



In a nutshell...

Coronavirus: Preparing for the wider opening of early years and childcare.

Planning guide for early years and childcare settings.

DfE published guidance for early years settings on 24 May 2020. You can find it here: <https://tinyurl.com/y73x3ye4> We have read it, and these are our main elements in a nutshell:

- The guide is designed to offer information and support for early years providers as they prepare to open.
- Providers can choose to use the guidance, or not.
- Providers should decide how best to use guidance in their setting.
- It contains:
 - **Preparing the premises** – this includes some general health and safety advice. It suggests CV-19 risk assessments for all planned activities, and a review of arrangement with food suppliers and contractors. It sets out the importance of hand-washing and cleaning all frequently touched surfaces several times a day. All soft toys and furnishings should be removed, as well as toys or equipment difficult to clean. It asks that children be kept in small and consistent groups, and these groups should be kept apart.
 - **Practical measures to reduce risk** – this includes involving staff in the development of policies and plans, this should:
 - ensure parents are advised to keep children with any symptoms at home
 - ensure staff who are symptomatic do not attend work
 - hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices are in place
 - include regular cleaning of settings, toys and equipment

There should be small groups of children and these groups should be kept apart as far as possible. Individual groups use the same area of a setting throughout the day as much as possible. The sharing of toys and resources should be reduced. Staff meetings and training should be held virtually. Face-to-face contact with parents and carers should be reduced, including

and drop-off and pick-up times. This section states PPE is only needed for children where this is routinely used. PPE should be used in the event of a child becoming symptomatic before they leave the setting.

- **Reviewing staff** – this includes finding out the availability of staff after 1 June 2020 and considering their personal and household circumstances and health that may require continued self-isolation, distancing or shielding. It also suggests supporting anxiety through discussion and reassurance, and supporting their wellbeing. Knowing about staff availability will support the planning of capacity to meet demand and the requirements of the EYFS.
- **Responding to suspected cases of coronavirus** – this includes reviewing sickness management policies to cover suspected cases. Anyone displaying symptoms should be sent home immediately. Children should be separated from the rest of the group until they are collected, supervised by a staff member wearing PPE. The area should be thoroughly cleaned. This section also contains details about testing.
- **Communicating with staff** – this includes ensuring staff are aware of and fully understand the new measures and policies put in place, and their roles and responsibilities. Staff should know how to use PPE and how to clean and manage groups of children. Settings should support staff wellbeing through continued dialogue and assistance. A reminder also they should not attend the workplace if they or a member of their household is symptomatic.
- **Communicating with parents and carers** - this includes ensuring they are aware of and fully understand the new measures and policies put in place, and their roles in supporting them. A reminder also they and their children should not attend the setting if they or a member of their household is symptomatic.
- **Likely numbers of children returning to the setting** – this includes the importance of open communication with families to identify the demand for attending your setting. Where children are unable to sustain safe social distancing and hygiene measures, and live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and has chosen to shield, those children will not be expected to attend an early years setting. Children should only attend one setting. Providers may need to temporarily cap the number of child places available (for safety and staffing reasons).
- **Reducing contact between children and staff** – this includes using the results of checking staff availability with likely demand to plan delivery and safety. Providers should use professional judgement when planning smaller groups, and consistent staffing.
- **Safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing** – this includes a focus on supporting children's individual needs and circumstances, mental health and wellbeing. There may be new children attending the setting as they move to provision that is open and better meets their needs. Consider a review of the child protection/safeguarding policies and procedures.

- **Learning and adapting the EYFS** – this includes the current priority is helping children adapt to new routines and their setting. Settings should use reasonable endeavours to deliver the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. In addition to the changes to routines, toys and equipment it highlights the importance of being outdoors and supporting home learning of children not currently attending a setting.
- The guide also includes a model letter for parents which could be used as the basis for parent communications.

Hempsall's

Office 2, Phoenix Square, 15 Morledge Street, Leicester LE1 1TA www.hempsalls.com

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