



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Olympia, Washington 98504

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Dear Washington families with children in child care, preschool, and other early learning settings:

The health of our children is very important to all of us. You've probably heard about the H1N1 (swine flu) virus that first appeared last spring. It's a public health concern we're taking very seriously. The Washington State Department of Health, the Department of Early Learning, local health agencies, and other partners around the state are working together to prepare for the potential impact of this new flu on families and schools.

We're tracking and monitoring this new virus very closely so we are prepared to do everything we can to keep people healthy. We also want to make sure parents and guardians have the information needed to understand and get ready for this upcoming flu season.

One of the most important things you can do to stop the spread of germs is keep your children at home if they're sick. Children should stay home from child care and other early learning settings at least 24 hours after their fever has passed (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

Things you can do to prevent the flu

Wash your hands: wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. (Alcohol-based hand cleaners may also be used.)

Cover your cough: cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.

Flu shots: get your family vaccinated for **both** seasonal flu and H1N1 flu (when vaccines are available).

Make a plan

Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick or their school is dismissed. Many families around the country are creating "child care co-ops" with friends and neighbors. These trusted friends and family work together to share the responsibility of caring for sick children.

If you have children with asthma or other medical conditions that put them at higher risk for the flu, talk to your health care provider now about a plan to protect them during the flu season.

More information

- **Department of Early Learning.** Resources and information – <http://www.del.wa.gov/development/health/flu.aspx>
- **Washington State Department of Health.** Health information about H1N1, including current information, more on symptoms, and other resources in English and other languages – <http://www.doh.wa.gov/H1N1/>
- **Local public health.** To find information from your local public health agency – <http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm>

We hope these tips will help keep you and your family healthy this year!



Mary C. Selecky, Secretary
Washington State Department of Health



Dr. Bette M. Hyde, Director
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