

School-Age Childcare

School-Age Childcare:

School-age childcare is defined as a service for school-age children from 4 up to 15 years old that operates outside school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children when their parents are unavailable.

- School-age services are subject to the same public health advice as early learning and care settings.
- Social distancing is not a requirement for children of any age in early learning and care or school-age childcare settings.
- Services may continue to use service transport (car or bus) to collect or drop off children.

Communication with Children, Parents and School:

- Inform children and parents about any new health and safety measures put in place.
- Talk with children and parents about their responsibilities in supporting these measures.
- Create clear two-way communication pathways with children, parents and schools.
- Children have a right to be heard. Encourage them to actively participate in decision making on issues that directly affect them.

Play Pods:

As an alternative to social distancing, school age childcare services will introduce play-pods. For further information please see the tip-sheet on play-pods.

- There is no evidence base to define a maximum play-pod size. They should be kept as small as is reasonably practical.
- Play-pods may contain one or two adults, sometimes three e.g. where required to assist a child with additional needs.
- Services should continue to operate within regulatory adult-child ratios. For School-age childcare, the ratio is 1 to 12. In this context a practical pod size would be 13 (1 adult and 12 children) or 26 (2 adults and 24 children).
- Keep play-pods separate. If space permits, there may be more than one pod in a room with partitions.

Examples

(other scenarios can apply)

Pine Tree Breakfast and Afterschool Service;

Provides for 33 children. Eleven of the children attend breakfast club only, 13 attend afterschool only and nine attend both. The service splits the children into two play pods with one pod of the 11 children who attend breakfast only and one pod of 22 children who attend breakfast and/or afterschool.

Rosie's;

provides an ECCE service in the morning from 9-12 and an afterschool service from 2-5.30. When the children leave at 12, staff members take a lunch break before thoroughly cleaning and ventilating the room, and the room is cleaned again in the evening. To minimise infection risks, the setting has separated the toys and play materials for the two sessions and stores them away when not in use.

Bright Sparks;

is a full day service with an afterschool group of 20 children. The setting reviewed their outside space and partitioned off an area outside just for the afterschool. The adults and children made a plan for this area together. They included a covered area in case of rain and the children can now access the outdoors throughout the session.

School-Age Childcare

Infection Control:

There is extensive important information available on infection control on First 5 website.

- Promote safe and healthy behaviours and attitudes through a range of activities such as discussion, poster making and research projects.
- Ensure facilities and practices are in place to support good hand hygiene practices.
- Make the cleaning process for equipment visible for children to see.

Face coverings are not required for children in settings or for adults while they are caring for children. Face coverings should be worn by adults (staff, parents, visitors) when not caring for children and where social distancing is not possible.

Activities:

- Try to maximise time spent outdoors as much as possible.
- Trips to nearby parks and amenities can be managed with a low risk of infection if physical distance from other people is maintained.
- For more information, see tip-sheet on play during COVID-19.

Please see School Age Childcare key messages for more information available on First 5 website.

