



HENRY FORD
DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS



Daycare in an Ongoing Pandemic

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Many parents wonder if it is [safe for daycares to be open now](#). These really are uncharted waters and there is no one-size fits all answer. There are some important things to consider.

If you are an essential worker, your children may have remained in daycare. But that doesn't mean you aren't concerned now that more children are coming back. Fewer children and most people at home meant there was some risk mitigation.

With more people going back to work and more opportunities for social interaction, there is no way to know if other families are taking the same precautions you are. This is not to say other people are doing anything wrong. We all have different levels of risk we are willing to take. Your family's willingness to take risks can be influenced by many things.

- Are you financially able to stay home?
- Are you working while home? Can you continue to work and care for your child(ren)?
- Are there older children who will be home? Does that make it easier or harder?
- Is anyone in the household at higher risk?
- Is there someone else who can provide some childcare?
- Are you able to socially distance from high risk friends or family members? For how long?

Knowing what to do with this information is not always easy. There are some things to consider based on the type of care you use.

Nanny or Babysitter: If you have or want to use a nanny or babysitter, remember that your home is their workplace. Special precautions may be needed. There are lots of things to [consider](#). Will you both be checking symptoms? Will masks be required? Will there be an increased cleaning schedule and who is responsible for that? If you are also working from home, how will you balance your supervision of the nanny and his/her challenges with keeping your child(ren) from interrupting you? The more you discuss this in the beginning, the easier it will be to handle issues as they arise.

Home or Center Group Care: If you use a home or center-based daycare, what changes are they are making? Daycare centers in Michigan are required to have a response plan they can share with parents. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) recently published [Guidelines for Safe Child Care Operations During COVID-19](#). You can also get information on the [Michigan.gov](#) Coronavirus [Resources for Childcare](#) page.

If there are members of your household who are at higher risk for COVID-19 complications, you may want to consult their medical providers for advice on managing risks. LARA recommends that immunocompromised children and children with chronic respiratory conditions only return to childcare under the direction of their primary care provider. Nothing in this article can replace medical advice. Each family's situation is different. Only a medical professional who knows the details of your family's health can offer appropriate medical guidance.

Lastly, talk to your employer about the limitations of daycare during the pandemic. It may take longer to drop off or pick up your child. If at any time your child has symptoms that cause concern, you will need to remove them from care and may not be able to work. How long your child must stay home will depend on the nature of the symptoms and your childcare provider's guidelines. Your nanny/babysitter may be unable to provide care because they or someone in their household becomes ill. Are your back-up care providers still an option right now? If they are grandparents or at higher risk for complications from COVID-19, you may not be able to adjust to changes as quickly as you could prior to the pandemic. Talking through these possibilities with your employer before they happen can save confusion and stress if they do.