

Return to Day Services Guidance for Individuals and Families

COVID-19

The physical and emotional health and safety of individuals and families in our services has remained the top priority of the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) during the COVID-19 emergency. This guidance has been created to help individuals with disabilities and their families decide whether to return to their day services, now or in the future, as some providers begin to reopen and provide in-person services again. It includes a list of recommended questions for you to consider when talking about whether to go back to day services, along with links to documents with helpful information on COVID-19 to review when making a decision.

Please reach out directly to your Support Coordinator or dspd@utah.gov if you have any questions.

Definitions

- “Providers” are agencies that provide services and supports to individuals with disabilities.
- “Supports” are the help or tools that are needed to do something successfully.
- “Residential settings” are where some individuals with disabilities live.
- An individual’s “support team” includes people chosen by the individual to help them in Person-Centered Planning, such as their Support Coordinator, Provider, family members, or friends.
- Personal Protective Equipment, also known as PPE, includes items such as masks and gloves.

When will my provider reopen?

Providers determine if they can safely reopen based on:

- The specific needs, health considerations, and risk factors of their staff
- The specific needs, health considerations, and risk factors of individuals using day services
- The ability of the program to make any environmental modifications for social distancing and infection control protocols

- Guidelines from federal, state, and local authorities
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sanitation supplies
- Capacity to adequately train staff or individuals on the proper use, handling, and disposal of PPE/sanitation supplies

Should You or Your Family Member Return to Day Services?

The decision to return to day services now or in the future must be made on a case-by-case basis while thinking about your/your family member's needs, choice, personal risk, risk of those who you live with, possible ways to reduce the risk, and the group size of your services. This decision needs to be made by you and your family, with help from your support team.

Useful links to review when deciding whether or not to return to day services:

- [Utah's Color-Coded Health Guidance System](#)
- Department of Health (DOH) documents that explain how providers should be protecting high-risk individuals who choose to return to day services:
 - [Protecting High Risk Individuals](#)
 - [Congregate Care Settings Guidelines](#)
- Department of Human Services (DHS) information about day program operating requirements available on the [DHS Provider COVID-19 FAQ](#) under DHS COVID-19 Guidance for Congregate Care Settings.
- The [Workplace Safety Checklist](#) if you go to group employment programs.

Residential providers should screen individuals for symptoms; support individuals to stay home if they show signs of illness or if they live with someone who is sick; and communicate with day service providers if someone stays home.

If you and your support team decide that you will return to day services, the team should identify and document any accommodations you may need, personal safety concerns, support needs, and dates you are looking to go back.

If you and your support team decide that you will not return to day services, the team should make sure that any current supports continue to meet your needs and preferences.

Recommended Discussion Questions for Considering a Return to Day Services

Individual considerations

- What does your day look like while you have not been going to day services?
 - What do you like about it?

- What about it has been hard for you?
- What do you want your day to look like?
 - What does your family want?
 - What would it take?
- Have you used more technology, like a tablet or smartphone?
 - What did you like about it?
 - What did you not like or what was hard about it?
- Are there new options for your day that you would like to explore?
- Would you like to go back to day services?
- What does your family think about whether or not you should return to day services?
- Do you, or someone you live with, have any [risk factors identified by the CDC](#), like asthma, diabetes, aging, heart disorder or get sick frequently?
 - If yes, does the benefit of returning to day services outweigh the risk?
 - Are there measures in place for when you return home from day services to minimize any further risk of exposure to yourself or to those you live with (wash hands upon return, change clothes, etc.)?
- If you choose not to return to day services, how does this impact your life (mental health, supervision needs, etc.)?
- Can you learn how to protect yourself and others by:
 - washing your hands often;
 - not touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
 - covering your coughs and sneezes;
 - wearing a protective mask or cloth face covering; and
 - following social distancing recommendations?
- Would you be okay with having your temperature taken regularly?
- Would you be okay with being tested for COVID-19 if necessary?
- Do you have any additional concerns that need to be addressed (safety, transitioning back to day services, etc.)?

Environment

- What can be done to help you prepare for the changes that have happened in day services?
- Do you need something specific at the day service setting to help you feel comfortable returning to day services or the community?

Supports needed for success

- What do you feel you need for safety and success before you return to day services?
- Do you need to add new supports or adjust existing supports?

- Are there any changes that you need to happen in your day program?
- How can people help you at home to stay healthy and safe if you go back to your day program?
- Is there a back-up plan in place if you show symptoms of COVID-19 and cannot attend your scheduled day services?

Transportation

- How have the options for transportation to day services changed during COVID-19?
- How will you get to day services?
- If your provider does not transport you, would you be able to attend day services?
- Would you be able to use different forms of transportation to and from day services if needed (i.e. UTA/public transportation, Lyft, Uber, taxi services, carpooling, etc.)?
 - If no, what would you need to access these different transportation services (i.e. training, technological devices, etc.)?
- Does transportation pose an additional risk?

Resources to Learn About Social Distancing and Wearing Masks

- [Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center \(SARTAC\) plain language webinar](#) on social distancing, wearing masks, and other COVID-19 topics
- [Social Distancing: A Social Story for Visual Learners](#) from the University of Cincinnati Center of Excellence
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Videos: How and When to Use Masks](#)
- **Ways family members can help teach individuals how to wear masks:**
 - **Demonstrate how to use the mask.** Let the person put the mask on a model (mannequin, figure, doll, toy, etc.) or another person. Then ask the person to put on their own mask or allow staff to put it on. The support person may have to put the mask on the model or themselves. Leave it on the model for a while so that the person can get comfortable with the mask. It may take several times of putting the mask on the model or another person before the individual will allow a support person to put a mask on their face or put the mask on their own face.
 - **Choice of mask.** Make different mask options available: different textures, colors and prints, and ways to secure the mask. Select elastic that is not too tight so that it won't hurt the person's ears. If elastic is not available, use large hair ties. The fluffy hair ties that are elastic may be used, too. Try masks with no elastic but instead have simple ties that go around the head. Offering multiple types of masks can help meet individual sensory and medical needs.
 - **Give the person a mask to carry around, hold, and feel.** Let the person try it on and take it off. It doesn't matter if they destroy it, give them another type to

become comfortable with and see if there is more success. Let them wear a mask for ten seconds, then take it off. It may help to start with a shorter time and add a second or two each time they put the mask on. You can even make an activity out of it. "Mask time" is when everyone can practice putting on and taking off a mask properly.

- **Personalize the mask.** Help the person make their own mask with fabric and art supplies. The activity can be to make a fabric mask or to decorate a pre-made mask. Fabric can be colored and painted. Decorative items can be sewn or glued on.