

## **Guide to Childcare Practices in Response to COVID-19**

*Updated 5-22-2020*

Over the past 8 weeks, we have continued to evaluate and revise our operations to maximize safety and health. It has become clear that practices necessary to reduce risks associated with the pandemic will be required over a much longer period than originally expected. While guidance may change from time to time, we hope that the following practices will be sufficient to maintain a healthy balance between the developmental needs of young children and potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

We are currently enrolled for 10 children in the toddler and 9 in the preschool classrooms. While we would prefer to limit our classrooms to 8 children and 2 adults, we will be flexible to ensure that no enrolled children will be turned away. We will not be enrolling any new children for the time being. On any given day attendance may easily dip below the enrolled number.

### **Staff and Teachers**

Teachers will check their own temperature daily either at home or when they arrive. Thermometers are available in each classroom.

Teachers must report to the Childcare Director and not come to work if:

- You have a fever of 100.4 or higher
- You have any symptoms of COVID-19 (as updated by the CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).
- You have had any close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- You have travelled or live with someone who has travelled in the past 14 days.
- If you are symptomatic you should immediately seek testing and any necessary medical help.
- If you have had close contact with a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 you should self-isolate at home for 14 days.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the Childcare Director or other authorized administrator will contact:

- The Bureau of Infection Disease Control (BIDC) at 603-271-4496
- The Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration at 603-271-4242, and
- The Child Care Licensing Unit at 603-271-9025 or [ccluoffice@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:ccluoffice@dhhs.nh.gov)

- Any person who may have COVID-19 must stay away from childcare until the symptom-based criteria for discontinuation of isolation are met
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and
  - At least 3 days have passed since recovery from symptoms.
  - These criteria may be updated from time to time and can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html>)

### **Use of facemasks (including cloth or disposable masks that disguise the face)**

We believe that wearing a mask in the presence of young children under age three has a detrimental effect on the caregiver's bond with the child and in addition will adversely affect speech development.

Teachers working with children under 3 will not wear facemasks that disguise the mouth.

Teachers working with children over 3 are encouraged but not required to wear facemasks.

All staff are encouraged but not required to wear facemasks indoors whenever spatial distancing (6 feet) is not possible.

No facemasks are required outdoors.

The wearing of facemasks requires proper handling which greatly influences any benefit.

Guidance on the proper handling of facemasks can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

### **Childcare Parents**

Parents will drop off and pick up children outdoors beginning on May 26, 2020. Entry is through the gate on the far-right side of the building (near the toddler room).

Parents should maintain spatial distancing with all other adults at all times. Private conversations with teachers should happen away from the main traffic areas to ensure privacy.

Parents should clearly label a "gear bag" for their children which they can leave on the porch or just inside the classroom door. Take all clothes home every day. We can not do any laundry for children.

Parents will drop off and pick up infants in the building. Please enter and leave through the door on the infant porch in the back yard. If you have 2 children, please drop off you infant last.

Parents must not bring children to childcare if any of the following are present:

- Child has an unmedicated temperature of 100.4 or above within 24 hours of drop off.
- Child is coughing or having any difficulty breathing.
- Any two (2) of the following symptoms are present:
  - Chills
  - Fever
  - Headache
  - Muscle Pain
  - New Loss of Taste or Smell
  - Repeated Shaking with Chills
  - Sore Throat

If children develop any of these symptoms, parents will be notified and are expected to pick up their children immediately.

If any child becomes ill during the day, teachers will immediately separate them in the Hearth Room and contact the parents. Children will be supervised in the Hearth Room by a staff member at all times.

## **Visitors**

Visitors to the building are not permitted unless they have an important need to access the premises.

Visitors who need to enter are required to wear facemasks and maintain spatial distancing of 6 feet between themselves and all staff. Visitors will not have access to children's classrooms.

Visitors entering the building will immediately use hand sanitizer which is located on the main reception mantle and will wash hands frequently if required to touch surfaces in multiple areas.

## **Hand Hygiene**

Frequent handwashing is critical to controlling the spread of infectious disease. At a minimum all staff and children will wash their hands using the CDC recommended protocol at the following times:

- On arrival to the facility or into the classroom
- Before and after all meals and snacks
- After toileting or diaper change
- After handling any bodily fluid
- After handling any garbage

Staff will ensure that hands are washed:

- Before and after handling any food
- Before and after medication administration
- Between handling children to avoid cross-contamination.

Single use paper towels will be used at all times – no cloth towels are permitted outside the kitchen and in the infant room.

If recommended handwashing is not available, the use of hand sanitizer which meets the standard of 60% alcohol will be used. Hand sanitizer should never be used on children under age 2 and should be kept out of reach at all times.

Hand sanitizer should be available in the backpack used during outdoor activity.

### **Hygiene during caregiving**

The CDC guidelines for diapering are posted in each diaper changing area and must be followed at all times. It is acceptable for paper surface covers to be replaced by ensuring that the diaper surface is thoroughly wiped with Benefect disinfectant wipes after each use.

### **Spatial Distancing and Group Interactions**

Whenever possible, teachers will attempt to maintain 6 feet of distance between children during naptime or place barriers between the children's mats.

Group size will be limited to 10 children/adults in a room when indoors to the extent possible.

Intermixing of caregivers will be kept to a minimum whenever possible.

### **Daily meals and snacks**

Teachers will prepare all meals and snacks in the commercial kitchen using ServSafe practices.

Teachers will serve meals, not allowing children to handle serving ware.

Children will not share bowls, spoons, or cups.

The table will be cleaned and sprayed with Benefect (or wiped with Benefect wipe) after each meal or snack.

### **General Cleaning and Disinfection**

CDC Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting will be followed. They can be found at:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#CleanDisinfect>

The disinfectant that we use is 100% natural and safe and is included on the EPA's list of effective disinfectants. We have also contacted the health inspector and he informed us that this cleaner is an effective choice. You can read more about the cleaner here:  
<https://benefect.com/us/products/disinfectant/>

Daily cleaning will be completed at the end of each day by the teacher. After cleaning, any frequently touched surfaces will be sprayed with disinfectant and allowed to dry overnight.

All toys that were used during the day will be cleaned and disinfected. If at all possible, the toys will be washed in the commercial dishwasher for best sanitation.

All soft or cloth toys will be laundered daily.

Soft toys that cannot be laundered daily (fleeces for example) will be put away for the time being.

All bibs and handcloths will be used only once and laundered daily.

Because our children spend so much of their time outdoors, if at all possible, toys should be cleaned and put away and surfaces wiped and sanitized after children have gone outdoors.

General building cleaning will be done weekly or semi-weekly.

Additional requirements will be modified over time as the recommendations evolve.

Regardless of strict adherence to these guidelines, infectious transmission is possible. Everyone who comes to Sophia's Hearth including children, teachers and parents should be comfortable with the requirements set forth above. Anyone who is not comfortable with the above should not enroll their child until the risk of COVID-19 transmission is adequately controlled.