

CHILD DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR SAFELY OPENING EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska recommends that all early care and education programs in the state be licensed by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and/or authorized by the Nebraska Department of Education. In addition to complying with these agencies' health and safety policies and procedures, we strongly encourage use of the following child development guidelines:

1. Establish greetings and routines that take into account adult social distancing when children are dropped off and picked up.
2. Group size shall be limited to 10 children or fewer in a single classroom; smaller staff-child ratios than those allowed by the state, especially for infants and toddlers, are preferred. Children with underlying health conditions should not be enrolled.
3. Classrooms and restrooms will be cleaned thoroughly each day and throughout the day. Involve older children in cleaning routines in the classrooms.
4. Playgrounds and gyms will only be used by one group at a time and will be cleaned after each use.
5. Meals and snacks will be served in classrooms by an adult (not family-style with children serving themselves and then passing the dish to others).
6. Toy thermometers, masks, and other PPE equipment will be provided for dramatic play in order to reduce anxiety and enhance children's sense of mastery.
7. Focus on establishing consistent, reliable relationships between adults and children. Try to reduce staff-child ratios and hours of care and ensure that a consistent adult is with the children all day.
8. Facilitate staff participation in professional development courses and experiences that focus on trauma-informed practices and resources for parents.
9. Communicate with parents on a daily basis about the child's behavior and social-emotional needs.
10. If there is an outbreak of disease among staff, children, or other adults with whom children are living, the program director or licensee must immediately notify local public health officials and parents of all enrolled children so that quarantine procedures may be put in place, if appropriate.

Please note that information about COVID-19 changes rapidly. These changes may require modifications to these guidelines. Please check the CDC website for updates (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#General>) and pay close attention to children's daily health and well-being.