



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 13, 2020

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent  
P-20 System and Student Transitions 

**SUBJECT:** GSRP Requirements During COVID-19 Closures

The governor has ordered the closure of all schools in the state as of Monday, March 16, 2020. The expected re-opening date is Monday, April 6, 2020. This includes all Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP) directly run by ISDs and based in local education agencies.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been developed and posted to the [GSRP website](#) (attached) to clarify GSRP requirements during this unprecedented situation. The FAQs on the GSRP website will be updated as necessary as the situation evolves.

Please address questions to the GSRP consultants in the Office of Great Start. For contact information refer to the [GSRP Consultant Assignment List](#).

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Pat Sargent at [sargentp@michigan.gov](mailto:sargentp@michigan.gov) or 517-241-4741.

Attachment

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

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## Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Temporary Classroom Closure FAQ

1. If a building housing a GSRP or a program operating a GSRP is required by local or state authorities to shut down for 14 or more days, will days have to be added to meet the GSRP 120-day requirement?
  - A. If a program is required to shut down to limit risk of exposure to communicable disease, the number of days that the program is closed will be subtracted from the 120-day requirement. All local program decisions must be made and documented in conjunction with the intermediate school district. The Early Childhood Contact (ECC) will use the survey link provided by MDE to report information related to such closures. More information will be provided with the survey link.
2. When programs (e.g., LEAs) in a community are required to shut down, and other programs (e.g., Community-Based Organizations (CBO)) are not part of the requirement to shut down, may those programs choose to continue operations?
  - A. GSRP or child care sites that are not required to shut down may choose to remain open. If a child care center will remain open for non-GSRP families, it should also remain open for GSRP families. ISDs may not require CBOs to shut down GSRP programming if the CBO will remain open for child care. Any programs remaining open may not charge GSRP families for “regular” GSRP hours even if alternative staffing or configurations are necessary. Programs needing GSRP support during this time should email [sargentp@michigan.gov](mailto:sargentp@michigan.gov) and a consultant will be assigned to provide assistance.
3. If a program shuts down, can it continue to pay GSRP staff?
  - A. As MDE is waiving the requirement for days to be made up, programs are encouraged to continue to pay **all** staff during the shutdown to alleviate potential financial instability and hardship for employees. However, there will not be additional GSRP funds allocated to support that decision.
4. If programs shut down, what is the expectation about completion of classroom evaluations (PQA-R/CLASS)?
  - A. As a reminder, the evaluation window was recently extended to June 1. At this time, the expectation remains that every effort be made to evaluate every classroom; however, this requirement will continue to be considered as the situation evolves.
5. If a program shuts down, should it provide resources to families to continue learning at home?
  - A. Any supports that programs can provide to families would be beneficial if possible. However, programs will need to consider community and family

situations to determine how those resources can best be shared. For instance, do all families have internet access? Is it safe to mail resources? Do any families have problems accessing written instructions? Any resources that are shared should encourage adults to interact with children, rather than activities intended for children to complete independently. One resource to consider is the Library of Michigan's electronic catalog. It includes many activities for preschool children. <https://mel.org/kids>

6. What if a staff member chooses not to work due to concerns about a communicable disease? What if that means we cannot meet the ratio?
  - A. If this happens, programs should follow the personnel and staffing policies currently in place. If after all available staff have been utilized, and the ratio cannot be met, classrooms may need to be closed on a day-to-day basis. In this situation, programs would be expected to meet the 120-day requirement.
7. What if parents choose to stop sending children to school due to concerns about a communicable disease?
  - A. Programs should share the steps they are taking to minimize exposure for all children. However, parents may elect to keep children at home during this period as a precautionary measure. This should not affect the enrollment of the child.
8. For programs that remain open, can we amend family-style meal service allowing adults to serve children during this time?
  - A. Each program should ensure that it is carefully following all recommended health and safety practices as always. If staff or families have specific concerns about food service, a program may temporarily allow adults to serve children.
9. What if we are scheduled to do home visits or parent/teacher conferences during a scheduled closure? What if the site is not closed but the local authority has said that home visits may not take place?
  - A. Connections with families are a vital piece of GSRP's success. Typically, we see the four formal family interactions take place as two parent/teacher conferences and two home visits. When there are extenuating circumstances, that schedule can be modified. Each program should carefully consider current circumstances and health department guidance when determining whether it is advisable to plan or implement currently scheduled interactions or if such events should be altered or canceled. Possible alternatives to face-to-face family interactions could include telephone calls/video calls, written reports, or email conversations, among others.