



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2020

PH20-207

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California Public Health Officials Release Guidance for Small Supervised Groups of Children

Guidance Applies to Educational and Childcare Settings

Groups or Cohorts Must be Limited to No More Than 14 Children and 2 Adults

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health today released guidance regarding the in-person [supervision of cohorts of children or youth in educational and childcare settings](#). A cohort is a stable group of no more than 14 children or youth and no more than two supervising adults in a supervised environment in which the adults and children stay together for all activities and avoids contact with people outside of their group in the setting. The guidance makes cohorting practices consistent and outlines the required health and safety practices needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 across settings, such as small group learning for students with special needs and district or school “hubs” for distance learning and childcare.

“The precautions and considerations detailed in this guidance will ensure that when small cohorts of children and youth, and those that care for them, come together they can do so with the appropriate health and safety measures in place. It’s important that appropriate steps are taken to reduce virus transmission and the risk of infection,” said Acting State Public Health Officer Dr. Erica Pan. “It’s critical that Californians continue to take action to help prevent COVID-19 transmission - please continue to wear a mask, practice physical distancing, and wash your hands regularly.”

The guidance applies to groups of children and youth in controlled, supervised, and indoor environments operated by local educational agencies, non-profits, public and private schools, child care providers, recreation programs, before- and after-school programs, youth groups, and day camps.

Cohorts must be in groups as small as possible in order to limit virus transmission. This practice facilitates more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case; and allows for targeted testing, quarantine and isolation. The guidance states:

- Cohorts must be limited to no more than 14, with no more than two supervising adults.
- Cohorts may not interact with other such groups, including interactions between staff assigned to different cohorts.
- Supervising adults should be assigned to one group and must work solely with that group.
- Cohorts must be kept separate from one another for special activities such as art, music, and exercise.
- Physical distancing between children in the same cohort should be balanced with developmental and socio-emotional needs of the age group.
- Physical distancing between adults must be maintained to the greatest extent possible, and adults and students must wear face coverings, pursuant to the [CDPH Schools Guidance](#).
- One-to-one specialized services can be provided to a child or youth by a support service provider that is not part of the cohort.
- Requirements for adult to child ratios continue to apply for licensed child care programs.

It's important to note that previously issued [guidance](#) related to schools, child care, day camps, youth sports, and institutions of higher education are not superseded by this guidance and still apply to those specified settings. Today's guidance is intended to supplement existing guidance.

The state has released a set of [FAQs](#) on how this guidance applies to the provision of school-based targeted, specialized support for schools that are not permitted to reopen based on current state public health directives.

The California Department of Social Services has released a set of [FAQs](#) on how this guidance applies to childcare settings.

For more information about what Californians can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19, visit www.covid19.ca.gov.

California will continue to update and issue guidance based on the best available public health data and the best practices currently employed. More information about the state's COVID-19 guidance is on the [California Department of Public Health's Guidance web page](#).

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