



Child Daycare Services Action Plan

If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take during this time, use this guide to get you started. Here's what we'll cover:

Keeping safe

- Protecting yourself
- Protecting your staff, children, and families

Assessing and generating solutions

- Identifying short-term modifications
- Starting to think long term

Adapting and overcoming

- Converting to digital solutions
- Putting a plan into action

Staying in contact

- Updating your communication channels
- Reaching out to families

Marketing during this time

- Being sensitive and respectful
- Gauging the appropriate path

Planning for the future

- Thinking ahead
- Using what you've learned



The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic is changing the way we all do business. There is much we still don't know about how this situation will play out.

From taking on more children to serve our frontline workers to cutting back to part-time hours to coping with school closures, it can be difficult to know what to do and when to do it. And child care professionals have the added pressure of keeping the children in their care safe.

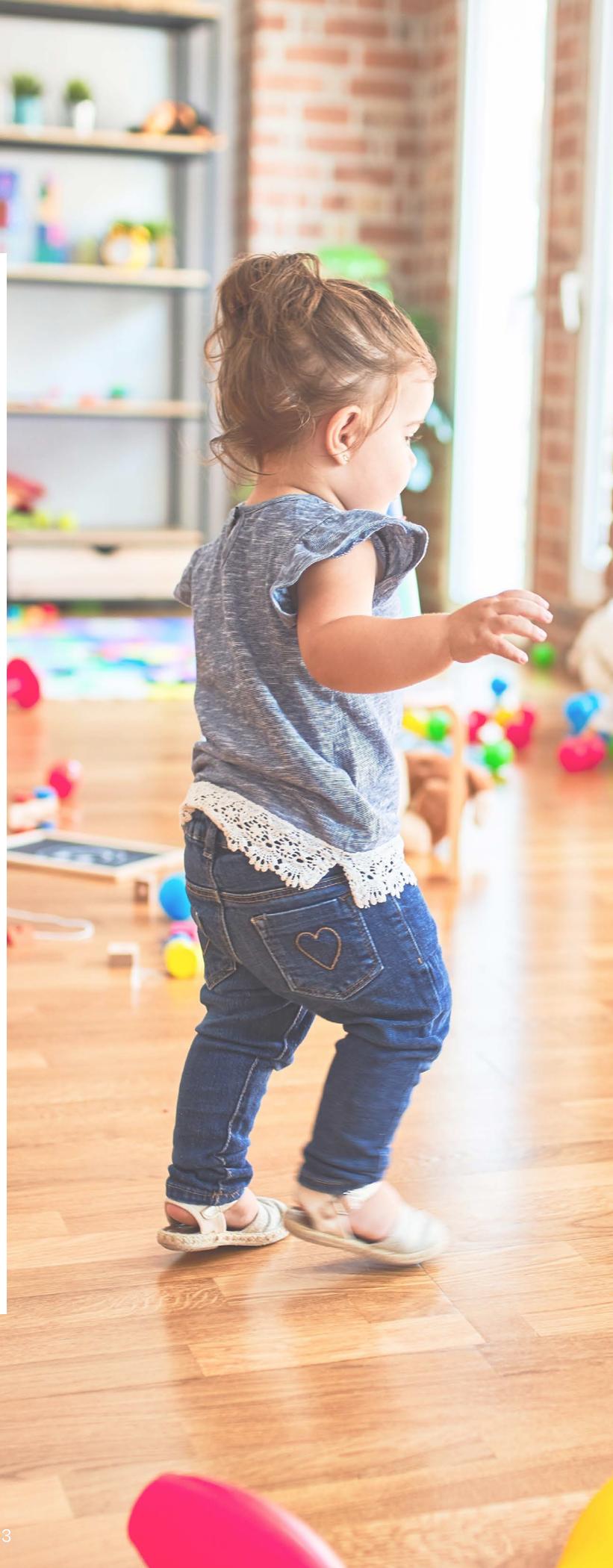
As this unprecedented crisis continues to evolve, many child care professionals are also wondering how to minimize losses, and what steps they can take to protect their businesses.

Small business owners and entrepreneurs are some of the most resourceful and resilient people we know. And now's the time to lean into that resourcefulness, make a plan, and get to work. If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take, this guide will serve as a good starting point.

Let's take a look at some ways that you can take stock of the situation, generate solutions, and take action to protect your child care business.

As you know, things are developing rapidly. Remain flexible to make changes on the fly.

Remember, you've got us and can get [Constant Contact Help and Support](#) when you need it.



Safety First

Your first priority is to make sure that your family, staff, and especially yourself, are safe and safeguarded, to the best of your ability.

Next, make sure that you're doing everything you can to safeguard your children and their families.

By now, you've already implemented [CDC-recommended precautions](#) in your business and you're being diligent to maintain the strictest of precautions. Among the most important precautions are:



- Requesting that all employees, parents, and children stay home if they have a fever over 100 degrees, have flu-like symptoms, or have potentially been exposed to COVID-19.**
- Restricting access to your facility to anyone who exhibits the above symptoms.**
- Restricting access to your classrooms to children and staff only.**
- Maintaining a drop-off and pick-up procedure that restricts the number of individuals in your entrance at one time, and have placed markers to help those who are waiting to remain at least six feet from others in the line.**
- Continually emphasize the importance of cough and sneeze etiquette as well as hand hygiene within your business.**
- Performing routine, thorough environmental cleaning of the entire facility, including toys, equipment, and doorknobs.**

The CDC offers more [guidance specific to the child care industry](#). Once you've done what you can for everyone's health and safety, it's time to figure out how this situation may affect your business.

In any emergency, large or small, you'll often have to assess and reassess to generate solutions because things are always changing.

Note: Since this is a rapidly moving situation, the guidelines set forth by your local health officials should take precedent when deciding what precautions to follow. ([Find resources for your state here.](#))

Assess and generate solutions

Since there are a lot of unknowns, it's important to think about various possibilities and what you can do to adapt to them. The problems you face will vary depending on the nature of your child care business, and so your solutions will vary too. In general, some of the things we hear child care professionals struggling with during this crisis are a decrease in attendance, a loss of income, as well as knowing when it's the right time to take certain actions (such as temporarily closing).

Whether you have child care facilities in your home, operate an independent facility, or are a franchisee, these issues are changing the way child care is done right now. And it's likely that these changes could influence the industry in the future. It's important to look at these problems directly and to make a plan based on what you're able to do now, as well as what you might be able to do later on. Here are some examples of things you should consider.

You may want to write things down as you think through these questions and your answers. It'll help you formulate your action plan.

Will you allow new enrollees?

- As some centers around you close, will you allow new children into your facility?
- What about the children of frontline workers? Are you able to prioritize them?
- Will you allow school-age children to attend your facility if long-standing clients or frontline workers need a safe place for them to be while at work?

What will you do if current enrollees stop coming for a time?

- Will you require that they still pay full-tuition so they don't lose the option for future enrollment?
- Will you provide options for partial tuition, fees to guarantee future enrollment, reservation credits?

What will you tell parents?

- How are you advising parents? Are you advising them to keep their children home if possible, or letting them know that your facility is safe and open?

What if you get sick?

- If possible, designate someone else to be in charge of your daily operations.

How will you respond to inquiries from potential enrollees during this time?

- Consider formulating a response ahead of time that can copy and paste into an email that lays out what you currently know about the child care situation in your local area, and how it's affecting your center.

What can you do to support your children and their families?

Think about reaching out to them proactively with your assessment of the local child care situation at this time, your recommendation on how to proceed when it comes to the care of their child (even if it's just to hang tight until more information is available), and any other must-know advice parents could use.

And at some point you may have to ask the bigger questions:

What changes do you need to make to normal operations?

- What will that look like? How will you communicate it with parents and the rest of your community?

Is the “temporary” plan you put into place sustainable? If so, for how long?

- If not, are there things you can do to adjust your plan so it will be sustainable?

What if this lasts several months?

- How this would affect your family, as well as your staff, children and their families – can you help them in some way?

Are there any other resources available to you?

- We've compiled a list of resources for you: [Resources for Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
- You can also find industry-specific resources on the [National Association for Family Child Care \(NAFCC\) website](#).



Adapt and overcome

Your “business as usual” may no longer exist, at least for the time being. You’ll need to adapt to get through these trying times. Some things to consider:

Working from home

If you have to close temporarily, see if you can set up work from home options for yourself and your team. Thinking of things that you and your staff might be able to do from home that will be of benefit (Think: online storytime for your children, additional education via online courses for your teachers).

As an owner, director, or facility manager of any sort, you know your work won’t stop just because you’re not inside your facility. Set up a workstation that can stay in place for as long as you need it. Create a space where everyone in the family knows that if you’re in it, you’re working. This can help you to stay focused when you’re working.



Building your brand online

Your Constant Contact account comes with tools that make it easy to start building your brand online. You can create a logo, a full website where you can share updates and information about what’s happening with your facility, and manage your social media.

Moving in-person care online

When you're in an industry that depends on physically interacting with your charges, it seems absurd to imagine doing what you do online. However, with the changes brought on by the coronavirus (COVID-19), what you do is changing as well.

So while you may not have children to care for in-person, perhaps there are ways you can help parents care for their children (and keep them on the right learning track) at home.

And while child care is what you do, parents are your customers, and they've been used to you taking care of their preschool-age children while they're at work. Now, they're having to try to juggle working from home and caring for their children at the same time. And they're likely not versed on the daily routine that you've set up for their child.

If you're a franchisee and you have a corporate office to guide you, check with them on how you can help your enrollees and their parents during this time. If you have an independent facility, or you run said corporate office, think about what you might be able to do to help parents keep their children's day as routine as possible, keep their children on the right learning track, and when it comes time, to make their reintegration to your child care center as smooth as possible.

- If you held storytime, is that something you could do via livestream now?
- If you played music during naptime, could you share resources with parents (or even hold an online naptime that parents could access) so they can get their anxious youngsters to lay down and sleep?
- Can you hold video conferences with parents to coach them on what their children should be learning, and how to help them continue to progress through their various learning stages?
- Can you do live question and answer sessions with parents, to help them make sure they're doing the right things for their children?

Remember, parents count on you for a lot more than just "watching their kids." Think about what you can do now to help them fill the hole that's left when you're not in their children's daily lives. See if you can find a way to still be in their daily lives – just not in person.



Stay in contact

When you're constantly having to make changes to adapt to an ever-changing situation, it's imperative that you let parents know what you're doing and when.

Keep them aware of any changes to day-to-day operations.

Be sure to include details parents should know about, like center hours, restrictions, tuition changes, temporary closures, and online offerings and resources.

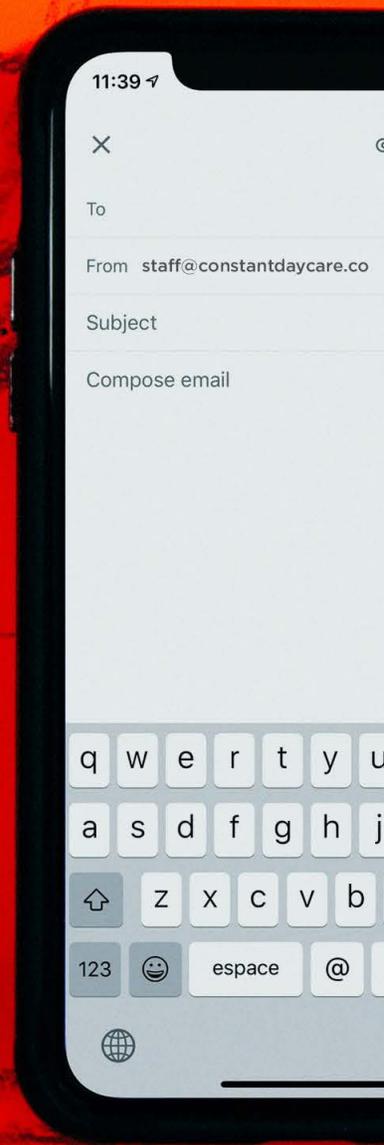
Consider the following tips to communicate the above information with your families:



- Update your website.**
- Email your families.**
- Post to social channels and pin those posts to the top of your feed if possible.**
- Update your details on your Google My Business profile and any other sites where you have a listing.**
- Hang signage in your windows and around the pick-up and drop-off areas.**
- Hand notes to them personally when they pick up their children, using caution to avoid the person-to-person spread of any germs.**

It's also a good idea to review any communications you already had scheduled for their appropriateness and relevance based on the current state of affairs.

Remember, your Constant Contact account comes with tools to create a website, send email (including templates for you to communicate with your contacts about COVID-19 including tips on what to say), post to social media, and more. Need help? See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#).



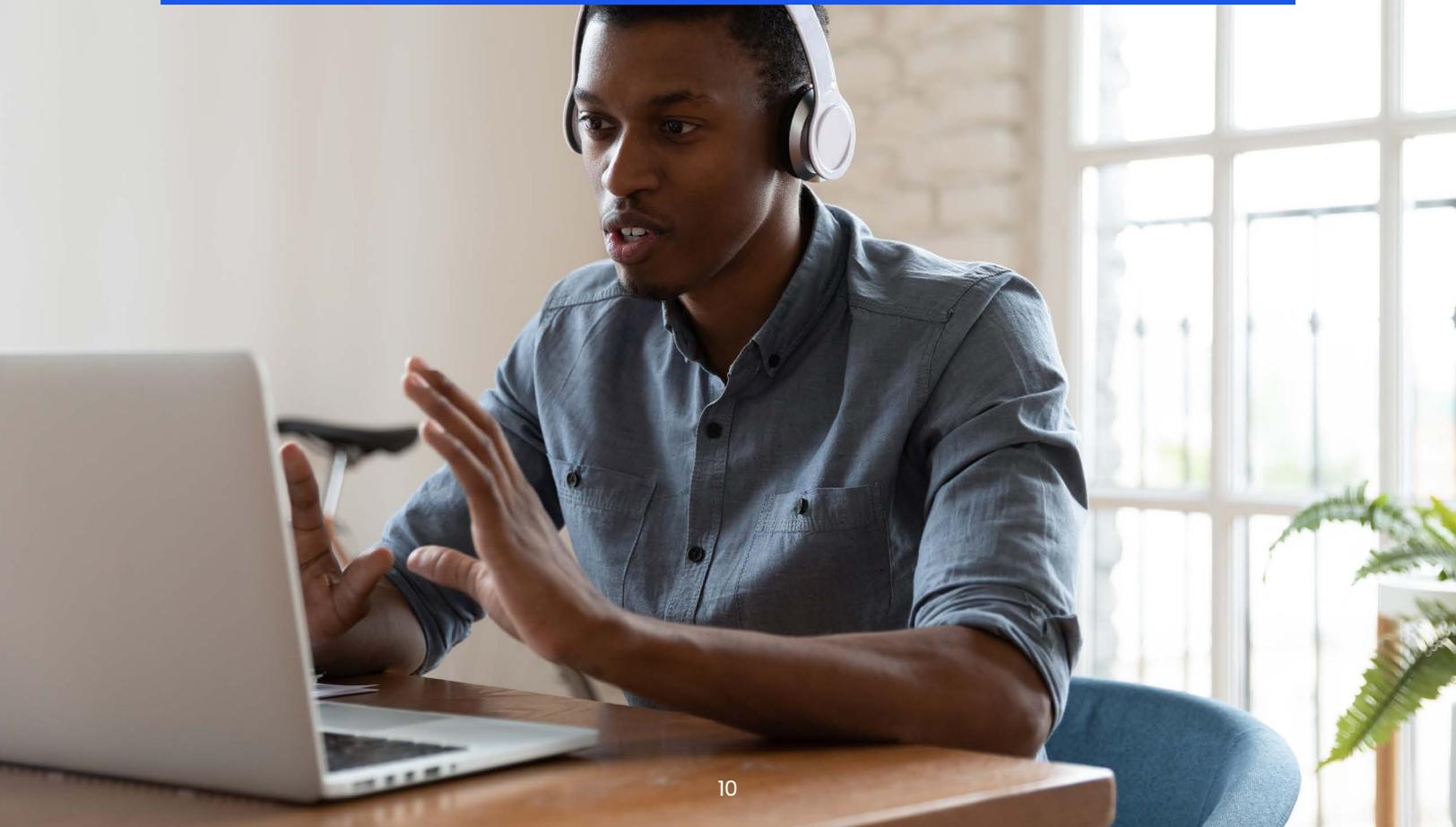


Marketing during this time

Letting people know about the changes you've made is a great place to start. Use the channels mentioned above to communicate on a consistent basis. Of course, consider your unique situation and local market to gauge the most appropriate path forward.

With the recommended and required changes that are happening with child care right now, you may now have time to connect with potential enrollees via social media, build up a pool of valuable content that positions your facility as the best choice in your area, and build/refine your brand online. If you have a corporate office that does all that for you, follow their guidelines on how they want you to proceed with your marketing endeavors during this time.

Always be sensitive to the current situation and respectful of your audience and the situation they are also going through.



Plan for the future

Eventually, you'll need to transition back to business as usual. It's important to plan ahead. So, start making plans for what comes after the emergency.

Review the changes you've made and what you've learned, then think about how you can use that information to move forward.

What can stay?

Look for things worth making a permanent part of your business.



- Did you try an online effort like sharing naptime tips that got more attention than you anticipated?
- Did you make headway building your brand?
- Were people interested in the content and messages you produced about child care or learning stages during this time?

If so, don't stop just because the emergency is over. Keep them going and see if they're a good addition to your business long term.

What comes next?



- Do you need to reach out to your partners or corporate office?
- Will you need to replenish supplies or purchase items that were previously in short supply?
- If you closed temporarily, what will it take to start back up?
- How will you recall your staff? Will it be in stages or all at once?
- How will you let the children return? Will you require health screenings or new immunization records?
- If you stayed open for the children of frontline workers and they want to keep their children with you, how will you manage to bring back your previously long-standing enrollees? Will you hire more staff or turn children away?

These are trying times with many unknowns. By doing your best to stay safe, review your options, and make a plan you'll better position yourself to come out on the other side.

Remember, you are not alone

Our marketing advisors are here to help.

- Connect with other small businesses in the [Community](#)
- See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#)
- Read *The Download*, our [ultimate online marketing guide](#)

You've got this. You've got us.

