

## **COVID-19 SAFETY PLANNING PROTOCOL FOR LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES**

This guidance is designed to help providers and early childhood professionals maintain health and safety standards, in response to the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). Having a response plan with complete steps can make a real difference in ensuring health and safety during a pandemic. To meet this need, all licensed child care facilities are encouraged to have a current safety plan to include the following information. Please utilize the *Health and Safety Required Practices and Guidance for New Mexico Childcare Centers and Early Childhood Professionals*, located on <https://newmexicokids.org> as a guide for completing your safety plan.

**\*Please note Department of Health (DOH) mandates a safety plan in response to a confirmed COVID-19 case at your facility.**

1. **Facility Information and Contact Numbers:** Create a list of contact numbers that include your regional area's DOH office, county emergency manager, early childhood lead, regulatory staff, and the New Mexico Coronavirus hotline.
  
2. **Entry Plan:** This plan should provide information on arrival, departure, and daily health checks. Plan needs to include:
  - Minimizing the risk of cross contamination at clock in/out stations.
  - Daily health screening protocols
  - Temperature checks
  - Usage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Observation for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
  
3. **Preventative Plan:** This plan should provide information on preventative measures, to reduce the risk of spreading or exposure of COVID-19. Plan needs to include:
  - Frequency, duration, and techniques for proper hand washing and teaching
  - Proper usage and storage of face coverings
  - Include cleaning and sanitizing with increased frequency and disinfecting high touched areas throughout the day
  - How, when, and why Personal Protective Equipment should be used and disposed
  - Education provided to children on how germs are spread and how to minimize their risk

4. **Physical Distancing:** This plan should provide information on measures to take to adhere to social distancing requirements while maintaining social connections. This plan needs to include:
  - Maintaining proper space distancing amongst each other
  - Limit group size and observe ratios inside or outside at all times
  - Meal time settings and practices
  
5. **Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Cases:** This plan should provide information on steps to take when signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are observed or notification of a positive COVID-19 test is received. This plan should include:
  - Who, how, and when to notify
  - Additional steps to take for deep cleaning and sanitizing
  - Changes to business, such as closures, hours, and protocol for returning to facility

**For more information on COVID-19, please visit:**

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov>
- NM Department of Health (NMDOH): <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- Early Childhood Services: <https://newmexicokids.org>



One teacher from the classroom will escort child from parent/caregiver to the child's classroom where the third teacher in the classroom will greet the child and bring the child into the room to get settled.

Rooms 103, 114, 119 enter through the East Playground Gate

Rooms 120,122 will enter through the Northwest Playground Gate

Rooms 123,124,125 will enter through the Southwest Playground Gate

Rooms 126, 127, 128 will enter through the front entrance

Parents and children will wait in line at specific drop/off and pick up areas with their child on the "x's" (which will be marked every 6 feet) and move up the line accordingly. All parents/caregivers and all children 3-5 years of age must wear masks at drop off and pick up.

- Person Responsible: Lead Teacher for each classroom
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B. Health Screenings (e.g. temperature checking procedure for staff and children)

Staff will be screened prior to coming in contact with children.

One teacher from the classroom, wearing appropriate PPE, will meet parents and child at drop off point to do the Temperature Check & Health Screening

Staff members and children may only enter the school after meeting all of the criteria listed:

- Temperature under 100.4 Fahrenheit as read by a "No Touch" thermometer.
- Answered No to the following questions.
- Have you or your child:
  1. had a fever greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or taken fever reducing medication in the last 48 hours?
  2. had any of the following symptoms? shortness of breath, chest pain, cough, diarrhea, nausea
  3. been in contact with someone who has experienced these symptoms or tested positive for Covid-19 in the past two weeks?
  4. or anyone that you live with traveled outside of the state in the last 14 days?
  5. been in contact with someone from out of state in the last 14 days?
  6. Does your child seem like him/herself today?

7. Once the child is in the classroom the teacher will also do a feelings check-in with the child using the emoji list of emotions.

If the parent/caregiver answers yes to questions 1-5 above, the child must be excluded from school for the day and the director will call the adult to discuss the situation.

- Person Responsible: Lead Teacher from each classroom and administration

#### C. Daily Health Checks

Please see above criteria for entering the school. If the parent reports that the child does not feel like him/herself or the child picks an emoji describing an unusual feeling or state of being, the classroom staff will monitor the child closely each hour for symptoms and or changes in behavior.

If a child develops symptoms during the school day, the child will be isolated in our sick room with one of his/her teachers until a parent or caregiver comes to pick up the child. Child must be picked up within an hour of the time the parent/emergency contact was notified.

- Person Responsible: Lead Teacher from each classroom

#### D. Departure Procedures

Pick-up - One teacher from the classroom will bring children to the specified area at the assigned pick-up time (1:00/3:00/4:30)

\* Please see drop off procedures for specific areas.

Parent/Caregiver will wait in line on the “x’s” and when the parent/caregiver gets to the front of the line, the teacher will escort the child and the child’s belongings to the parent.

Teachers and children from each classroom will be socially distanced at the pick-up point.

- Person Responsible: Lead Teacher from each classroom

## II. **Preventative Plan: This plan provides information on preventative measures, to reduce the risk of spreading & exposure of COVID-19.**

## A. Hand Washing

Posters describing proper handwashing steps will be posted near all sinks.

All children and staff will practice frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at these required times:

1. upon arriving at school when entering the classroom
2. before meals or snacks
3. after outside time
4. when transitioning between activities
5. before and after diapering
6. after going to the bathroom
7. After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
8. Before eating or preparing food
9. After contact with animals or pets
10. Staff will also wash their hands after assisting children with handwashing, nose wiping or blowing and eating.
11. prior to leaving for home
12. If soap and water are not readily available, children and staff may use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Staff will closely supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.

## B. Face Coverings

Cloth face masks of appropriate size are required for everyone three years of age or older. This includes all staff as well as families dropping off and picking up children. Masks should fully cover the nose and mouth without gaps and stay in place without needing adjustments.

Children between the ages of 3 and 5 must be supervised if they are wearing a mask. ACG staff will use their best judgment on when to remove a mask if it is creating discomfort or resulting in a child touching their face frequently. If a child cannot remove the mask on their own, without assistance, even if they are over the age of 3, they should not wear a mask.

**Exceptions:** Cloth face masks will not be placed on children under 3 years of age. Children and ACG staff will not wear masks when eating, drinking, or napping.

Each staff member and child should come to school with a clean, well fitted mask each day.

\*When masks are not in use, they will be stored in individual brown paper bags that are labelled with the child's/staff member's name. Each bag will be kept either on the counter in the classroom or placed in the child's cubby.

*Cloth face coverings should:*

1. fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
2. be secured with ties or ear loops
3. include multiple layers of fabric
4. allow for breathing without restriction
5. be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

### C. Cleaning & Sanitizing

ACG staff will increase the frequency with which we clean and disinfect. In the context of infection control, "deep" cleaning means cleaning surfaces with soap and water and then appropriately using disinfectants on high-touch surfaces (See below for specific cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing products). We will follow these guidelines as it is especially important to use proper gloves and personal protective equipment (PPE), good ventilation, and thoroughly air out the classroom/space/facility before children and staff return.

We will disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often, including bathrooms, faucet handles, water dispensers, tables, countertops, doorknobs, hands-on learning items (manipulatives, puzzles, blocks, art supplies) and toys.

We have removed all toys that are not easily sanitized like stuffed animals and pillows.

We will sanitize and clean keyboards and electronics with alcohol wipes and wash hands after use.

ACG staff will clean and sanitize playground equipment and other shared spaces between use of different groups of children and at the end of each day.

These are the products we will use to clean, disinfect and sanitize our environments:

Buckeye ECO Neutral Disinfectant – multi-purpose neutral ph germicidal detergent

Buckeye ECO Floor Cleaner

Buckeye ECO Uppercut Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Buckeye ECO Hydrogen Peroxide Cleaner

Buckeye ECO Muscle Cleaner

Buckeye ECO Neutral Cleaner

Buckeye ECO Glass Cleaner

Buckeye Sanicare 3 Disinfectant/Deodorizer

Alcohol Wipes with 75% Alcohol Content

Trained custodians will clean and disinfect potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills – blood, vomit, feces, and urine when necessary

#### D. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All ACG staff will wear a cloth facemask during the school day. Staff members who are taking temperatures and doing health screenings will wear a disposable face mask, eye protection (goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face), a disposable gown and a single pair of disposable gloves.

When staff members are changing diapers or cleaning up toileting accidents where the feces or urine are not contained, a gown will also be worn along with the goggles and gloves.

When disposing of PPE equipment, staff members will remove equipment and dispose of it in the sealed foot operated trash cans provided.

#### E. Guidelines for talking to children about health and safety

ACG staff will continue to teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs by:

1. Reminding children to stay away from people who are coughing, sneezing or otherwise sick.
2. Discussing any new actions that may be taken to help protect children and school staff (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities).
3. Getting children into a handwashing habit and teaching them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; before and after going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
4. Teaching them to properly use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

*Tips for parents/teachers and caregivers:*

*Remain calm and reassuring.*

1. Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

*Make yourself available to listen and to talk.*

1. Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

*Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.*

1. Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.



*Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.*

1. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

*Provide information that is honest and accurate.*

1. Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for their age and development.
2. Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.

**III. Physical Distancing: This plan provides information on measures to take to adhere to social distancing requirements while maintaining social connections.**

**A. Distancing space**

ACG is a relationship-based school where children’s social/emotional development is paramount. Although we realize that children should practice physical distancing (6 feet), where possible, we also know that children need physical touch and reassurance throughout their day. Our teachers will implement distancing systems, as practicable, while children are learning and playing.

We will not mix or combine groups or classrooms. We will maintain the same groups from day to day and week to week.

We will incorporate additional outside time that is staggered and clean outdoor playground equipment in between groups of children.

We will not gather in large groups for any reason.

Teachers will increase the distance between children during table work and minimize the time children stand in line.

We will not use water or sand/sensory tables except for individual play. Other sensory activities will also be done where each child has an individual bag or bin or tray.

We will limit item/art material sharing. If items are being shared, we will remind children not to touch their faces and wash their hands after using these items.

We will place cots 6 feet apart, when possible, for rest. If there is less than 6 feet between cots, we will place a solid barrier between cots.

**B. Group size and ratios**

<b>A CHILD’S GARDEN GROUP SIZE AND RATIO DURING PANDEMIC HEALTH EMERGENCY</b>		
<b>Age of Children</b>	<b>Group Size</b>	<b>Child/Teacher Ratio</b>
6 weeks to 12 months	6	3:1

12 - 24 months	8	4:1
24-36 months	12	6:1
Age 3	14	7:1
Age 4-5	16	8:1

C. Meals

Meals and snacks will take place in the classroom or outside ensuring there is at least six feet of space between children, when possible. When eating inside, children will sit socially distanced at classroom tables. Children will sit far enough away from each other (opposite sides of table) to ensure that other children and their food is out of reach. When eating outdoors, children and staff will be at least 6 feet apart.

We recommend packing lunch in disposable items such as paper bags. All food containers and water bottles must be labeled with child’s name. No warm-ups as we cannot heat food in a microwave any longer.

D. All snacks will be served by teachers in individual portions. We have eliminated family-style snack to reduce the spread of germs.

**IV. Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Cases: This plan provides information on steps to take when signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are observed or notification of a positive COVID test is received.**

A. Notification

ACG has established a clear plan and a protocol to isolate staff and children who have symptoms.

We will:

Close off areas used by a sick person and will not use before cleaning and disinfection.

Provide a child or staff member who is sick with the CDC COVID-19 [handout](#).

Children that become sick should be picked up immediately. Children and staff members with COVID symptoms should be tested. If they test positive, they must isolate at home for 10 days from the date of the test and be fever-free for three days before returning to the program.

If a staff member or child becomes sick with COVID 19, we will notify the NMDOH and Licensing so they can implement contact tracing.

We will notify staff and families by letter for potential risk of exposure and information on the next steps.

Children or staff who have “close contact” (being closer than 6 ft for 3 minutes) with someone who is COVID-19-positive must be tested and quarantine for 14 days from their last date of close contact.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should follow instructions from NMDOH and meet CDC criteria to discontinue isolation before returning.

### *ACG Rapid Response Protocol*

We will refer to the RAPID RESPONSE TO A POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE IN AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION FACILITY document for requirements on reporting and responding to a positive COVID-19 case.

There are Five ways a COVID-19 positive case may be identified in a childcare facility:

- a. Testing by DOH at an assigned facility
- b. Report by a parent/guardian that their child has tested positive
- c. Employee or child develops symptoms
- d. Employee is tested at a public testing site and reports to director
- e. Complaint received through the childcare complaint hotline

### B. Deep Cleaning & Disinfecting

If A Child’s Garden has a confirmed case of COVID-19 we will be closed temporarily for deep cleaning **provided by New Again Surface Restoration.** The duration of closure will depend on multiple factors, including the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the impacted community.

### C. Changes in business operations

During this Public Health Emergency due to the Covid-19 Pandemic A Child’s Garden has made the following changes to our operations.

Hours 7:30-4:30 M-F

Class size maximum:

6 weeks -12 months – 6 -8 children per class with 3 teachers

12 months – 24 months – 10 children per class with 3 teachers

3- 5 years – 10 children per class with 2 teachers

Due to potential closures and tuition reimbursements, we will not take semi-annual or annual tuition payments. All payments must be made monthly and be

contact free (ACH, credit card) during this time. No cash payments will be allowed.

No Drop-in Extended Care or Interim Care will be offered.

As Director/Owner of this facility, I have ensured that all staff and families have had the opportunity to read and receive this plan and will post this in my facility for future reference.

Sincerely,

Mary C Matteucci

Director

A Child's Garden Preschool