



## Commissioner's Update

Commonwealth is a nationwide leader in vaccinating residents, with 75% of adults receiving at least one dose and 3.3 million fully vaccinated. As such, on May 17, 2021, the [Baker-Polito Administration announced](#) that the remaining COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted beginning May 29. On this date, EEC will retire the Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety and eliminate any COVID-specific requirements for child care programs. EEC is now introducing [Suggested Strategies for the Prevention and Response to COVID-19 in Early Education and Care Programs](#).

Childcare programs will be required to adhere to the requirements specified in 606 CMR 7.00 and will be responsible for developing their own program policies to address specific practices for continued COVID-19 transmission prevention. The EEC team is working to develop necessary protocols and policies to support a smooth transition during this time and will release additional supports in the weeks ahead. At this time, we do want to share the following updates to support your planning towards post-COVID conditions:

**Suggested Guidance Regarding Face Coverings:** At this time, EEC is recommending (not requiring) that consistent with the [DPH's mask advisory](#), unvaccinated staff, and educators, and children 5 years old and older continue to wear masks when inside a program and unable to distance. Children do not have to wear masks or maintain distance when outdoors.

**Program Operation Requirements:** COVID-19 specific practices like a daily health attestation, keeping groups separate, and not allowing visitors into the space are no longer required by EEC. Center-based programs can return to the minimum space requirements of 35 square feet per child. Programs will no longer need to retain health attestation documents. Additional clarification on program requirements will be forthcoming.

Moving forward, the Knowledge Tree Preschool will update Health and Safety Policies to align with the Department of Early Education and Care's recommendations.

