Children’s Learning Center Child Care COVID Response and Preparedness Plan

Children’s Learning Center Procedures

Introduction/Overview

Our Commitment to Health & Safety

Oakland Family Services Children’s Learning Center is committed to protecting the health of our children, families, staff, and community. The following policies were designed in response to guidance from the Michigan Departments of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and Health and Human Services, in accordance with best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and with everyone’s well-being in mind. To limit the potential spread of COVID-19, we will be making some changes to our programming that include robust cleaning and disinfecting procedures and minimizing opportunities for person-to-person exposure (e.g., an infected person spreading respiratory droplets through actions such as coughing, sneezing, or talking). The following plan outlines the recommended practices and strategies we will use to protect the health of our children, staff, and families while at the same time ensuring that children are experiencing developmentally appropriate and responsive interactions and environments.

Changes to Our Physical Spaces

We will use the following strategies in our classrooms and facilities to minimize the spread of illness:

- Rearranging classroom areas to seat children as far apart as reasonably possible and limiting the number of children sitting together.
- Where possible, limiting or eliminating use of common spaces in the classrooms/facility. When common spaces must be used, we will rotate use of the space and clean between groups.
- Using touch less trash cans and sinks to provide a hands-free way to dispose of tissues, contaminants and sanitize hands.
- Before re-opening we will ensure all water systems and drinking fountains are safe following CDC guidelines.
Other policies related to our physical space include:

- Increase outdoor classroom activities to provide children and staff with opportunities to be in fresh air.
- Air purifiers have been incorporated into classrooms and in the hallways throughout the center.
- Limiting the number of children in each play area of the classroom.

Availability of Toys and Classroom Materials

At this time, we will make the following changes pertaining to the toys and materials in our classrooms:

- We will remove toys and objects that cannot be easily cleaned or sanitized between use.
- Given that cloth toys are not recommended at this time, we will remove these from classrooms.
- Toys will be washed and sanitized before being moved from one group of children to another.

Mealtimes

To limit opportunities for exposure during mealtimes, we will engage in the following recommended practices:

- Staff and children will wash hands before and immediately after eating.
- We will space seating as far apart as possible (ideally 6 feet apart) by limiting the number of children sitting together and rearranging the proximity/area.
- We will discontinue our" family-style" meal service. Instead, staff will plate each child’s meal so that multiple children are not sharing the same serving utensils.
- Disposable dishware will be utilized.

Naptime

To reduce potential for viral spread, we will follow these recommended practices:

- Ensure that children’s naptime mats/cots/cribs are spaced out as much as possible (ideally 6 feet apart).
- When possible, children will be placed head-to-toe (i.e., one child with their head at the top of the mat, the next child over with their head at the bottom of the mat).
- Use bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed.
- Store each child’s bedding in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags.
- Label each child’s cot/mat.
Items Brought From Home

During this time, we are limiting the number of items brought into the facility to reduce potential transmit of the virus. We request that families leave two extra pairs of clothes, sweater or coat and a blanket. Center staff will be responsible for washing these items. Please refrain from bringing items from home whenever possible. We recognize that limiting children’s comfort items from home may increase stress for children and staff as they may be especially needed during this time of transition. However, it is an important measure to reduce any potential spread of the virus.

We request families and staff follow the following guidelines with regard to children’s comfort items:

- Comfort items should remain at the childcare facility to avoid cross-contamination.
- These items will be placed in a cubby or bin and be used at naptime or as needed.
- Items should be washed weekly (at our facility or the child’s home) and daily if the comfort item is a soft material (e.g., blanket, stuffed animal, clothing).

Screening Families and Staff for COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure

Upon arrival to the center, staff and families are required to report if they or anyone in their household:

- Have received positive COVID-19 results;
- Been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19; and/or
- Have experienced symptoms such as persistent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, sore throat, headache, extreme fatigue, change in smell or taste, diarrhea, and/or vomiting.

The procedure we will use to screen staff for symptoms and exposure include:

- All staff are required to have their temperature checked upon arrival and submit a daily electronic health screening questionnaire. This information is collected electronically and stored in staff’s individual licensing file to ensure privacy.

The procedures we will use to screen children/families for symptoms and exposure include:

- Designated teaching staff is responsible for greeting the families upon arrival in the centers check in space. This staff will go through all daily health screening questions, temperature checks and other check in procedures with families. This information will be collected verbally and documented on the daily attendance sheet which is entered daily.
• If families or staff are absent (or otherwise off-site) but experience exposure or symptoms, they should contact:
  o Angela Liegghio, Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator at aliegghio@ofsafamily.org or (248) 858 - 7766 extension 1254.

Daily Temperature Checks

As fever is the key indicator of COVID-19 in children, we will check each child's temperature upon daily arrival to the center. Staff will be required to take their own temperature upon arrival to work. Staff will re-check children’s temperatures throughout the day if they appear ill or "not themselves" (e.g., flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue, or extreme fussiness).

Designated teaching staff will be responsible for completing daily temperature checks for the children as they arrive using a digital, contactless thermometer. Children’s temperatures will be checked during our drop off screening procedures and documented on the child’s screening form.

To minimize potential spread of illness, staff will:
• Wear a face mask while taking the child’s temperature.
• Wash their hands (using soap and water for 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) between checks.

Responding to Symptoms and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Responding to COVID-19 Symptoms On-Site

If a child or staff member has a temperature above 100.4 degrees and/or symptoms such as persistent cough, difficulty breathing, chills, diarrhea, or vomiting, they will be sent home immediately with the recommendation to contact their primary care physician/medical provider. If anyone shows emergency warning signs (e.g., trouble breathing, persistent pain/pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face), we will seek medical care immediately.

If a child develops symptoms during care hours, parents will be contacted for prompt pick up. The child will be isolated from other children and as many staff as possible. The child will not be left alone but will wait with a designated staff member (one of their teachers).

If a staff member develops symptoms during care hours, they will be sent home immediately.
Reporting Exposure

If a child, staff member, family member, or visitor to our program shows COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for the virus, we will contact our local health department and licensing consultant. Based on the guidance of the local health department, we will determine whether to close individual classrooms or our facility, the duration of the closure, and other next steps. When communicating with families and staff about any COVID-19 cases, we will respect the privacy of individuals and not share health information of a specific person. The local health department can be contacted at: (248) 858-1286.

Returning to the Program After Experiencing Symptoms and/or a Positive COVID Test

If a staff member or child has a fever OR a cough (but no other symptoms):

- Children and staff must be fever free without the use of any fever reducing medication for 72 hours prior to returning to the center.
- If a staff member or child exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19, possible exposure is expected, OR an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the individual must stay home until:
  - They have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers, AND
  - Other symptoms have improved, AND
  - At least 14 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

Two weeks after an individual has received two doses of an FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine they are considered to be fully vaccinated. A fully vaccinated individual is not required to quarantine if/when exposed under current CDC and Oakland County Health Department Regulations. Notification of exposure is still required. The Children’s Learning Center will continue to adhere to all Oakland County Health Department’s COVID-19 regulations for schools.

As per Executive Order 2020-36, if staff or their close contacts have possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19, staff will remain home without penalty of discharge, discipline, or other retaliation.

To accommodate for the potential need to quarantine staff or allow for longer absences from work than normal, we will implement the following staffing plan to ensure we can meet staff to child ratios:

- Individual classrooms may close.
- Should one or both of the classroom teachers become ill or need to stay home to care for an ill family member, a substitute teacher or center administrator will support the children and the classroom until the classroom teacher is well and able to return to work safely.

Because child care staff members are part of Michigan’s essential workforce, they are eligible to be tested and vaccinated for COVID-19. Staff can visit this resource to locate a nearby test site and vaccination information.
Maintaining Consistent Groups

During this time, we will maintain the following group sizes:

- Infants and Toddlers (birth until 30 months of age) – 7
- Preschoolers (30 months of age until 3 years of age) – 8
- Preschoolers (4 years of age until school-age) – 10
- School age - 10

To support these smaller group sizes, the center will be operating at a reduced capacity. Each operational classroom will have a reduced capacity in order to maintain smaller group sizes and offer consistency and continuity for the children in their care.

Previously enrolled children who are temporarily not attending our program will not be charged tuition or any fees to hold their spot until they are able to return.

To minimize potential spread of COVID-19, we will engage in the following best practices:

- To the fullest extent possible, classrooms will include the same group of children and providers each day.
- Cancel or postpone field trips and special events that convene larger groups of children and families.
- Limit non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities including groups of children or adults.
- Whenever in-person meetings are approved, they will be limited and social distancing requirements will be followed as much as possible.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

We will use the following recommended practices during drop-off and pick-up times to protect the health of children, families, and staff:

- Staff will escort children into and out of the center, parents/guardians are not allowed to enter the center.
- Hand sanitizer or wipes will be kept at the sign-in station for parents/guardians to clean pens/keypads between each use.
- Only one adult per family should be present at drop-off/pick-up. Ideally, this would be the same parent or designated person every day, though we recognize this is not always possible.
We will temporarily be changing our sign-in/-out policies as follows:

- We will confirm attendance times with parents via email when necessary.

Other policies related to drop-off and pick-up include:

- We will be implementing designated staggered drop-off and pick-up times.

Parents will be required to wear masks while dropping off and picking up their children.

**Transportation**

We will use the following CDC-recommended practices to ensure the safety of children and staff:

- We will limit non-essential work-related travel and have staff participate in training and technical assistance virtually, whenever possible.
- Field trips requiring transportation via Agency vehicles will be suspended at this time.

**Hand Washing**

We will reinforce regular health and safety practices with children and staff and continue to comply with licensing regulations and CDC hand washing guidelines as follows:

- Staff and children will wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Staff and children should cover all surfaces on their hands with hand sanitizer, rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- Staff should assist children with hand washing (especially very young children who cannot wash hands alone) and use of hand sanitizer to ensure proper use and prevent ingestion.
- Staff and children (with frequent reminders and support) will cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve and wash hands immediately after.
- Wearing gloves does not replace appropriate hand hygiene.
- Hand hygiene is especially important after blowing one’s nose or going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food (or helping children do any of these actions).
Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces

We will engage in the following cleaning and disinfecting practices in accordance with CDC recommendations:

• Daily cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, toilets, light switches, doorknobs, counter and tabletops, chairs).
• Regular cleaning of electronics (e.g., keyboards, parent/staff check-in kiosks) according to manufacturer's instructions.
• Normal routine cleaning of outdoor spaces, with special attention to high-touch plastic/metal surfaces (e.g., grab bars, railings).
• Use of a schedule for regular cleaning and disinfecting tasks.
• Ensure staff wear disposable gloves to perform cleaning, disinfecting, laundry, and trash pick-up, followed by hand washing.
• Clean dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
• Use of CDC-recommended disinfectants such as EPA-registered household disinfectants, diluted bleach solution, and/or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.

Keep cleaning products secure and out of reach of children, avoiding use near children, and ensuring proper ventilation during use to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Toys

We will follow best practices to clean and disinfect toys:

• Clean toys frequently, especially items that have been in a child’s mouth.
• Remove toys that need to be cleaned (e.g., out of children’s reach in a dish pan with soapy water or separate container marked for "soiled toys").
• Clean toys with soapy water, rinse them, sanitize them with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry.

Safety Equipment

Face Mask for Staff

Staff are required to wear masks at all times while inside of the building and center. Staff are permitted to remove masks only during periods of outdoor play.
Face Masks for Children

Our plan regarding children wearing cloth face coverings during care is:

**New MDHHS Epidemic Order:** This order is an extension of the previous order, with one important change for child care providers. The mask mandate is being expanded to include children ages 2-5, beginning Monday April 26.

**Executive Order 2020-164** requires all staff and children ages 2 and up to wear a face covering on a school bus or other transportation. Additionally, all staff and children ages 4 and up must wear a face covering in all indoor common spaces. All staff and all children 12 and older are required to wear a face covering when in classrooms, homes, cabins, or similar indoor small-group settings. The governor also strongly encourages that all children ages 2 and up wear face coverings when indoors. These rules align with the existing rules on face coverings that already apply to preK-12 schools across Michigan.

**Executive Order 2020-185** requires all students in grades kindergarten and up in MERC regions one, two, three, four, five and seven to wear a face covering in classrooms. Prior Executive Orders had recommended, but not required, a face covering for grades kindergarten through five. To view Executive Order 2020-185, please click here.

We will comply with the Governor’s Executive Order in regard to exemptions and will require medical documentation signed by your child’s physician stating they are medically unable to wear a mask. Any child who is unable to wear a face mask will be required to wear a face shield during the time periods noted above.

Families are required to provide two clean masks for their child each day.
Use of Gloves

Staff will wear gloves in a manner consistent with existing licensing rules (for example, gloves should be worn when handling contaminate, changing diapers, cleaning or when serving food). Staff members should wash hands before putting gloves on and immediately after gloves are removed. Gloves are not recommended for broader use and do not replace hand washing.

Partnering and Communicating with Families & Staff

Communicating with Staff and Families

We will actively communicate with staff and families to determine when they will return to work/care if they have been absent. We will discuss concerns or questions, share new/updated policies and expectations, and confidentially discuss any extenuating circumstances that have emerged and/or any health concerns/conditions that may elevate risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19.

The staff responsible for handling questions and outreach for staff is: Angela Liegghio and the staff members assigned supervisor.

The staff responsible for handling questions and outreach for families is: Angela Liegghio.

Training Staff

To support staff in effectively engaging in best practices and making personal decisions, we will provide learning opportunities to help all of us understand how COVID-19 is transmitted, the distance the virus can travel, how long the virus remains viable in the air and on surfaces, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and our new policies and procedures as outlined in this plan.

Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Needs

Staff and families will partner together to support the needs and emotional reactions of children during this time. We anticipate that children will experience a wide range of feelings. Some children will be relieved, some will have initial challenges with separation from their parent(s), some may demonstrate anger at the "disappearance" of their child care provider, and some may act out toward other children. Whatever the reactions, we acknowledge that staff and families may need some new tools, approaches or techniques to assist the child with emotional regulation and we will work together to support all caregivers.

We are committed to supporting our children. Our Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist will be available to provide consultation, support and resources to families, children and staff. For assistance, you may reach her at:
Amanda Robertson, Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist
(248) 804-3785 or arobertson@ofsfamily.org

The following resources are available for staff and families to support children:

- [Crisis Parent and Caregiver Guide](#), from the Michigan Children’s Trust Fund
- [Talking with Children about COVID-19](#), from the CDC
- [Helping Young Children Through COVID-19](#), from Zero to Thrive (includes Arabic and Spanish translations)
- [Georgie and the Giant Germ](#), from Zero to Thrive and Tender Press Books

**Supporting Staff Members' Social-Emotional Needs**

To ensure the well-being of the children, it is also imperative to ensure the well-being of their teachers and caregivers, and to provide them with the emotional and administrative supports necessary during this time of re-integration, and in the months ahead. As essential workers in the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand our staff may have worries about their own physical or psychological health, and the potential risk to their family members at home. Because young children internalize the stress of the adults who care for them, we know it is vitally important to provide supports and services to ensure the emotional well-being of our staff.

We are committed to supporting our staff. Staff will attend weekly team supervision with their supervisor, participate in reflective supervision sessions and be provided access to HelpNet, Oakland Family Services’ employee assistance program.

**For more information**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

- Angela Liegghio ([alieghghio@ofsfamily.org](mailto:alieghghio@ofsfamily.org)) or
- Kris Kasperski ([kkasperski@ofsfamily.org](mailto:kkasperski@ofsfamily.org))