



## **MERRIMACK VALLEY YMCA CHILD CARE PROGRAM PARENT HANDBOOK COVID ADDENDUM**

The safety of our children, families and staff is always our number one priority. As we reopen our Child Care Programs, we wanted to share our updated procedures to continue to ensure safety and to support a smooth transition to welcome you back.

This document is subject to change based on the latest public health data as well as guidance from the Center for Disease Control, The Department of Public Health, the local Board of Health and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

Please speak to your Center Director if you have any questions or concerns.

Here is the link to the [Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety from EEC](#).

### **Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19**

- Fever of 100.4 F or above
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)
- Headache
- Loss of smell/taste
- Muscle aches
- When to seek medical attention
  - Seek medical attention if any of these symptoms are severe.
  - Call 911 if experiencing extreme difficulty breathing, bluish lips or face, persistent pain or pressure in chest, severe or persistent dizziness, lightheadedness, confusion, seizure or inability to rouse someone.

### **Welcome**

- **Contact Information**
  - During the re-enrollment process you have been asked to provide us with updated registration forms so we will have the most up to date contact information for each child. During this pandemic it is imperative the center is able to reach you or another authorized contact quickly in an emergency. Make sure you have contacts documented, (other than yourselves), in case of emergency.

- **Screening**
  - Each morning you will be asked to complete a Health Attestation form for your child in a paper form upon outside the child care program entrances. The self-screening will include checking for symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms, new loss of taste/smell, muscles aches or any other symptoms of illness as well as household contact with COVID-19 or travel out of state using public transportation. Upon arrival the staff will ensure you have completed the appropriate form.
  - Individuals who decline to complete the screening will not be permitted to enter the program space.
  - If a child does not pass the health screening they will not be signed into the program or allowed to stay.
  
- **Drop off procedures**
  - In order to limit the amount of people in our locations we will do all pick up and drop off curbside, outside the YMCA.
  - Parents/Guardians will park in designated child care parking spaces and remain in their cars until a staff member comes to your car to conduct the medical screening. If you walk to the program, please wait for the staff conducting the medical screening to assist you. **CHILDREN MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF WITHOUT COMPLETING THE MEDICAL SCREENING.**
  - Once your child has passed the health screening they will be signed in by a staff person and brought into the program.
  - Upon arrival to the room, your child's belongings will be stored in an individual cubby and they will wash their hands before engaging in play.
  - Face masks must be worn by staff and are encouraged for children to wear when entering the building.
  
- **Pick up procedures**
  - Each afternoon when you arrive at the program at the designated pick time, a staff member will gather your child's belongings and escort your child to you. **PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURING CHILDREN INTO AGE APPROPRIATE CAR SEAT RESTRAINTS.**
  
- **Personal belongings**
  - Your child's personal belongings, including nap items, must be secured in a zippered backpack, diaper bag or tote.
  
- **Operating hours**
  - Our operating hours will be 8:00-5:00 Monday-Friday. Drop off must be completed by 9:45 am and pick up will begin at 3:45 and end promptly at 5:00 pm.
  
- **Early Intervention/Individual Education Plans**
  - While we understand the importance of these services, EEC is requesting all services be delivered virtually. We encourage you to work with your provider and schedule virtual services when you are at home with your child.



- **Tooth brushing**
  - Due to the potential spread of germs, at the request of EEC we are suspending tooth brushing during this phase.

## Transition

Everyone has been through several changes over the past few months and we all want to resume our normal routines and schedules. As we work through what our new normal will look like, we are here to support you and your family to smoothly transition back to school. Here are a few tips to help you.

- Social stories are designed to show children what the unknown may look like. Here are links to our favorites:
  - [Going Back to School After COVID-19](#)
  - [Seeing Other People Wear Masks](#)
  - [Hand washing Social Story](#)
- **Toys from home**
  - Children take comfort in being able to transition with a familiar item. Often stuffed animals, “loveys”, etc are used to support saying goodbye as well as snuggling at nap. EEC is not allowing soft items in the classrooms and the center is discouraging soft items from home. Other transition items could be a family picture or something that reminds your child of the comforts of home. Work with your child’s teacher or Director to determine how we can support your child with transitions. Items from home must remain in your child’s cubby.
- **PPE**
  - EEC is requiring staff to wear masks when unable to be 6 feet apart from others.
  - Merrimack Valley YMCA Child Care Programs are recommending masks for children 3 years of age or older who can safely and appropriately wear, remove and handle masks. Masks will not be worn during eating/drinking, sleeping/nap or outside times. Educators will encourage children to wear them as much as possible. Families should provide their children with a sufficient supply of clean masks for their child to replace as needed. Masks should be clearly marked with your child’s name and classroom.
  - Masks must be worn by the parent/guardian dropping off and picking up.
  - Staff will wear gloves for the following activities; diapering/bathroom, food preparation, screening, administering medication and applying sunscreen. Handwashing is also required before and after these activities.

## Classroom Environments/Schedules

- **Materials and equipment**
  - Learning centers have been redesigned to minimize sharing and to promote distancing.
  - Items that cannot be easily washed (stuffed animals, pillows, dress up clothes) as well as items that encourage children to put the toy in their mouths (play food, pretend utensils) have been removed.



- Shared items and sensory tables that cannot be disinfected (playdough, sand etc.) have been removed and will be replaced with individual sensory experiences.
- **Nap**
  - Children's mats/cots will be positioned to ensure children's faces are a minimum of 6 feet apart.
  - Nap items will be individually stored in a bag from home. Nap items will go home each night for laundering.
- **Outdoor play**
  - Each classroom will have a scheduled time outside. High touch playground equipment will be sanitized between groups.
- Handwashing is the most effective way to stop the spread of germs. Children and staff will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry with a paper towel with the following activities:
  - Upon entry into the program space
  - When coming into the classroom from outside
  - Before and after eating
  - After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing
  - After toileting and diapering
  - Before handling food
  - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
  - After using any shared equipment
  - After assisting children with handwashing
  - Before and after administering medication
  - After contact with mask/face covering
  - Between changes of gloves
- **Cleaning procedures**

Staff shall ensure all equipment is properly sanitized or disinfected to prevent the spread of infection. The goal of safe cleaning is effective germ control using the safest amount of cleaning, sanitizing or disinfecting product.

  - The sanitizing and disinfecting solutions used in our Child Care Programs is either a bleach solution prepared by the program daily or a commercial product registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
  - Manufacturer's instructions are followed
  - The Programs will intensify our routine cleaning, sanitizing/disinfecting practices, paying extra attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, including door knobs, bathrooms and sinks, keyboards, and bannisters.
  - The Programs will clean and disinfect toys and activity items used by children more frequently than usual and take extra care to ensure that all objects that children put in their mouths are removed from circulation, cleaned, and sanitized before another child is allowed to use it.



## Illness Policies and Isolation Procedures

- Staff will actively monitor children throughout the day for symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, etc. Children who appear ill or are exhibiting signs of illness must be separated from the group and isolated until able to leave the center. A staff will use a non-contact thermometer if a child is suspected of having a fever of 100.0 F or above.
  - If a child appears to have severe symptoms, we will call 911 immediately then call a parent/guardian
  - The isolated child will be made comfortable and properly supervised by staff wearing PPE until pick up.
  - **Children are required to remain home from school fever free for 72 hours, not 24 as previously required without the aid of fever reducing medications.**
- **COVID-19 Exposure of staff or children**
  - If a child or staff is exposed to COVID-19 regardless of symptoms, the child or staff must remain home for 14 days. The center will consult the local board of health for guidance on quarantine for other children and staff as well as additional precautions needed to ensure the program space is safe to continue child care services.
  - If a child or staff's household member tests positive for COVID-19, the child or staff must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last time they could have been exposed.
- **In the event a program experiences an exposure, programs must notify the following parties:**
  - The Center Director will notify employees and families while maintaining confidentiality as well as the Executive Director of Child Care Services .
  - The Executive Director of Child Care Services or the Program Director will notify the Local board of health if a staff or child is COVID-19 positive for further guidance.
  - The Executive Director of Child Care Services will notify EEC if a staff or child tests positive.
- **Individual Health Care Plans**
  - Directors will meet with the families of children who have IHCP's to discuss their individual needs and how COVID-19 may impact their child's health and treatment.
  - **Meeting will include:**
    - IHCP's will be reviewed and updated as needed
    - Parents/guardians will be encouraged to speak to their child's health care provider to ensure group child care is a safe environment for their child's condition and discuss alternative treatments to nebulizers
    - Families will be informed that nebulizers are prohibited from use in the Early Learning Center due to the increased risk of the virus being aerosolized. Parents/guardians will be called if their child is requiring a nebulizer treatment so it can be administered outside of the center, if no other treatment is available.



- Educators will review each child's IHCP for updated information and be trained according to the plan

### **Tuition**

- Current tuition policies including policies on vacation and absences will remain in effect.

### **Microwaves**

- The program cannot use microwaves at this time. If your child wants food warm, please heat it at home and send it in a thermos.

### **Travel**

- If children (enrolled in our YMCA program this summer), a member of their household, staff member or a member of the staff's household travels anywhere by plane or by train they must self-quarantine for 10 days before returning to the program.

### **Acknowledgement Page**

The undersigned fully understands and appreciates both the known and potential dangers of utilizing the facilities, services, and programs of the YMCA and acknowledges that use thereof by the undersigned and/or such participating children may, despite the YMCA's reasonable efforts to mitigate such dangers, result in exposure to COVID-19, which could result in quarantine requirements, serious illness, disability, and/or death.

**I understand the policies and protocols may change based on the public health data, information from CDC, DPH, BOH, and/or EEC. I will adhere to the Merrimack Valley YMCA Child Care Program COVID Addendum added to the Parent Handbook.**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Hand Sanitizer**

I give permission for my child to use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol based) in the program.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

