



Chippewa County Department of Public Health

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Chippewa County Childcare Centers and Daycares:

I want to first thank you for all the diligence, time, and financial resources you have dedicated to COVID-19 mitigation. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on our lives. Many of us face challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions. We understand your frustration and know that the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic can be trying for all of us as we strive to do everything we can to make sure that our children are safe.

Recently, some local childcare settings have announced that it is the parent's decision whether or not to quarantine their child(ren) if they are a close contact with a COVID-19 positive person in the childcare setting. Numerous mitigation strategies help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Vaccination, isolation and quarantine, mask-wearing, physical distancing, and handwashing and cleaning are the best strategies that we can implement to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a Public Health Director, I am very concerned about allowing children who are close contacts to attend childcare. Currently, Chapter 252 of the Wisconsin Statutes provides local health departments with authority to require isolation and quarantine to mitigate the spread of communicable diseases. Although I understand that childcare centers and in-home daycares are in a challenging position due to the societal divisions that we are seeing, I want to make it clear that I do not recommend or support the idea of parents choosing whether or not their child should quarantine as a close contact. These decisions potentially imperil the safety of the other children in the childcare setting and their families, which is why the local health departments have the authority to quarantine and isolate. These decisions need to be made by those entrusted with promoting and ensuring the safety of our community.

The Chippewa County Department of Public Health continues to receive communications from the community and parents expressing their concerns for local childcare settings' policies. To make sure that their concerns are heard, I will continue to let them know that the health department has the authority to require isolation and quarantine and direct them to contact their local childcare provider if they have questions about decisions that are being made. The safety of our children and the community must be our utmost concern.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or wish to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

Angela Weideman, LMFT
Chippewa County Health Officer/Public Health Director