



Office of Children and Family Services

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

SHEILA J. POOLE
Commissioner

February 6, 2020

Dear Provider,

A new coronavirus called 2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first found in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This virus had not been found in humans before. This coronavirus can lead to fever, cough and trouble breathing or shortness of breath. There are thousands of diagnosed cases in China and new cases being diagnosed in a number of countries including the United States.

What do we know?

Since this virus is very new, health authorities continue to carefully watch how this virus spreads. Based on current information the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends avoiding unnecessary travel to China. Updated travel information related to novel Coronavirus can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/novel-coronavirus-china>.

How Does 2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus Spread?

Health experts believe the virus probably spreads from animals to humans and from person to person. It's not clear yet how easily the virus spreads from person-to-person.

At this time, there are no cases in New York State. The risk to children, families and providers is low. At this time of the year, there are many possible causes for respiratory illness. Therefore, there is no need to cancel programs or social events, and there is no need for children or staff to wear surgical masks.

Prevention

There are currently no vaccines available to protect against this virus. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) recommends the following ways to minimize the spread of all respiratory viruses, including the novel coronavirus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Symptoms

Information to date suggests that novel coronavirus causes mild-to-moderate illness and symptoms like the flu, including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

Are visitors from China being screened?

Yes, as of February 2nd new screening protocols are in place for individuals entering the US from China at designated airports.

Child care programs may have children or staff who have traveled to various areas in Asia, including China. Children should not be excluded from programs or activities based on race, country of origin, or family member's recent travel, including to any part of China. The NYS Department of Health and local departments of health determine if a child or staff member without symptoms who has traveled needs to stay home.

Important Health Information for Those Who Have Recently Traveled to Wuhan, Hubei Province, China

If a child or anyone else at your program recently traveled to Wuhan, China and is sick with fever, cough or trouble breathing; OR develops symptoms within 14 days of traveling there, they should:

- Seek medical care right away. Call ahead and tell them about the travel and symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Stay home, except for seeking medical care.
- CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China.
- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Contact their local health department.

- **Individuals who have returned from mainland China after February 2, 2020:** The federal government has issued a requirement for up to 14 days of either mandatory quarantine or monitored self-quarantine (depending on travel areas in China) for individuals returning from mainland China after February 2, 2020. This means that children and staff impacted should NOT report to work or child care programs for up to 14 days after leaving mainland China. The number of days is dependent on their last date in mainland China. Individuals should contact their local health department.
- **Individuals who have returned from mainland China before February 2, 2020 and have no symptoms of illness:** Children and child care program staff who returned to the US from mainland China before February 2, 2020, and have no symptoms of illness, may return to child care programs immediately.
- **Individuals who have returned from mainland China in the last two weeks and have a fever or cough or shortness of breath:** Individuals should call their medical provider and report their symptoms and travel history. They should not attend child care programs until they have been evaluated by a physician and told they are no longer sick. If a child or other individual exhibits symptoms while at your program, follow your program's plan for isolating an ill person until the person has left the premises and you have disinfected properly.

This is an emerging, rapidly changing situation. For questions please contact your local department of health or the NYS Department of Health Novel Coronavirus hotline at **1-888-364-3065**.

We encourage you to keep up to date about the novel coronavirus, its treatment and prevention by visiting the following websites:

Additional Resources

CDC's dedicated novel coronavirus website at <https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV>.

NYS Department of Health's dedicated novel coronavirus website at

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

NYS Department of Health's directory of local health departments

https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/

New York State Office of Children and Family Services website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/>

Thank you for your ongoing efforts in protecting children and keeping them safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janice Molnar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Janice Molnar, Ph.D.

Deputy Commissioner

Division of Child Care Services