

Guide to Childcare Practices in Response to COVID-19

Updated 9-2-2020

As a result of recent recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services, this guide has been updated.

The recommended maximum number of people in a room has been raised to 20. Sophia's Hearth will follow our licensed capacity of 8 infants, 10 toddlers and up to 14 preschoolers.

It is important to remember that all toddlers and preschoolers spend about 75% of their day outdoors. Time indoors is limited to lunch and nap-time. Parents should ensure that appropriate outdoor clothing is always available.

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 outside of the New England states.
- 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 10 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
- 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 24 hours 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 may choose to wear facemasks indoors but are not required to do so.

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. Entry is through the gate on the far-right side of the building (near the toddler room). Parents who must enter the building at any time must wear a facemask. Disposable masks are available near the doors.

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.

If anyone other than the parent drops off or picks up a child, they must wear a facemask, even outdoors.

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 cannot do any laundry for children.

Parents may 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 your infant last. You will be required to wear a facemask if you enter the building for any amount of time.

Children

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. Parents will be contacted, and the child should be picked up immediately.

Parents are advised to contact their physician immediately when your child has any of these symptoms.

A child may **NOT RETURN** to Sophia's Hearth until:

1. The 10 day/24-hour isolation protocol is completed* or
2. Your physician certifies that there is another diagnosis responsible for the symptoms; or
3. Proof of a negative COVID-19 test has been provided.

The following is the CDC listing (as of 8/14/20) of signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in children:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Myalgia (muscle pain or muscle ache)
- Cough (uncontrolled)
- Nasal congestion or rhinorrhea (runny nose)
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Poor appetite or poor feeding

*10 day/24-hours protocol is out for 10 days AND symptom free for 24 hours.

Children with underlined symptoms should remain at home until clear for 24 hours regardless of cause of symptom.

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, including tissues
- After handling any garbage

Staff will ensure that children's 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.

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.

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.