

# Returning to Childcare During COVID-19

Families returning to childcare during the COVID-19 situation may have many questions and concerns. Children may show anger, sadness, or frustration. Having big feelings is normal during this transition. Help your child by talking openly about their feelings. Here are some ways that you can support your child during this challenging time.

## Talk about what is the same. Your child will still:

- Receive the same level of care.
- Receive snacks and meals.
- Have time to play.
- Have time to read books.
- Have time for large motor play.
- Have positive interactions with teachers and other caregivers.



## Try strategies to help your child understand the changes at childcare.

- Use pretend play to talk about the new routines such as drop-off and pickup.
- Read books about childcare. Talk about what will be different and what will be the same as before COVID-19.
- Consider ways to help children manage their feelings, such as using breathing or short calming phrases.
- Get back to your routines for bedtime, waking up, meals, getting out the door, and getting dressed.
- Stay positive and upbeat with your child and the caregivers.
- Consider creating a special goodbye routine. This can be a special song or kissing their hand before you leave.



## Ask your childcare provider questions to help you feel comfortable and confident.

- What are the new drop-off and pickup procedures?
- Can my child bring something from home to keep at the center?
- Will my child be with the same group of children and caregivers all day?
- How will health screenings be done?
- How will you comfort my child if they get upset?
- Will all of my child's friends be there?
- What changes will be made to naptime?
- Will my child's teacher be there?
- Can I still observe my child's classroom?



For related Web resources, see “Returning to Childcare During COVID-19” at <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/>

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



13 Children's Research Center  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469  
Telephone: 217-333-1386  
Toll-free: 877-275-3227  
E-mail: [iel@illinois.edu](mailto:iel@illinois.edu)  
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org>

Illinois State  
Board of Education