



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

School-Age Guidance for Fall 2020

Updated 7/21/2020

Rhode Island understands and values the importance of offering quality, school age child care for working families who depend on supervised care for their children outside of the typical school day. As we enter the 2020-2021 school year, the Department of Human Services is partnering with the RI Department of Education to support child care centers in providing safe, quality care under the COVID-19 guidelines and regulations. Below, we have highlighted two options for delivering school age child care in the fall, specifically before and after care.

Option A [Preferred]: Public Schools/LEAs will “host” before and after school care with child care providers operating the programs onsite in a classroom. This will eliminate transportation concerns and mixing of stable groups across districts & schools.

- The child care provider will be responsible for coordinating directly with the LEA(s) to deliver programming at the school.
- DHS will work with the child care provider and LEA to temporarily license classroom space in their schools.
- Classroom space would need to meet DHS standards, and include:
 - A minimum of 35 sq. feet for each child served in the classroom
 - Appropriate ventilation system & access to natural light
 - Either direct access to a bathroom for children OR a staffing plan that accounts for accompanying children to a bathroom not housed within the classroom
- Create and implement a plan for supporting distance learning to accommodate full days of distance learning for school age children.

DHS-licensed child care providers must maintain full compliance with all DHS child care licensing regulations re: staff qualifications, background checks, staff: child ratios and lesson planning at all times. The DHS-licensed child care provider would be responsible for administering the [Screening Tool](#) on all children and staff in the before/after care program, as outlined in the [DHS COVID-19 Emergency Child Care Regulations](#).

Currently, there are 68 DHS-licensed child care programs in LEA’s, licensed to serve more than 6,000 children. This is a successful model for many child care programs in the state and is a recommended strategy for DHS-licensed child care providers to offer before/after care for the 2020-2021 school year.

Option B: Child care providers will deliver before and after school at their DHS licensed site, in coordination with local schools. If your local school does not have space available or one of the parties are unwilling to consider Option A (above,) DHS-licensed child care providers would operationalize the [DHS COVID-19 Emergency Child Care Regulations](#) and [Guidelines](#) for delivering care at their respective DHS-licensed site.

- Providers would implement DHS COVID-19 Emergency Child Care Regulations to ensure limited exposure across stable groups.
- DHS stable group size up to 20 and need to consist of children **from the same school**. Groups from different schools cannot co-mingle at any point throughout the day.



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- School age children are also not able to combine with any additional groups in your program for any reason throughout the course of the day.
- Stable groups must maintain 14 feet of distance or be separated by a wall/divider/partition.
- If a child care program is interested in offering before & after care, they will need to create a plan for remote learning days to demonstrate their ability to serve children for full days.
- Child Care Provider will follow RIDE's COVID-19 Transportation Guidance if offering transportation for children served. For 15-passenger vans, driver must have a chauffeur's license and either 1) be part of the child's stable group (teacher,) or 2) maintain 6 feet of distance from children/passengers.
- Child care provider will adhere to all [CDC guidelines for cleaning & sanitation.](#)