



BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

better health. stronger communities.

March 13, 2020

Partner in Health:

The Governor's announcement late last night to close K-12 schools through April 5th did not include the closure of daycare facilities (per Executive Order 2020-5). Daycare facilities are exempt from this closure and can remain open. Remaining open, particularly in the absence of any known community spread of COVID-19 here in Berrien County, does **not** pose a health risk to children as children ages 0-9 have incredibly small risk associated with this novel coronavirus.

Daycares are encouraged to continue preventative measures to avoid illnesses such as:

- Actively ask all parents if the child is experiencing any symptoms of illness including fever or cough.
- Exclude ill students and staff from the facility.
- Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
- Ensure that hand sanitizer, soap/paper towels, and tissues are widely available in facilities.
- Remind students to cover their coughs/sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.
- Minimize the mixing of children from different rooms or groups.

Additionally, please consider other measures to increase social distancing such as:

- Canceling or postponing events that bring groups of families and students into more frequent contact with each other.
- Have a separate room for sick children to be in while waiting for a caregiver to pick them up if they become ill during the day.
- Limiting the number of people that have contact with students in the school building including parents or volunteers during the school day and gatherings that occur in the school building during non-school hours.
- Having students eat meals in their classrooms or in smaller cohorts in the lunch room.

Parents should be encouraged to build a plan for backup childcare in the event that the daycare facility may close in the future if there is substantial spread of COVID-19 in our community.

BCHD staff are working day and night to monitor this evolving situation and will continue to provide new information to the community as things change. If you have questions or are seeing increases in illness and would like to consult with our team, please call us at 1-800-815-5485.

For up-to-date information, please follow us on Facebook or visit www.bchdmi.org.

Sincerely,

Nicki Britten, MPH
Health Officer
Berrien County Health Department