, safety, and well-being of all Illinois residents.

Child care homes may serve up to six children of essential workers, while child care centers will be able to apply for emergency child care licenses to serve up to 10 children in one room and may be located in schools, community-based organizations such as churches and social services organizations, or health care facilities or other workplaces for essential workers.

We invite you to visit the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) COVID-19 webpage (<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>) for links to support you, your family, and your children. You may also want to visit the Governor's COVID-19 Response website ([coronavirus.illinois.gov](http://coronavirus.illinois.gov)) for breaking updates from state government, prevention and preparation tips, frequently asked questions, and resources from public health experts. If you have any questions, you can email [gov.oecd@illinois.gov](mailto:gov.oecd@illinois.gov) for help.

Thank you.