

COVID-19 Facts

From the Minimum Standard Health Protocols from the State of Texas

A note about children and COVID-19:

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years of age or older with pre-existing health conditions, persons in every age group can become infected with COVID-19 and some may become seriously ill or even die.

We should be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.

COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking, and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child, or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

These facts are vitally important when considering the reopening of schools, child care centers, youth camps and other places that provide care and education for our children.

One thing is for certain: We must find reasonable safe ways to restore these services so that our children can be cared for and educated, and for their parents and guardians to be able to return to work.

For adults in the workplace or other public spaces, we are confident that if certain measures such as cloth face coverings or non-medical grade masks, respiratory etiquette, frequent handwashing/hand sanitation and environmental cleaning and sanitizing are widely observed, we can then proceed with reopening Texas in a safe and measured way.

However, such protective measures that we can expect from adults are, for a variety of reasons, simply not possible for infants, children, and youth to practice in schools, child care centers, and youth camps. In some cases, the child will be too young to understand and practice these precautions. We cannot, for example, expect a group of toddlers or schoolchildren not to engage in interactive play or share toys.

All of these factors mean that while certain precautions against the spread of COVID-19 can and will be applied to schools, child care centers, and youth camps, the infection control measure that can be put in place in these settings will differ from those that are suitable for other social, business, and commercial settings.

Every adult who is responsible for providing care or education for infants, children and youth in these settings must be aware of these facts and be willing to comply with the infection control measures that will be in place in these settings. Parents should monitor the health of their children and not send them to the program if they exhibit any symptom of COVID-19. They should seek COVID-19 testing promptly and report results to the program given the implications for other children, families, and staff. Individuals aged 65 and older are at a higher risk of COVID-19. Parents should protect any vulnerable persons who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with infants, children and youth who attend child care centers, schools, or youth camps.

The full text is available at: <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/opentexas>