

OUR COVID-19 POLICY

We have prepared the following information to help assure you that we are doing everything we can to keep your family healthy and safe and to help prepare your family to return to routine and most of all Back to School!

HOW WE ARE PREPARING TO BRING FAMILIES “HOME!”

WHAT WE ARE DOING TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY’S HEALTH & SAFETY...

First and foremost, we are following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and local state childcare licensing authorities. Our company policies, described below, are derived from best practices and expert guidance.

Health Screening & Temperature Checks

In order to ensure that our school community stays healthy, we must screen everyone who enters the building. We ask that anyone exhibiting any signs of illness stay home and not enter our school at all. Those who come to the door will be asked a few simple health questions such as:

- ▶ Do you have any of the following symptoms? Cough, lethargy, drainage from the eyes or nose, wheezing or shortness of breath, loss of your sense of taste or smell, a recent fever within the past 24 hours, or headache?
- ▶ Has any medication been taken (or given to your child) within the past 24 hours?
- ▶ Have you had any interaction with anyone known to be COVID-19 positive in the last 14 days? For healthcare professionals, have you interacted with anyone known to be COVID-19 positive within the last 14 days when you were NOT wearing the appropriate personal protective gear?
- ▶ Is there anyone in your home showing signs of illness or who have any of the symptoms listed above?

Slightly different or additional questions may be added over time or as required by local licensing and health departments. A member of our staff will also visually inspect for any signs of illness such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, tiredness, flushed cheeks, rash, runny nose, etc.

Finally, a member of our staff will take your temperature with a touchless thermometer. Anyone with a fever of 100.4 degrees (F) (or the state mandated screening temperature, if different) will be asked to leave and stay home for 72 hours.

“Curbside” Drop-off & Pick-up

A member of our staff will greet families outside the front entrance where possible or in the lobby/front entrance. After the Health Screening described above, he or she will escort your child to their classroom. Currently, we are requesting that parents do not go beyond the lobby or main entrance to minimize the spread of germs. We understand that this may make for a harder drop off, particularly for the first few days, but hope you agree that this practice will further protect the health and safety of all our children, teachers, and families by limiting the number of people to which your child is exposed. If possible, to further limit exposure, we ask that you identify one parent, guardian or other individual to be the authorized person to always drop-off and pick-up your child. Finally, we recommend that you refrain from having any individual who is at high risk for COVID-19 participate in pick-up or drop-off.

Face Masks

The CDC and AAP have both issued guidance regarding wearing face coverings in public when there is concern of community spread of COVID-19. Unless required by state, local, or licensing authority to wear them at all times, we require that our staff wear face coverings whenever they are completing health or temperature checks, during close care routines such as diaper changing and/or toileting, food service, bottle feeding, when escorting children to and from their classrooms at drop off and pick up time, and whenever in public areas of our schools. Any administrative staff or teachers who cover breaks will also wear masks at all times when within a classroom. Face coverings should not be used on children if they pose a choking or strangulation hazard, if the child is sleeping, cannot independently put it on or take it off and wash hands, or if wearing the mask causes the child to touch their face more frequently. Therefore, we will not be providing masks for children or requiring that children wear masks, unless directed to by state, local, or licensing authority. We do not feel that masks offer enough potential health benefits to overcome the risks and concerns for children age 4 or younger, but if you would prefer that your school age child (age 5 or older) wear a mask that you will provide for him or her while at school, we are happy to discuss this with you.

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Limited Visitors to the School

For the duration of the current health crisis, we must limit visitors to our school. Classroom visitors will be limited to teachers/school staff and certain pre-approved essential service providers like early intervention specialists and social workers providing services to children and licensing specialists as required. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome, as always, too. These approved visitors will have to successfully clear the Health and Temperature Screenings before entering. Members of our School Support Center team and your school's Regional Director will visit and support the school virtually for the time being. All vendors and deliveries will not be allowed past the school front lobby.

Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitizing Protocols

Teachers and school staff will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, paying particular attention to high-touch areas such as doorknobs, toilet flushers, faucets, countertops, phone handles, and tablets. Toys such as sensory bins and sand play will be removed for the time being, and we ask that home toys be left at home. Playground equipment, if in use, will be sanitized between each group of children using it. Toys will be carefully sanitized at the end of every day and all bedding will be kept separate, individually stored, and washed at least weekly. Prior to the school reopening, and then nightly, professional cleaning will be completed using EPA approved disinfecting products.

Social Distancing

Let's face it – it's not easy to provide a loving and caring environment for children from 6 feet away, nor is it easy for kids to understand social distancing! Despite those challenges we are committed to creating the safest possible childcare environment and will be changing some of our practices to reduce contact and promote safe distancing between children. We will take local and CDC guidance on the maximum number of persons (children and teachers) allowed in one group or classroom into account so you may see smaller class sizes. We will maintain consistent groupings of children and teachers whenever possible to reduce movement around the school and unnecessary exposure to different individuals. At nap time, cots or mats will be arranged so that children are sleeping 6 feet apart and in "head to toe" configurations whenever possible. Only one group at a time will use the playground or any common enrichment areas in the school to reduce contact among groups of children. Unfortunately, we will also have to postpone or reschedule any upcoming community or school events to limit group gatherings.

Meticulous Attention to Hand Hygiene

Everyone who enters the building will have access to hand sanitizer at the entrance and be asked to wash their hands immediately upon arrival into a classroom (teachers will help the children!). Hand washing will also occur before and after preparing food or beverages, before and after eating or handling food or feeding children, before and after administering medication, before and after diapering, after using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet, after coming in contact with any bodily fluid, after handling any school pets, after playing outdoors and of course, after handling any garbage. We will ensure that hand washing procedures are thorough and consistently followed.

Enhanced Exclusion and Isolation Practices

In addition to our general health guidelines and exclusion practices for illness, we will complete a health assessment and temperature check of all students and staff at lunchtime each day. Any symptom related to COVID-19 (cough, shortness of breath, or lethargy) or fever requires the student or staff member to be symptom and fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medication (acetaminophen or Ibuprofen) before returning to school. Any child who becomes ill during the day will be isolated from other children and will be required to be picked up within one hour of notification. The child's bedding, toothbrush, and any other personal items will be sent home for cleaning at that time.

Exposure to COVID-19

In the event that there is a known or suspected case of COVID-19 within our school, we will notify local health officials and follow their guidance. The school will notify families of any cases as well, and share the guidance given by local health officials. The school is prepared to close when necessary to limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19. The duration of closure will be at the guidance of local health officials.