

The Children's Center



Pandemic Handbook

2020-2021

(last update August 11, 2020)

This handbook is to help guide us in an emergency pandemic. The content herein is very fluid and will be adjusted based on new information, actual community spread, and the emergency needs of the Center. This handbook was written to help guide families and staff with open communication. The Children's Center administration will update this (4-page) handbook as needed due to State and Federal guidelines. We will follow all rules, regulations, and requirements as well as recommendations of the local, state, and federal government for the health and safety of our children, families, and staff. We are a Licensed Plus Center and Emergency Child Care Program that takes the current public health crisis seriously and will always choose best practices over those that will result in a more positive economic outcome.

Be Safe. Be Well.

Dropping off and Picking up Children

Ideally, the same parent or designated guardian should drop off and pick up their child(ren) every day. Parents and guardians will not be allowed to enter the building beyond the front lobby for drop off or pick up until further notice. The exception to this policy is nursing mothers who will be able to breast feed their baby in an isolated room separate from their child's classroom. All child care providers, office staff, and persons entering the building must wear a cloth face covering or mask over their nose and mouth at all times. Parents should also wear a mask when interacting with staff outside and picking up their child(ren) from the back playground when weather permits.

If parents need to speak with the director or office team, they are to enter through the front door with a mask or face covering and use hand sanitizer. We ask that no parent touch anything (other than the tablet to sign their child(ren) in or out if needed; pens will not be shared) during this time. We ask that when in the building that parents respect the personal space of staff by aiming to stand 6 feet away while in the lobby. We ask that families "stage" or wait outside in their vehicle if they see that the lobby is occupied by a family coming in.

When a child arrives to school and prior to being escorted to their classroom, they will be screened. Temperatures will be checked, and questions regarding health and travel asked. The child will then be brought by their teacher or staff member to the bathroom or sink in their classroom to wash their hands, arms, and face before beginning to play.

Communication with staff should be done via *ProCareConnect*, email or phone to support social distancing recommendations. Teachers miss the direct face to face contact, and we are committed to ensuring family engagement is still strong. We will make sure teachers are available to keep all families updated and to answer/ address all the needs of the children in our care. We also ask that you check your notifications regularly regarding dismissal plans and/or for potential classroom or Center closures.

Mask Wearing

We understand there are personal opinions and choice related to wearing masks. Given that both the CDC and DHHS highly recommend their use, the Center's policy during a pandemic is that all adults must wear a mask while in the building, and outside if they are within 6 feet of another adult or child. Additional recommendations can be found at: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/covid-mask-guidance.pdf>

Face Shields are not currently allowed alone as a substitute as they may protect the wearer, but do not necessarily protect the people surrounding the wearer from their droplets. You may see staff members wearing face shields as an additional layer of protection.

Children's Supplies

Children should arrive in clean clothing and bring any items needed for the day, preferably in a disposable shopping bag. Some clothing items (like fresh changes of underwear, socks, shorts) may be kept at the Center for the week, and older children may bring these in their backpacks, which will be kept separated in the classroom. As needed, personal items will be sent home at the end of the week for proper washing. This may include nap time items, or

other items that may need proper cleaning (please remember to wash the backpack too!). Personal water bottles are allowed at this time. Please make sure all your child's items are clearly labeled. Children's cubbies, bins, or hanging hook areas will be sanitized each Friday.

Illness Policy and Monitoring

Children and all staff will have their temperatures checked daily before entering the classrooms. (Staff members, please see the "Staff Checklist" addendum attached for questions to ask prior to leaving your house to come to work.) Children's temperatures will be taken at the door upon arriving then randomly throughout the day. Any student with a fever of more than 100.4 (38.0 C) must remain out of school for 72 hours after the fever has broken without fever reducing medications. *During a pandemic, we will not allow a doctor's note for returning before the 72 hours.*

Any child showing any concerning signs of respiratory issues: excessive coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, etc., will be sent home and may not return for 7 days plus 3 additional healthy days *unless the child tests negative for COVID-19* and is cleared by a medical professional.

Children who are found to have fever, rash, conjunctivitis, swelling in their hands or feet, vomiting and diarrhea with stomach pain OR present with a cough and a fever will need to be seen by a medical professional. A doctor's note will be required for their return. The child must be out and additional 72 hours after the symptoms have subsided. The former symptoms come with the newly identified illness that children affected with MIS-C are presenting. This syndrome is believed to be related to COVID-19. For more information, please see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/mis-c.html>

Parents will be required to contact the Center within 24 hours of seeing their medical provider to inform administration regarding what the illness may be.

If a doctor has cleared your child to attend child care sooner, the medical professional MUST in writing state " _____ (Child's name) was seen on _____ (date) and was evaluated for _____ and diagnosed with _____. *The child was tested and does NOT have COVID-19 and is able to return to childcare without placing another child or adult at risk.*" During these uncertain times, we must understand what the child's diagnosis is and why the child was coughing, vomiting, presenting with a rash, etc. We appreciate you proactively partnering with us and your primary provider regarding your child's health.

If the child or anyone in the home has a confirmed positive COVID-19 test, or was in direct contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, the parent/guardian of the child or family member must inform the director as soon as possible via email at tcox@thechildrenscenternh.org. The child will be required to stay home for 10-14 days.

Keeping Healthy

The Children's Center will take every precaution for your child to stay healthy! When we received our ECCP designation, staff were all required to complete training from NH DHHS titled *COVID-19 Public Health for Child Care Community*. Staff training and communications regarding health and safety measures remain ongoing. Consistent hand washing, disinfecting,

and cleaning of the center will be performed many times during the day by the staff and again at night by a professional cleaning service.

Children will be required to wash their hands additional times during the day. At minimum, hand washing will occur when arriving and entering the classroom, before and after meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, and prior to leaving for home (if the child is still inside). This may cause a child's hands to become more dry or raw than normal. We ask that you use lotion on their hands nightly to help keep your child's hands from becoming overly dry or sore.

Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Children's books, like other paper-based materials, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures. We will increase outdoor play as much as possible. Playground toys and structures will also be cleaned and disinfected regularly. No standing water tables will be allowed. Children will be encouraged to engage in activities that promote natural spacing and minimal congregating. Hand sanitizer is available on the playground. Proper hand hygiene will be required immediately following outdoor playtime.

NH's "Stay-At-Home" order expired at midnight on June 15. While reopening guidance for business and houses of worship continue to unfold, for the foreseeable future, we do ask that all families continue to practice social distancing. Children should not be going out into public where physical distancing practices are not being honored. Public playgrounds and large group gatherings must be avoided for your child to be able to attend the Center. Violations in this matter will require the child to be placed on a leave of absence until the pandemic is over.

During a time of a pandemic, The Children's Center will only care for the allowed children in accordance with the state, federal and local government. We will not allow new family tours, outside volunteers, or "drop ins" beyond the core group of families enrolled. Required maintenance procedures will occur during business hours only if necessary. Service providers will be screened and be required to wear face coverings if in the building. All deliveries will be left outside at the front door or by the side door to the kitchen.

General Travel and Quarantine Guidance

We need your help in keeping all children and our staff healthy. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to be open and honest with us about any illnesses the child or family member may be experiencing, and/or if any travel outside of New England is planned. As of July 22, families (and staff) do not need to report travel within NH, ME, VT, CT, MA, or RI but all other travel must be disclosed. Personal international and domestic travel outside of the New England states is strongly discouraged for all staff members. NH residents (or out-of-state visitors) traveling to/from areas outside of New England need to self-quarantine for the first 14 days after travel. If public transportation is used for any travel means, including within New England, self-isolation would also be required. If we find that transparency and open communication is not the case, your child(ren) may be asked to not attend.

Isolation and Closing of the Center

If a child develops a cough and a fever while at the Center, we will isolate that child until a parent or guardian can pick them up. We ask that you immediately pick up your child and

plan to follow up with your primary care provider. Any staff member developing these symptoms will be sent home.

Person(s) with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 must stay out of child care until symptom-based criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation. These criteria include at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND at least 72 hours have passed since recovery. Additionally, the classroom and/or center may be shut down for 24 hours for proper cleaning and additional sanitization per CDC guidance.

The classroom where the potential exposure took place may also close for a monitoring period while waiting for test results. The NH Division of Public Health Services will provide input. Following COVID-19 testing, if a staff member, child, or parent test is positive, the classroom and/or center will close for proper cleaning and sanitizing. Moreover, if the test is positive, and after contact tracing, the classroom and/or center will have to be closed for up to 14-days. Those in contact with the confirmed case of COVID-19 will specifically be asked to self-isolate, contact their medical provider, watch for symptoms, and possibly be tested for COVID-19. If there is a confirmed case, the Center shall contact The Bureau of Infection Disease Control (BIDC), The Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration (DHHS), and The Child Care Licensing Unit.

In addition to potential closing requirements, hours of operation may change slightly for periods of time to allow proper staffing and prevent staff overtime, which we currently cannot afford. If this were to occur, families will be given at least a 72-hour notice.

Tuition Payments during a Pandemic Closing

Payment of care decision making will be taken on a circumstance bases depending on the specific family situation and course of the pandemic in our community. Please do not assume that if your child is not at the Center, that accounts will be credited or not charged for care as was the case in March and April 2020 as COVID-19 began to unfold. Tuition payments will be reduced during short times of required closure, but not eliminated entirely. (Please see the 7.28.2020 communication regarding tuition payment requirements for August 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 based on scenario).

The enrollment specialist and/or financial coordinator will keep all families updated of payments due. If at any time during a Center closing, or your own need to be out of work because of COVID-19 presents a financial hardship, please do not hesitate to let us know so that we can partner with your family during that time of need.

ADDENDUM

STAFF CHECKLIST

Prior to leaving your house to come to work ask...	Yes or No?
In the past 14 days have you...	
Been in close contact with someone confirmed or being tested for COVID-19?	Y / N
Traveled domestically (anywhere in the country – including NH “hot spots”)?	Y / N
Do you have any of the following symptoms?	
Temperature above 100.4°F (check temperature w/ forehead thermometer)	Y / N
Cough	Y / N
Sore throat	Y / N
Runny nose	Y / N
Shortness of breath	Y / N
Mild flu-like illness (fatigue, chills, muscle aches)	Y / N
Unidentified Rash or Possible conjunctivitis	Y/N

****If you answered “YES” to any of the above, please contact Tanya or Jana, remain at home, and follow CDC protocol for each of the symptoms. See our “Pandemic Handbook”, for more information on returning to work****

If none of the boxes are marked with a “YES”, proceed to work as normal.

**After entering the building, be prescreened for symptoms by Annie
or a Designated Staff Member**

WASH YOUR HANDS OR USE HAND SANITIZER

Important reminder: You have chosen to work in Emergency Childcare. You are responsible for avoiding exposure to the COVID-19 virus to the greatest extent. You are not only responsible for your own health and your loved ones’ safety, but the health of the children and families we care for. You are responsible for exercising proper hand washing & exposure precautions along with social distancing with every activity you partake in (grocery shopping, getting gas, going to the post office, the beach etc.). Please be mindful of how your actions can affect the health of all within our center and community at large.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION!

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