Child Care COVID Response & Preparedness Plan

Program Information

Child care program name:

**Early Childhood Center** (Center Line Daycare)
24580 Cunningham
Warren, MI  48015

Introduction

**Our Commitment to Health & Safety**

The Early Childhood 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 temporary 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:

1. Where possible, dividing large group spaces to allow more children to safely use the space (e.g., using child-sized furniture, such as rolling shelves and kitchenettes, to divide a room and prevent mixing between groups of children).
2. Rearranging classroom areas to seat children as far apart as reasonably possible and limiting the number of children sitting together.
3. 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.
4. Ensuring ventilation systems operate properly and increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible (e.g., keeping windows and doors open to the extent that this does not pose safety risks).
5. 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:

- Children will be signed in and out at entrances one classroom at a time. Parents will not be entering the building.

Availability of Toys and Classroom Materials

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

1. We will remove toys and objects which cannot be easily cleaned or sanitized between use.
2. Given that cloth toys are not recommended at this time, we will remove these from classrooms.
3. We will temporarily suspend use of water and sensory tables.
4. Toys will be washed and sanitized before being moved from one group of children to another.

Other policies related to toys and materials include:

- Hard surface and wooden toys will be cleaned on a daily basis.
Mealtimes

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

1. We will serve meals in the classroom instead of group dining spaces.
2. We will space seating as far apart as possible (ideally 6 feet apart) by limiting the number of children sitting together and rearranging seating.
3. We will modify our family-style meal service and have staff plate each child's meal so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.
4. Staff and children will wash hands before and immediately after children have eaten.

Naptime

To reduce potential for viral spread, we will engage in the following recommended practices:

1. Labeling each child's cot/mat.
2. Using bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed.
3. Storing each child's bedding in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags.
4. Ensuring that children's naptime mats/cots/cribs are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart.
5. 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).

Items Brought From Home

During this time, we are trying to limit the number of items brought into the facility because this can be a way to transmit the virus, so we ask that families refrain from bringing items from home as much as possible. However, we recognize that placing limits on children's comfort items may increase stress for children and staff as they may be especially needed during this time of transition.

We ask that families and staff follow these guidelines with regard to children's comfort items:

1. To avoid these items coming into contact with many children, efforts will be made for these items to be placed in a cubby or bin and be used at naptime or as needed.

Other policies related to naptime/items from home include:

- All items of soft materials (e.g., blanket, stuffed animal, clothing) should be taken home daily and washed at child's home. Please send in small travel size pillow and blanket that fit into the bin the school provides.

Screening Families & Staff for COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure

Upon arrival to the program, 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, change in smell or taste, diarrhea, and/or vomiting.

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

Utilizing the CLPS/MCHD COVID Health Screening tool and assurance protocol. Staff will be educated on the protocol as well as the symptoms related to COVID-19. Staff will be asked to self-assess each morning prior to the start of the school day. Staff will acknowledge they are free of symptoms when they sign in to the building each morning, contact the office, and work with the school district on following the response guidelines established by the Macomb County Health Department.
The procedures we will use to screen children/families for symptoms and exposure include:

Utilizing the CLPS/MCHD COVID Health Screening tool and assurance protocol. Families will be educated on the protocol as well as the symptoms related to COVID-19. Families will be asked to screen their child(ren) for symptoms each morning prior to the start of the school day. These symptoms may indicate a possible illness that may decrease a child’s ability to learn, and put them at risk for spreading illness. Families will work with the school district on following the response guidelines established by the Macomb County Health Department.

If families or staff are absent or otherwise off-site but experience exposure or symptoms, they should contact:

- Early Childhood Center at (586) 510-2800.
- They should report if they have been exposed, have symptoms, or tested positive for COVID-19.
- If no one is available, leave a message stating child’s name and classroom teacher.

**Daily Temperature Checks**

**Temperature Checks**

As fever is the key indicator of COVID-19 in children, families are asked to utilize the CLPS/MCHD COVID Health Screening tool and assurance protocol. Staff will re-check a child’s temperature 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).

**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).
- The child will wait with the following designated staff member(s): Director, Secretary or Teaching Staff.
- The child and designated staff will wait in the following safe, isolated location: Room 117.

Other procedures include:

- Refer parents to MCHD website for testing sites if the parent chooses to test their child.

If a staff member develops symptoms during care hours:

- They will be asked to go home immediately.
- If no other caregiver is immediately available to be with children, the staff member will put on a cloth face covering (if not already on) and limit close interactions with children until they can be relieved by another staff member.
- Children may need to be picked up if no other caregiver is available.
- If the ill staff member needs to be picked up or otherwise cannot leave the facility immediately, they will wait in the following safe, isolated location: Room 117.
Reporting Exposure

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 necessary steps. When communicating with families and staff about any COVID-19 cases, we will respect privacy of the individual and maintain confidentiality.

Our local health department can be contacted at:

- (586) 783-8190

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):

- It is recommended that they be fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication that reduces fever, before returning to care/work.

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 fever AND
- Other symptoms have improved AND
- At least 10 day have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

As per Executive Order 2020-36, if staff or their close contacts have possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19, staff will be allowed to 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:

- We will have staff members or substitutes of the district fill in for staff members who become ill.

Maintaining Consistent Groups

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

- Preschoolers, 3 years of age until 4 years of age: 10
- Preschoolers, 4 years of age until school-age: 16

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

1. To the extent possible, classrooms will include the same group of children and providers each day.
2. Each group of children will be kept in a separate room.
3. We will limit the mixing of children across groups by staggering times for outdoor play and other activities where children from multiple classrooms are typically combined.
4. Canceling or postponing field trips and special events that convene larger groups of children and families.
5. Limiting non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities including groups of children or adults.

Other policies related to minimizing exposure risks include:

- Staff meetings will follow social distancing requirements 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.

1. 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.
2. We will implement staggered drop-off and pick-up times to limit contact among parents.
3. Staff will greet children and families curbside or outside the building and walk children in and out of the building.
4. We will ask parents and other visitors to wear masks while in the building.
5. We ask that parents avoid congregating in a single space or a large group.

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

- Teachers will be signing children in and out 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 of their hands with hand sanitizer, rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- Staff should assist children with hand washing (especially infants 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, going to the bathroom, 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:

1. Daily cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, toilets, light switches, doorknobs, counter and tabletops, chairs).
2. Cleaning dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
3. Use of CDC-recommended disinfectants such as EPA-registered household disinfectants, diluted bleach solution, and/or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.
4. Keeping 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 engage in the following best practices to clean and disinfect toys:

1. We will clean toys frequently, especially items that have been in a child’s mouth.
2. We will clean toys with soapy water, rinse them, sanitize them with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry.
Safety Equipment

**Face Mask/Coverings for Staff**
Our plan for staff around face masks/coverings is as follows:

- Staff are required to wear face coverings at all times on-site.

**Use of Gloves**

- Staff will wear gloves in a manner consistent with existing licensing rules (e.g., gloves should be worn when handling contaminants, 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.

**Face Mask/Coverings for Children**
Our plan regarding children wearing cloth face coverings during care is:

- All students and staff must wear masks.
- Homemade masks must be washed daily. Disposable ones must be thrown away each day.
- All staff and students must wear masks in hallways and common areas except during meals.
- Preschool teachers may allow students to remove masks while in self-contained classrooms or outside while social distancing.

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 out, discuss concerns or questions, share new 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:
- Superintendent, Director, Counselors and Health Staff.

The staff responsible for handling questions and outreach for families is:
- Superintendent, Director, Secretary, Counselors and Health Staff.

**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 during this transition period. 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 in their toolkit to assist the child with emotional regulation and we will work together to support all caregivers.

**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.