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Clarification of Closure Notices and Child Care

OCDEL has received numerous requests for clarification around the daily update provided by Governor Wolf and Secretary Levine related to COVID-19. Press announcements are posted on the [Governor's website](#). Daily briefings are generally held at 2 p.m. and [can be streamed here](#).

On March 19, 2020 the Governor announced the Closure of All Businesses That Are Not Life-Sustaining. Child care is not considered life-sustaining in general and should therefore remain closed until such time as the Governor lifts the closure mandate. The list of life-sustaining businesses/non-life-sustaining businesses can be found [here](#).

Until such time as Governor Wolf lifts the order, child care programs in Pennsylvania must remain closed unless they meet one of the following criteria:

1. A Family Child Care Home;
2. A Group Child Care Home operating in a residence;
3. A Child Care Center or Group Child Care Home operating outside a residence that has received [Waiver](#) to provide care for children of employees of life-sustaining businesses from OCDEL; or,
4. A Part-day school age program that has received a waiver to remain open from the Department of Community and Economic Development, available [here](#).

Upon notice that the Governor's March 19, 2020 order is to be lifted, all child care programs who closed during COVID-19 may be able to resume operations depending on the circumstances and whether any additional orders are issued or in place at that time.

Child Care Programs will otherwise return to operations at their discretion based the program's ability to insure regulatory compliance on criteria that includes but is not limited to the availability of space, staff, and the needs of families enrolled at the time of the program's closure.

List of Facilities Operating with a Waiver

OCDEL will be posting a link to the list of providers operating with an Exemption to Operate During Temporary Closure (waiver) on the DHS COVID-19 Resources section, [here](#).

Providers who have received a waiver may be contacted by the ELRC or families seeking to find short-term placements during the emergency declaration period.

Providers who have received a waiver and make the decision to close, must report their closure to RA-PWOCDELFacilclose@pa.gov

Recommended Health Guidance for Child Care Remaining Open during COVID-19

Programs operating with a waiver are serving employees of life-sustaining businesses. Your role in caring for their children is important - you are also essential to the health of these children and families. Thank you for your contribution to help fight this pandemic. In order to provide guidance to child care continuing operations, OCDEL has worked with health professionals to provide the guidelines to screen children's health as they participate in programming. This guidance was sent in an earlier Certification Announcement, [Guidance for Child Care Providers Caring for Children of Essential Personnel During COVID-19](#) and also posted on the DHS Coronavirus-Related Provider Resources [page](#).

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning supports families and their children, from prenatal through school age, by using data, research and stakeholder guidance to assure high quality services.