

Families Who Need School-Aged Child Care – COVID-19

Schools are announcing changes to their approach to learning for the 2020-21 school year. Recognizing the challenges this may create for families, below are options to help you navigate care for your school-aged child during the 2020-21 school year.

What are your options?

Licensed Child Care

When possible, enroll your child in a licensed, certified child care program. Licensed programs have routine oversight and must comply with state child care regulations.

When selecting licensed child care, consider how the program will support your child's school work when they are at the facility during remote learning days. Program supports can vary widely, so it is important to understand the level of instructional support your child will receive before enrolling in the program. Make sure you, your child, and the program provider have mutual expectations.

Find licensed child care in Pennsylvania at findchildcare.pa.gov or contact your Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) at www.raiseyourstar.org.

Part-Day School-Age Program

You can enroll your child in non-licensed part-day school-aged child care (SACC). Part-day SACC programs may have a less formalized infrastructure, be subject to fewer state mandates and less oversight, and offer different services than a licensed child care provider.

To ensure your child is being cared for in a safe setting and meets expectations this school year:

- Ask to see the providers' Attestation Form from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and Health and Safety plan to keep staff, children, and volunteers safe during the pandemic;
- Confirm all program staff have their background clearances, as required by Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law; and
- Discuss how the program will support your child's school work. Program supports can vary widely, so it is important to understand the level of support your child will receive while in the program.

Outside of the Box Solutions

Work with other families to generate outside-the-box solutions, such as learning pods. Learning pods are when families take turns supervising each other's children when they cannot be in school and are learning remotely. Learning pods are limited to 12 or fewer school-age children.

- **Make health and safety the priority.** Make sure your learning pod follows local and state laws, as well as public health guidelines. Verify any meeting place is following [CDC recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s1103-covid-19-guidelines.html) for social distancing, handwashing, masking, and other guidelines and state mandates for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Determine if all adults involved in supervising the children will be required to have [background checks](#).

- **Identify the goals and guidelines for your learning pod.** Guidelines may include where and when the learning pod will meet, the grades and age ranges of participants, and who is responsible for overseeing supports like internet access, meals, etc.
- **Consider what type of support your learning pod will need.** Students will need support and supervision while learning. This may include hiring a tutor or having parents and other family members assist students. Identify who will provide the support, and how and when this will occur. Review resources for [promoting a positive learning environment at home and online](#).
- **Keep a routine.** Maintain consistency with learning by having specific days, times, and locations for the learning pod members to participate.