



STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DATE: February 28, 2020

TO: Providers of Services to Young Children

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus

As you may be aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that it expects the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) to spread across the United States as the number of cases continues to grow worldwide. While the immediate risk to the American public is believed to be low at this time, there are steps that we can all take to prepare.

First and foremost, education is vital to reduce the spread of this and any other illness. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is participating in weekly state conference calls to exchange information with the Governor's Office, Department of Public Health and other state and local officials to ensure all proper protections are in place for the state. Outbreaks involving novel coronavirus evolve quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change frequently as new information becomes available. It is important to stay informed and so it is recommended that you listen to public messages and check the below websites often for updates. Here, you will find resources and the most-up to-date guidance.

DPH: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Secondly, it is also important that good public health practices to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses are implemented. The same steps which prevent other respiratory viruses, such as the flu, from spreading can also prevent COVID-19 from spreading. It is important to follow these steps as a matter of standard practice:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Be sure adequate supplies are readily available in bathrooms and other wash areas
- Remind children and staff to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Remind children and staff to cover their mouths and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and encourage those who are ill to stay home
- Follow your existing protocols for staff and/or children presenting as ill or who may have been exposed to a contagious disease, including exclusion policies
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces according to product directions and program policy

In February 2020, COVID-19 was added to the List of Reportable Diseases. Therefore, **those required to report such diseases must report cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the Connecticut Department of Public Health and to the local department of health in the town of residence of the case-patient by telephone on the day of recognition or strong suspicion of the disease.** The COVID-19 report form is available on the DPH website at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/EEIP/Forms/nCoV_PUI_Form.pdf?la=en .

Specific information related to travel and COVID-19 can be found on the above referenced websites. In addition, you may contact your local health department for specific guidance. To locate the appropriate contact for your program, you may use the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/dph/Local-Health-Admin/LHA?Local-Health-Administration---Site-Map>

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect the health and safety of Connecticut's children.