

Reopening Considerations for Children's Activities

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After sheltering in place for weeks, your children will be excited to know that reopening means they can venture out of the house for activities again. They've waited a long time to get together with their friends.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides guidelines for different phases of reopening community activities. You need to know how to keep your children safe as community spaces, services and facilities open up again. Here's what to consider as you figure out how to move forward safely with hiring babysitters and attending playdates and summer camps.

Guidelines for Reopening

According to the [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#), published recently by the White House, getting together with people beyond your immediate household is taking place in phases.

During phase one, gatherings of up to 10 people are permitted in communities where the risk of transmission of infection has subsided. Following success with phase one, communities will move forward with phase two, which allows gatherings of up to 50 people.

During all reopening phases, the [CDC](#) recommends continuing the following safety practices:

- Avoiding touching your nose, mouth or eyes
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water, or use a hand sanitizer that's at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available
- Keep frequently touched surfaces clean and disinfected
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others if you're going to shared spaces where physical distancing is tricky to maintain, like the grocery store
- Stay home if you feel sick
- Wear cloth face coverings in public settings

Steps for Reestablishing Playdates

Your children may be keen to have playdates again, but it's wise to start slowly and set some ground rules for safety. Consider playdates with one friend at a time for a few weeks before adding any more to the mix.

If you're hosting the playdate, you're responsible for making sure your child and their friend stay safe and follow the rules, including physical distancing, washing hands frequently and avoiding touching their faces. If either child is not feeling well, or if someone in your family or their family is sick, reschedule the playdate for a time when you can keep everyone safe.

As a host, you're also responsible for keeping frequently touched objects and surfaces in your home clean and disinfected. If your child is going to a friend's house, make sure their parent or guardian is diligent about keeping their home clean, too.

Is It Safe Visits to Parks, Playgrounds and Pools?

Open spaces provide welcome opportunities for physical activity, respite and fun. The [CDC](#) encourages people to get outdoors while following the current guidelines for staying safe.

Popular areas of parks, including playgrounds, sports fields, skate parks, basketball courts, tennis courts and picnic areas, may stay closed until communities have graduated to a phase of reopening that allows sharing spaces with larger numbers of people, the [CDC](#) says. To avoid disappointment, check online or call ahead to find out which facilities are open and what activities are permitted in your area.

Check any signs posted by park administrators before entering. Outdoor areas, such as sidewalks, require only routine cleaning to stay safe and don't require disinfecting, according to the [CDC](#). Park administrators should be following the [CDC's guidance](#) for disinfecting hard surfaces and objects that are touched frequently by lots of people, such as handrails and doorknobs, and especially any open public washrooms.

For [swimming pools](#), proper disinfection should kill infectious viruses, the [CDC](#) advises. However, some communities may not be ready to open their swimming pools and splash pads yet. Check online or call ahead to find out when you and your family can get back in the water.

Reopening Summer Camps Safely

One of the most memorable rites of passage for children is attending summer camp. This summer will be different, as each camp is deciding whether it will open based on the camp's ability to implement the CDC's guidance for reopening and in keeping with state and local county rules.

The American Camp Association and the YMCAs of the United States are developing a [field guide](#) for how camps should implement the CDC's guidance for reducing the risk of spreading infectious diseases. Developed by an independent panel from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Association of Camp Nursing, it will be published as part of the [Camp Operations Guide Summer 2020](#) in mid-May.

Review the field guide when it's published to learn about the recommended safety measures camps need to put into place if they reopen. Contact your child's camp to find out what they're doing to keep campers safe. Use the recommendations in the field guide as a checklist to help you make an informed decision about sending your child to camp.

The [field guide](#) will contain information on areas including:

- Cleaning and disinfection measures
- Implementing physical distancing rules across the facilities, including dining halls, residential areas, and indoor and outdoor athletic facilities
- Measures to prevent the spread of infection, including handwashing, physical distancing during activities and wearing face masks
- Plans for quarantining campers or staff who become ill
- Rules for field trips and off-site travel
- Screening and assessing the health of campers and camp staff before and during camp
- Transportation to and from camp

Hiring a Babysitter

Kids aren't the only ones with cabin fever. If you're feeling overdue for a break from childcare duties, you may be thinking about hiring a babysitter again.

Keep in mind that you are an employer when you hire a babysitter, and your home is considered a workplace. You will need to follow the [CDC's guidelines](#) for keeping employees safe.

These guidelines are common sense and no different from what you've already been doing to keep your family safe. You must provide a clean workplace by frequently cleaning and disinfecting all frequently touched surfaces like handles, doorknobs and countertops. You must make soap and water, or hand sanitizer, available for hand-washing.

Have a discussion with the babysitter and make sure they know the safety rules. They should look after your children only if they are feeling well and do not have any [signs or symptoms of being sick](#), such as a [fever](#) or cough.

Insist that they wash their hands frequently when caring for your children, especially before serving or preparing food and before and after changing diapers. Finally, the sitter should make sure your children are practicing safe physical distancing if you are allowing them to visit an open playground or have a friend over for a playdate.

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