

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) GUIDANCE FOR STAFF OF TRIBAL CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

Schools and Tribal Head Starts can play an important role in preventing the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Collaboration and coordination with your local health department is encouraged. This interim guidance is intended to help staff of childcare programs funded by Tribes or the federal government to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff.

- ▶ If a student or staff member has been identified with COVID-19, school and program providers should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO¹

- ▶ **Encourage students to stay home if sick.**
 - ▶ If your student gets sick at school, it is recommended to keep the sick student away from healthy students. Encourage your student to stay home if they are sick with any illness.
- ▶ **Ensure practice of handwashing strategies**, which can include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or the use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- ▶ **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects in the classroom** by following your standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting. This typically means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as tables, countertops, doorknobs, and hands-on learning items. Use standard cleaning and disinfecting products in accordance with the labels.
- ▶ **Monitor absenteeism.**
 - ▶ Let Head Start or childcare administrators know if you see increased absenteeism.

IF YOUR SCHOOL GETS DISMISSED:

- ▶ **Seek guidance from your Head Start or childcare administrator to determine when students and staff should return to schools.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19²

- ▶ **Remain calm and reassuring.**
 - ▶ Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.
- ▶ **Make yourself available to listen and to talk.**
 - ▶ Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.
- ▶ **Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.**
 - ▶ Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.
- ▶ **Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.**
 - ▶ Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
- ▶ **Provide information that is honest and accurate.**
 - ▶ Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
- ▶ **Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.**
 - ▶ Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing, sneezing, or sick.
 - ▶ Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
 - ▶ Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff (e.g., increased handwashing and cancellation of events or activities).
 - ▶ Get children into a handwashing habit. Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.

REFERENCES

¹ Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools. Prepare, Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019. (February 16, 2020). Retrieved March 10, 2020 from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2F-specific-groups%2Fguidance-for-schools.html

² CDC Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019: Message for parents, school staff, and others working with children. (March 9, 2020). Retrieved March 12, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

