



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

**Bureau of Child Care
125 Worth Street
NY, NY 10013**

March 10, 2020

Dear Families,

The health and safety of all of our children continues to be our first priority in the wake of the evolving situation around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in New York City.

New York City is seeing “community transmission” meaning the source of the infection is unknown. Any additional measures will depend on the number of individuals affected and the severity of illness we experience in our city. The NYC Health Department is preparing for all possible scenarios, and we will continue to monitor and communicate about any possible impacts to our child care providers. Check the NYC Health Department and CDC’s webpages for the latest updates: nyc.gov/coronavirus and cdc.gov/coronavirus.

In our previous communication to families regarding COVID-19, we recommended that families continue to practice general flu prevention measures. We have added additional strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. That means strongly encouraging all staff and children to:

- Stay home if you’re not feeling well.
- If you have a fever, cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath and recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread of coronavirus or have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, call your doctor. If you do not have a doctor or health insurance, you can call 311 or visit nychealthandhospitals.org/hospitals.
- If your doctor asks you to stay home, avoid going out in public, to school, or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not with your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Get your flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.
- Avoid nonessential travel to affected areas.

In addition, we have recommended that child care programs:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces with regular household cleaning spray or disinfecting wipes.
- Continue to follow health code requirements by having children and staff wash their hands with soap and water before meal time, before and after toileting and diaper changes, and after outdoor playtime; and monitor and make changes as needed to ensure children have the time to thoroughly wash their hands.
- Continue to ensure that adequate hygiene and cleaning materials are available and that bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels.

Guidance for Travelers

Please be advised that if you recently returned to New York from China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, or Japan, the NYC Health Department will require that you home self-monitor. This means you must stay home from work or school for 14 days since the day you left one of the affected countries. Visit the NYC Health Department's [webpage nyc.gov/coronavirus](http://nyc.gov/coronavirus) for additional guidance. If returning travelers from affected countries develop fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, they should call their health care provider and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel. Please monitor the CDC's website for updates on affected countries: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>.

Lastly, it's important that we come together as a city and support one another during this time. COVID-19 is not more likely found in any one race or nationality. Together we can guard against stigma and fear in our workplaces and communities. If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, call 311 to report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights.

The health and safety of our children continues to be our top priority, and we will continue to follow all public health guidance and take all appropriate measures.

For additional information regarding COVID-19, visit:

- NYC Health Department: nyc.gov/coronavirus
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus

Sincerely,



Simone C. Hawkins
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Childcare
Division of Environmental Health