

The Texas Education Agency has compiled the following information to assist district leaders who are needing to establish emergency childcare facilities for COVID-19 first responders. As this emergency situation is rapidly evolving, childcare centers are highly encouraged to contact Health and Human Services for guidance and updates at MSC@hsc.state.tx.us.

Please note: For areas that have local shelter in place orders, childcare facilities that serve the children of essential employees are excluded from local shelter in place orders.

1. What is the application process to start up a childcare center?

Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) is the Agency in charge of **Child Care Licensing** in the state.

- HHS provides step-by-step instructions on how to [Become a Child Care Center-Based Provider](#).
 - Step 3 in this process includes the application forms and all other required documents. The fee schedule is available [here](#).
 - Once Child Care Licensing has accepted an application, they will issue an operation number which must be used to [register for an online account](#).
- If the facility needs to provide night-time care, *the same application process applies*. References to night-time care regulations are included in the section 2 below. Please **DO NOT** apply to be a 24-hour Residential Child Care Provider, as that process applies to a specialized set of student needs.
- Given the quick turn-around needed to establish emergency childcare facilities, please consider using already approved providers who have been through HHS’s review and approval to provide childcare services.

2. What are the requirements around staffing, child-to-adult ratios, and group sizes?

HHS issues the [Minimum Standards](#) governing the operation of a Child Care Center. Please make note of the following sub-sections:

- Personnel Requirements: Childcare Center Director (pg. 31), Employees & Caregivers (pg. 40), substitutes, contractors, and volunteers (pg. 56)
- Ratios: Pg. 59
- Maximum group size: Pg.61
- Night-time care regulations: Pg. 109

Additional Details

Classroom Ratios (The number of children one caregiver may supervise)		Maximum Group Size (The maximum group size and the number of children two or more caregivers may supervise)	
If the specified age of the children in the group is...	Then the maximum number of children one caregiver may supervise is...	If the specified age of the children in the group is...	Then the maximum number of children one caregiver may supervise is...
0-11 months	4	0-11 months	4
12-17 months	5	12-17 months	5
18-23 months	9	18-23 months	9

2 years	11	2 years	11
3 years	15	3 years	15
4 years	18	4 years	18
5 years	22	5 years	22
6-8 years	26	6-8 years	26
9-13 years	26	9-13 years	26

What are the requirements around nutrition, health and safety?

The HHS [Minimum Standards](#) also address the requirements around nutrition, health, and safety in the following sub-sections:

- Nutrition and Food Services (pg. 111)
- Health Practices (pg. 119)
- Safe Practices (pg. 133)

HHS also issued [Guidance for COVID-19 Response](#) to all Childcare Facilities (below)

Additional Details

In response to COVID-19 THE Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHS) provided specific Guidance to Childcare Facilities as follows on March 16th. Providers can stay up to date on continued HHS guidance by visiting the HHS [COVID-19 website](#). Because this situation is rapidly evolving, child care providers are highly encouraged to contact the Child Care Licensing (CCL) team at MSC@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Effective immediately, all current child-care providers will implement the following guidance, consistent with new requirements in accordance with state law, federal guidance, and Gov. Greg Abbott's recent disaster declaration:

- Prohibit any person except the following from accessing an operation: operation staff; persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff; professionals providing services to children; children enrolled at the operation; and parents or legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the operation.
- Require pickup and drop-off of children outside of the operation, unless its determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter an operation.
- Before allowing entry into the operation, screen all individuals listed above, including taking the temperature of each person upon arrival at the operation each day, and deny entry to any person who meets any of the following criteria.
 - A temperature of 100.4°F or above;
 - Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and low-grade fever;
 - In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19; is under investigation for COVID-19; or is ill with a respiratory illness; or
 - In the previous 14 days has travelled internationally to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission. For updated information on affected countries, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/travelers/index.html>.
- Ensure that each child is provided individual meals and snacks. Do not serve family style meals.