**Pennsylvania Family Support Programs**

**In-Person Group Guidance**

The Office of the Governor, Pennsylvania Department of Health and Department of Human Services (DHS) has issued guidance to Pennsylvania businesses to safely operate in ways to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through reduced person-to-person contact between professionals and Pennsylvanians.

The following addresses the delivery of Family Support in-person group services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidance issued below will assist the Family Support community in delivering in-person group services.

Please refer to the issued [OCDEL Family Support COVID-19 Guidance](http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/COVID-19/#Reopen) for additional considerations and requirements for in-person group services.

Family Support Programs should use the [COVID-19 Dashboard](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx) to review transmission risk communities they serve. While in-person strategies may be safer in Moderate or Low risk communities, it is recommended that when a community is in [Substantial Risk](https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/Pages/DeterminingInstructionalModels.aspx) of transmission of COVID-19, virtual strategies are used to implement group-based services.

Family Support Programs providing in-person group services must follow the business, cleaning and sanitation, and safety requirements provided by the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html), [Pennsylvania Department of Health](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Businesses.aspx) and local jurisdictions if applicable.

All Family Support Programs must complete the [COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire](http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/COVID-19/#Reopen) with every participant prior to every in-person service.

Family Support Programs providing in-person services must follow the Pennsylvania [Universal Masking Order](https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/20200701-SOH-Universal-Face-Coverings-Order.pdf).

In addition to the guidance within this document all Family Support Programs should follow guidance from their Model Developers related to delivering services with fidelity.

Prior to implementing in-person Family Support group Programs Family Support Providers are required to develop health and safety plans. These health and safety plans should be individualized and based upon the needs and design of the program. Family Support Programs are required to share their health and safety plans in a way that stakeholders (including families) can access. This may be on a website, provided in writing as part of a parent handbook, through social media, etc.

Although each Family Support Program is required to develop its own health and safety plan, there are elements required to be addressed within their plans. These requirements are:

* Face Coverings or Face Masks;
* Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting, Ventilation;
* Social Distancing and Other Safety Protocols;
* Monitoring Families, Children, and Staff Health;
* Transportation if applicable; and
* Other Considerations for Children and Staff.

Family Support Providers should also utilize the [Family Considerations for Classroom and Group Settings During COVID-19 For Children Receiving Early Intervention Services](http://www.eita-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FC_AV.pdf) as a resource.

After reviewing the requirements listed within this document, Family Support Programs can also use [CDC’s Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/COVID19-events-gatherings-readiness-and-planning-tool.pdf) as a resource to help protect staff, volunteers, and families.

If you have questions about how your Family Support Program is making decisions about health and safety practices, please reach out to your designated Family Support Consultant.