

In-Person Community Group Recommendations During COVID-19 (Last Update 8/4/20)

We recognize that some of you may be nervous about meeting in-person at all—and that's okay, you don't have to—and others of you may feel like any sort of meeting restrictions are unnecessary. We've adopted these recommendations because we want to preserve our witness for Jesus to our communities by following our local, state, and national leaders, and to be responsible in the recommendations we make which inevitably impact thousands of lives.

Illness – Group members should stay home if they or anyone in their household is sick, or if they have been in contact or think they may have been in contact with someone who has been tested positive for COVID-19.

Face Coverings – Group members should wear face coverings when they are unable to socially distance (for example: when you are arriving to group and socializing). (Here's the states wording: *"Any time attendees must come within 6 ft. of one another they must wear acceptable face coverings, unless they are members of the same household."*)

Food – We are big proponents of food at small group gatherings, but during this season we are recommending that groups avoid serving food in a buffet style. Food is fine if plated by a server, or if using individually wrapped snacks like ice cream sandwiches, small bags of chips, etc. Disposable tableware is recommended. (Here's the states wording: *"Prohibit shared food or beverages (e.g. self-serve meals and beverages)"*).

Social Distancing – As much as some will miss hugging or shaking hands with other group members, for now we are encouraging everyone to avoid physical contact. Seek to maintain social distance between households (at least 6 feet). (Here's the states wording: *"Prohibit holding or shaking hands of members in different households during services or prayers."*)

Group Size & Location – Based on the size of the meeting space, seek to keep meeting sizes small enough to maintain social distancing during your group time. If you are meeting outside, it may be easier for a larger group. If you are meeting inside, consider splitting the group into smaller subgroups that can meet in different places or different times.

Cleaning – The host should be prepared to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched both before and after the meeting (door handles, chairs, restrooms, countertops, tables, etc.).

Online Option – Not everyone will feel comfortable or be able to attend in-person. Consider setting up a computer in your meeting area so group members can join in via video conference.

High-Risk Individuals – Those who are considered higher-risk or who have serious underlying health conditions are encouraged to participate in a group online rather than in-person. Groups composed largely of high-risk individuals are encouraged to continue meeting virtually.

Childcare – To no fault of their own children are not great at social distancing. If your group decides to meet with children, we encourage you to keep in mind our state guidelines.

State guidelines tied to caring for children: (*In italics below*)

- **Limit groups of children to 15**
“Ensure workers and children groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same worker whenever and wherever possible. Group size must be limited to no more than 15 children (not including workers/staff).”
- **Ask children & workers to wash their hands frequently**
“Require workers and children to practice hygiene in the following instances: • Upon arrival to the first activity; • Between all program activities; • After using the restroom; • Before eating; and • Before departing the last program activity.”
- **Ask childcare workers to wear face covering around children**
“Ensure workers wear face coverings any time they are 6 ft. apart from one another, and at all times when interacting with children, regardless of distance.”
- **Limit activities where children are touching the same objects**
 - (Maybe watching videos, playing outside, reading books, etc...)
“Limit the sharing of objects (e.g. electronic equipment, arts and crafts materials, touch screens) and discourage touching of shared surfaces.”
- **Disinfect equipment & toys**
“Regularly clean and disinfect equipment and toys.”
- **Limit toys which are hard to clean**
“Limit children from using toys that can’t be cleaned/sanitized (e.g. dress-up clothes, puppets).”

This complete list of state guidelines tied to child care can be found [HERE](#).