



Vaccine Operational Guidance for Child Care Partners

Updated March 2, 2021

1. Background

This operational guidance includes recommendations intended to help Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) and Smart Start staff in the child care vaccination rollout as vaccine supply becomes available.

North Carolina will open vaccinations to school and child care employees starting Wednesday, February 24, 2021. **This means that school and child care staff will be ELIGIBLE to receive a vaccination on February 24. However, because of very limited vaccine supply, this DOES NOT guarantee that school and child care staff will be able to get an appointment or get vaccinated as of that date.** On March 3rd, eligibility will further open to other frontline essential workers in Group 3.

Initially, some vaccine providers may be ready to vaccinate child care and school employees as early as February 24, 2021, while other vaccine providers may continue to focus on vaccinating Group 1 (health care workers and long term care facility staff/residents) and Group 2 (adults ages 65 and older) if they are still experiencing significant demand from these populations. *Vaccine providers* include most hospitals and health systems, most federally qualified health centers, all local health departments, and some pharmacies (see Section 3 for more information on *vaccine providers*).

NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) recommends that child care programs work through their local CCR&R to learn whether or not local vaccination sites are opening distribution to child care staff on February 24 (see Section 5 on roles and responsibilities for more information).

Because of extremely limited supply of vaccines, it is unlikely that vaccine providers will be able to complete vaccinations for all school and child care staff in the period between February 24 to March 3. Even if child care staff are not able to get an appointment or vaccination within this period, they will continue to be eligible for vaccination after March 3rd, when eligibility opens to all frontline essential workers.

2. Which child care staff are eligible to get vaccinated as part of Group 3?

Starting February 24, 2021, North Carolina will open vaccinations to the groups of child care staff listed below **who work in the following settings and following roles:**

Child Care Settings	Eligible Child Care Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Care Centers• Pre-Kindergarten Programs• Head Start & Early Head Start Programs• Pre-School Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers in centers & family child care homes• Teacher assistants• Student teachers



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Child Care Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Owners, directors, supervisors• Bus & van drivers• Family support staff• Food service workers• On-site program, administrative, & support staff• Custodial & maintenance staff• Student teachers• Therapists & medical staff• Required on-site consultants
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3. Where can eligible child care employees get a vaccine?

Eligible employees can get vaccinated by any vaccine provider in North Carolina. Currently, vaccinations are being provided by:

- Most hospitals and health systems
- Many federally qualified health centers and community health centers
- All local health departments
- Some pharmacies, including some Walgreens locations (in partnership with the federal government)
- Some primary care providers

North Carolina has distributed vaccine to providers based on their ability and capacity to quickly administer vaccines and reach eligible populations. Because COVID-19 vaccine supply is very limited, most doctors' offices are not yet offering vaccinations. The number of vaccine providers offering vaccines will increase as more COVID-19 vaccine doses become available in the state. You can learn which vaccine providers are near you by visiting [Find a Vaccine Location](https://mynspot.nc.gov) (myspot.nc.gov).

4. How is North Carolina helping child care employees get their spot for their shots?

There are several ways that center directors and family child care home providers, CCR&Rs, and Smart Start, will help child care staff get their spot for the COVID-19 vaccine. Below are three examples of how child care employees can get vaccinated (see table below). Many vaccine providers have been vaccinating people for weeks, and have developed processes that look different across the state. In Examples 1 and 2, Smart Start, CCR&Rs, and child care directors can play a more active role to help eligible employees get vaccinated. In Example 3, an employee can get vaccinated without having to go through an employer, Smart Start, or CCR&R. The model that your local vaccine provider implements will depend significantly on how much vaccine and vaccinating staff are available.



Example 1: Vaccine Event On-Site at Community Location/Facility	Example 2: Vaccine Provider Hosts Special Vaccine Event	Example 3: Support Employee Getting Vaccinated Independently
<p>Partnership between Smart Start and vaccine provider for on-site vaccine event. Smart Start will support vaccinations by organizing event logistics, supporting event staffing, and communicating vaccine event information with CCR&Rs. CCR&R will help by linking child care programs with vaccination events.</p> <p>See Appendix 1 for more details.</p>	<p>Partnership between Smart Start and vaccine provider who hosts special event at their clinic or other community location. Smart Start will support vaccinations by supporting event staffing (if needed by vaccine provider), and communicating vaccine event information with CCR&Rs. CCR&R will help by linking child care programs with vaccination events.</p>	<p>Employee seeks vaccination at any vaccine provider, without going through an employer.</p>

Note: Because temporary reactions can occur after vaccination (e.g., headache, feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine), child care programs should plan to stagger vaccination for their employees to avoid any critical staffing shortages. For example, all staff from a child care center should not be vaccinated on the same day if staff absences from temporary post-vaccine reactions on the following days would lead to critical staffing shortages.

5. What are the roles and responsibilities of different child care stakeholders?

Smart Start

- Work with vaccine providers to set up vaccine events or appointment blocks for child care employees in your county.
- Work with vaccine providers to host events at locations that support equitable access to historically marginalized populations.
- Support logistics of vaccine events, if recommended by your vaccine provider (e.g., identify potential vaccine event location, identify volunteers to staff vaccine event). See [Appendix 1](#) for more details.
- Coordinate with CCR&R in your county to link programs to events and appointment blocks as requested by your vaccine provider.



Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

- Be a champion for vaccines and ensure team members working on vaccine outreach to child care providers are diverse in race/ethnicity, age, and role.
- Prioritize vaccine rollout efforts for child care programs that may be located in historically marginalized communities or primarily serving historically marginalized populations.
- Collect contact information (first name, last name, email and/or phone number) for child care staff.
- Coordinate with Smart Start to identify vaccination events and fill appointment blocks.
- Link child care programs with available appointment blocks and vaccine events if and when they are available.
- Provide general vaccination information for child care providers and programs and connect programs with Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC) and Vaccine 101 trainings.

Child Care Health Consultants

- Be a champion for the vaccine!
- Provide Vaccine 101 trainings to the child care community
- Answer health and safety questions related to the vaccine and COVID-19
- Collaborate with CCR&R and Smart Start on vaccine rollout initiatives

Child Care Directors and FCCHs

- **Reach out to your employees**
 - **Identify child care staff who are working on-site, notify them that they are eligible for vaccination as part of Group 3, and share employee contact information with CCR&R.** Additional information on who qualifies for vaccination in [Group 3 – Frontline Essential Workers \(School and Child Care\)](#) is available.
 - **Encourage your employees to get vaccinated when vaccine is available for them.** Your leadership matters!
 - **Identify a champion or group of champions at your program to encourage employees to get the vaccine when it is available to them.** Champions may be individuals who are early adopters to get their vaccine when it is available to them, and meet regularly to develop and implement strategies to promote the vaccine to their peers. Include champions represent the diversity of your program in terms of race/ethnicity, languages spoken, and different roles (e.g., teachers, administrators, support staff).
 - **Reach out to your Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)** who will help you with knowing when appointments are open or when vaccine events are being held. Find your local CCR&R using the Child Care Resource and Referral in [North Carolina Council and Agency Directory](#).
 - **Watch for communication from your local Smart Start and CCR&R.** The Smart Start and CCR&R networks have been activated to work with health departments and hospitals to reserve slots, set up vaccine events, and connect you to your spot. We ask that you do not reach out to local health departments or hospitals to



- schedule events yourself. This lets vaccine providers keep their focus on getting the vaccine into arms.
- **Find a Vaccine 101 training hosted by the Child Care Health Consultants for you and your employees.** These NCDHHS/DCDEE trainings have accurate information about the safety and importance of the COVID-19 vaccine. As your vaccine point of contact, CCR&R will connect you with a CCHC in your community that can provide this training.
 - **Share general information about how and where your staff can get vaccinated.** CCR&R will contact you when there are events and appointments, but anyone working in child care in one of the prioritized settings/roles can sign up for a vaccination appointment at any vaccine provider on their own. Remind your employees that there is not enough vaccine in North Carolina to vaccinate as many people as are in eligible groups right now, and it will most likely take weeks before an appointment is available.
 - **Share the following resources with your employees:**
 - [Find My Vaccine Location](#): Easy to use online tool to help individuals find their spot to get a vaccination in NC, including vaccine provider locations and contact information. North Carolinians enter their ZIP code or current location to find nearby vaccine providers. The Find a Vaccine Location tool will be updated regularly with the latest available data. Contact vaccine providers directly to confirm availability and schedule appointments.
 - NC COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center: **1-877-490-6642**. It's a free call.
 - **Share information with employees who may need transportation to/from vaccination site.** People who need transportation assistance to a COVID-19 vaccine should reach out to their local transit agency (a list of local transit agencies can be found at the [NC DOT website](#)).

Child Care Employees

- Talk to your employer about how they are working to get their employees access to vaccine.
- Be a vaccine champion in your program by encouraging others to schedule their vaccine appointment and share reliable vaccine information from trusted sources like the [CDC](#) and NCDHHS ([YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](#)).
- Share your contact information with CCR&R.
- Use the [Find My Vaccine Location](#) tool to find a vaccine provider near you and contact them to get an appointment. Enter your zip code to find nearby vaccine providers. You can contact the vaccine provider(s) directly to confirm availability and schedule appointments. Many vaccine providers will update their website to indicate when they are planning to open vaccinations to school and child care staff.
- Call the NC COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center (1-877-490-6642).
- Attend a Vaccine 101 training when offered.
- Contact your CCHC for health and safety information related to the COVID-19.
- Contact your CCR&R for information about vaccine appointments.



Vaccine Providers

- Coordinate with your local Smart Start to develop events and appointment blocks to vaccinate child care employees.



Appendix 1. Steps to Coordinate with Local Vaccine Providers

Smart Start local partnerships that are working with vaccine provider(s) in their area to set up vaccine events or appointment blocks for child care staff, may be able to take the following additional steps. **Before taking any of these steps below, Smart Starts local partnerships should talk to vaccine provider(s) (e.g., hospital/health department, local health department, community health center, pharmacy) about what this will look like in the communities you serve.**

Coordinate with Local Vaccine Providers	
Collect contact information for eligible employees [CCR&R, child care directors/FCCH]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCR&Rs will work with child care directors/FCCH to collect names, phone numbers, and email addresses of eligible employees in the event vaccine providers are able to set aside appointments or schedule vaccine events specifically for child care employees.
Host events, develop appointment blocks, and link employees to blocks and events (Smart Start, CCR&R, directors/FCCH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your local vaccine provider is able to set aside appointments specifically for child care employees, they should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the Smart Start local partnership lead for that county. The Smart Start lead should notify the CCR&R lead for that county. The CCR&R lead should then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert child care directors of times/dates of appointments/events that are available to their employees and how their employees can sign up Assist child care programs with linking to appointment blocks or events. If recommended by vaccine provider, assist child care programs with pre-registration. Send reminders to staff about upcoming vaccine events. <p>NOTE: When helping to schedule appointments, consider that child care directors may need to stagger their employees on different days.</p>
Support vaccine event logistics: identify a facility for a vaccine event for child care employees [Smart Start]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart Start will work with your local vaccine provider to determine the appropriate event model for child care staff in your county. If so, Smart Start local partnerships can help identify a facility that has basic amenities or features for a vaccine event (see Appendix 2). Consider using facilities that are not currently being used for in-person care or instruction Consider partnering with organizations (e.g., faith organizations, community centers) that have available space for vaccine events. NCDHHS has created a Database of Organizations Interested in Hosting or Supporting Vaccine Events, which includes community organizations that are offering to host a vaccine event or offer a facility for another organization to use.
Support vaccine event logistics: Identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with your local vaccine provider to determine the appropriate event model for child care staff in your county.



**volunteers and resources
for vaccine events [Smart
Start]**

- If so, Smart Start local partnership can support vaccine events for child care employees by identifying volunteers who can support with various tasks for a vaccine event (see [Appendix 2](#)).
- Smart Start local partnerships may be able to identify organizations from other community organizations that wish to contribute volunteers. NCDHHS has created a [Database of Organizations Interested in Hosting or Supporting Vaccine Events](#), which includes community organizations that are offering to contribute volunteers.
- *Please note: In most cases, vaccine providers (NOT Smart Start local partnerships) would be responsible for planning to staff the following components of vaccine events: registration in CVMS, vaccine storage and handling, vaccine administration, post-vaccination monitoring, and data entry. Vaccine providers may also guide/support other activities as needed.*



Appendix 2. Checklist for Hosting a Vaccine Event for Child Care Staff

Smart Start local partnerships that are supporting vaccine providers by organizing a vaccine event can use the checklist below when working to identify a location and/or identify volunteers to support a vaccine event. Smart Start local partnerships can review the [Database of Organizations Interested in Hosting or Supporting Vaccine Events](#) to see if there are organizations in their county that are willing to offer a location and/or volunteers for a vaccine event.

Considerations for identifying a location for a vaccine event

Please note that a location does not need to meet all of the criteria below. It is recommended that it meets most of these criteria to be an ideal location for a vaccine event.

- ✓ Location is easily accessible to child care staff
- ✓ Location is accessible via public transportation
- ✓ Location is wheelchair accessible
- ✓ Location has running water, electricity, heat/air conditioning
- ✓ Location has working toilets and handwashing stations (portable rentals if indoor facility is not close)
- ✓ Location has wireless internet
 - Accessing Wi-Fi can be crucial for the medical partner to register patients, whether through expanded network near the vaccine site or adequately powered hotspot.
- ✓ Location has reliable cell phone service
- ✓ Location has at least 20 tables and 40 chairs
- ✓ Location can accommodate a one-way in, one-way out traffic pattern
- ✓ Location has wheelchairs for people who may have difficulty with mobility
 - Location has equipment that may be needed for a vaccine event (e.g., PPE (e.g., masks, face shields, hand sanitizer), tables, chairs, golf carts, sign boards, traffic cones, wi-fi hotspots, heaters, outdoor lighting, tents, generators, portable toilets (if no restrooms inside), food and beverages (e.g., bottled water, coffee, pastries, lunch) for volunteers and vaccinators.
 - Work with your vaccine provider to determine what equipment they can supply vs. what equipment may need to be provided by a supporting Smart Start and their partners.

Considerations for volunteers/staffing for a vaccine event

Please note: *Volunteers and vaccine providers will need to coordinate on the activities listed below. This may include training or planning sessions.*

- ✓ Volunteers who can compile waiting lists of eligible individuals to be able to share with a vaccine provider for upcoming clinics or events
- ✓ Volunteers who can schedule vaccine appointments for a proposed event



- ✓ Work with your vaccine providers to determine the best approach to help schedule community members (e.g., using scheduling website, pen and paper). Many organizations may be able to provide support for scheduling vaccines prior to a vaccine event.
- ✓ Volunteers who can call and confirm appointments prior to the vaccine event
- ✓ Volunteers who can greet people, take temperature, and screen for symptoms of COVID-19
 - ✓ Local organizations are a good source of volunteers with familiar faces to greet people and put them at ease.
- ✓ Volunteers who can help direct people to parking and provide traffic control
- ✓ Volunteers who can help with check-in and confirm appointment when people arrive at vaccination site
- ✓ Volunteers who can help with check-out and scheduling of 2nd dose, if receiving a two-dose vaccine
 - ✓ Volunteers can schedule people for their 2nd appointment before they leave the site after vaccination, if receiving a two-dose vaccine. Volunteers can help with check-out by handing out masks, handing out flyers for resources, sharing other resources with people before they leave (emphasizing the [3Ws of Wear Wait Wash](#), resources like [Hope4NC](#) mental health supports).
- ✓ Volunteers who can serve as interpreters for individuals for whom English is not their first language
- ✓ Volunteers who can serve as American Sign Language interpreters for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- ✓ Volunteers who can bring food or bottled water for vaccinators and volunteers
- ✓ Volunteers who can be runners/floaters to help with miscellaneous tasks that are needed at the vaccination site
- ✓ Volunteers who can attend trainings that led by vaccine providers (as needed)
 - ✓ It is recommended that volunteers/staff review NCDHHS Frequently Asked Questions to be able to consistently answer questions related to vaccines: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/COVID-19-Vaccine-Update.pdf>

Clear Identification of Vaccination Site Staff

Note: Volunteers should be easily and clearly identified. Without a standardized identification (could be as simple as a colored sticky name tag on the chest), it is difficult to tell who is there to be vaccinated and who is a volunteer since everyone has different face coverings. Clear identification keeps the environment safe for privacy (if not well identified, others can access areas intended only for staff) and makes it easy for people presenting for vaccination to know who can answer their questions. One thing to consider is that depending on the community you are vaccinating; fear of authorities may deter people from coming to a vaccination event. Avoiding highly uniformed staff and wearing more casual street clothes creates a safer- feeling environment at times.