

Itsy Bitsy Early Learning Center

Health Policies and Practices

During a Pandemic

Updated 1/1/2022

The guidelines outlined in this handbook will be followed by Itsy Bitsy Early Learning Center effective immediately. These guidelines are provided to the Center by Office of Licensing and the local Health Department with guidance of The CDC. Itsy Bitsy has also included some additional policies in order for the Center to run smoothly and more importantly, to ensure the safety of our children and staff.

Although there are many changes to mandates in the State of NJ as far as capacity and masks, it does not necessarily mean that these changes apply to everyone. Child Care Centers still have the same policies and procedures in place in regards to masks. We will notify all families of any updates to our policies and procedures.

We appreciate your understanding and ask for your full cooperation and patience as we adjust to new recommendations and upcoming changes.

Please be reminded that we **MUST** follow these policies in order to ensure the safety of our families, children and staff of the Center and there is very limited or no flexibility with many of the guidelines.

Any questions or concerns can be addressed with the Office; we are always available to help!

For more information on licensing regulations and up to date information in regards to child care centers, please visit:

https://www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus_licensedchildcare.html

ARRIVAL AT THE CENTER:

At this time, Itsy Bitsy will continue to ONLY allow staff and children to enter the Center. It is strongly recommended and encouraged that parents drop off at the main entrance and do not enter the Center. Exceptions will be made for a parent that is coming in for a feeding (Ex. nursing their child) or an emergency situation with a child. Other exceptions include emergency or law personnel that need immediate access for emergency matters and personnel from The Department of Children and Families for inspection and child welfare visits. All individuals will be subject to a screening prior to entering the Center and MUST wear a face covering at all times. They will also be required to wear shoe covers or remove their shoes.

In order to reduce congestion at the entrance during drop off or pick up, we kindly ask that you wait in your car or outside at a safe distance from the entrance and other families that may be waiting. We also remind all families that if there is a parent at the entrance dropping off their child or waiting to pick up their child, kindly wait outside for the parent/family to exit. **There should not be 2 families waiting at the door at any time.**

We continue to ask parents to allow sufficient time in the mornings as drop off may take a little longer and we remind you to have an alternate/"back up" plan in the event that your child is unable to stay at the Center due to any symptoms or fever upon arrival. Screenings will only require a temperature check but we kindly ask that if there are any health concerns for your child, please notify the staff.

We continue to ask that if at all possible, the same parent should drop off and pick up the child in order to avoid exposure to many individuals. It is also suggested to any older person, such as grandparents, or those with any underlying medical conditions, avoid coming to the Center, unless it is absolutely necessary, as they are at a higher risk of illness due to Covid-19.

Upon immediate arrival to the main door, staff and children will be screened. A staff member will greet all individuals at the door. Parents MUST wear a mask at drop off and pick up regardless of vaccination status. The staff member will wear gloves and a mask for protection. We will take the individual's temperature. If anyone has a temperature of 100.4 and/or does not seem to feel well upon visual inspection, that individual must be excluded from the Center. During the visual inspection of the child/staff, we will look for signs of cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, difficulty breathing, fussiness, or flushed cheeks. Any individual with these symptoms will be excluded.

We understand that Covid-19 is not the only illness that an individual can have, people can still have a cold or suffer from allergies, however we ask that everyone understands that we **MUST** take every precaution in order to protect the other children, their families and our staff. We have also seen a surge of the Delta Variant in our community and for that reason we will strictly enforce our illness policy. **Please read below for our updated health policy.**

HEALTH POLICY AS OF 1/1/2022

If an individual arrives at the Center with any Covid-19 symptoms including a temperature of 100.4 or greater, runny nose, cough, congestion, vomiting, diarrhea, headache or sore throat, they must be excluded from the Center and are not able to return until fever free/medicine free for 48 hours and they **MUST** bring a note from the Doctor as well as a negative PCR test result.

If the child or staff develops any of these symptoms while at the Center, they must be removed from the Center and will not be able to return until they have a negative PCR result from a doctor. A rapid test will not be accepted.

DISMISSAL:

At this time, many children are being picked up and often we are unable to reach the phone. We are no longer asking parents to contact the Center prior to picking up the child. We will escort the children out on a first come/first serve basis. We again ask for your patience as this can take a little longer. We also ask that all rules be followed in regards to keeping social distance or waiting in your car until it is your turn as well as only having one parent/family at the door at a time. Due to the fact that this is a very busy time and we are trying our best to be as efficient as possible, if you have any questions or need to provide us with information in regards to your child's care, kindly contact the office or reach the office via email. We are simply unable to have a lengthy conversation with parents while there are several other parents waiting. The staff will ensure that the grams are as detailed as possible and that it is noted if any items are needed for your child.

FACE COVERINGS AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING:

All staff will continue to wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status. The only exceptions allowed will be due to medical reasons which must be documented. **ONLY** fully vaccinated staff members will be able to remove their masks while outside, provided that they have a mask readily available to them in the event that they must carry a child or come in close contact to a child. Masks are not allowed for children under the age of 2 and masks for children over 2 will not be required, but encouraged. Generally children end up touching their faces more as they adjust or play with the mask. If a parent wishes for their child to wear the mask,

we will make every effort to assist them, however if the child is repeatedly having a difficult time keeping it on and it requires that a staff is constantly adjusting the mask, we will remove the mask and suggest that it not be worn.

Staff will also be required to wear smocks and to have their hair pulled away from their neck and face. We are often times exposed to more bodily fluids since the children we care for are young. The staff will also be asked to keep a change of clothes with them in the event that their clothes become soiled. We will continue to use gloves for food preparation and diapering as we did prior to Covid-19.

CLASSROOM CHANGES/DAILY PRACTICES:

Classroom sizes will return to our normal schedule. We will continue to only allow 8 children in a class with 1 or 2 staff members, depending on the ratios for that particular age group. We will continue to keep all our groups separated unless it is deemed absolutely necessary. Sometimes 2 groups may be outside together while on their walk, however we will keep distance between the children. We will continue to have the minimize switching staff throughout the day, however fully vaccinated staff members will now be able to switch rooms as needed to cover breaks, lunch periods, or if a staff is leaving for the day.

Children in the Infant class will continue to have assigned swings/rockers in order to avoid sharing items. We still ask parents to bring in a few receiving blankets to cover the soft surface in the event that they MUST share one of these items.

Children in the Teeny Toddler and Toddler class MUST bring in their own blanket. We will not be allowed to provide a blanket from the school. All of their items, such as blankets, sheets, extra clothes and personal belongings, will be kept in individual plastic bins.

All soft toys such as plush toys, dress up clothes, and pillows, have been removed from the classroom.

Although outside time is encouraged, we understand that there are times where the weather does not allow for this so the children will now be able to use the gym area. Each group has an assigned time and all of the toys, chairs, doors, etc. will be disinfected with a sprayer after each use and allowed sufficient time to air dry.

Each child will have their own craft box with crayons, glue, and art items in order to avoid sharing these items.

All shared toys will be disinfected between use and we will continue to remove all toys that a child has put in his/her mouth. These toys will be removed from the area until they can be properly disinfected.

The staff will continue to clean and disinfect all communal areas and items such as tables and chairs. They will also increase cleaning all bathrooms, light switches, door knobs, phones, and refrigerator handles.

MEALS AND FOOD PREP:

Staff will continue to wash hands prior to food preparation but now will also wear gloves for heating and preparing bottles. If a child needs assistance with feeding, the staff member will use gloves as well.

Parents should continue to send snacks and we will continue to offer dry snack however we will discontinue any activities where the children are involved in food preparation (Making jello, butter, playdoh, etc.)

VISITORS/PROGRAMS:

As mentioned we are really encouraged to keep individuals, other than staff and children, out of the Center. We have not offered any tours to potential clients and we will continue to offer a virtual tour on our website. We will be able to have enrichment programs come in at a later time. We are currently trying to bring back our music program, however we can only do this if we are able to keep the groups separated and keep the children at a safe distance from the individual leading the class.

Therapists will be able to come into the Center, however we will request each parent to discuss with the therapist prior to the sessions taking place at the Center, that they will not be able to do their session in the classroom with the other children. Prior arrangements must be made and we need a parent to be as flexible as possible.

CLEAN ENVIRONMENTS:

If your child walks outside, we kindly ask that you have a pair of indoor shoes at the Center so that we may change your child's shoes upon arrival. Staff will also be required to wear indoor shoes at all times.

We will continue disinfecting hallway areas, classrooms, and communal areas. We will continue to teach each child proper handwashing techniques and we will have all children wash their hands, upon arrival, before and after meals, after being diapered, after cleaning a child's nose and/or mouth and upon return from the gym/outdoors. The Center will also provide each class with sufficient disinfecting products, soap and hand sanitizer. Gloves will also be available to them at all times.

EXPOSURE:

If the Center has a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19, the local health department and Office of Licensing will be contacted. The local health department will instruct us as to how we should proceed if there is in fact a confirmed case. Please keep in mind that as a private center serving the local community, we will seek guidance from the local health dept., however we can and will adjust policies and procedures as we see fit to ensure the safety of our young children and the staff we serve.

If a child or staff develops symptoms while at the Center, the individual will be separated from the others until they are able to leave the Center. We kindly ask all parents to be prompt when picking up their child due to illness. Staff members should leave at once.

QUARANTINE AFTER TRAVEL:

If a child or his/her parent will be traveling outside of the NJ/NY/PA/CT area, the child must have a PCR (NOT RAPID) test completed on day 5 after arriving. You would start counting day 1 on the day after arrival. If you are traveling internationally you MUST quarantine for a full 14 days with day 1 being the day after arrival. You do not have to submit a PCR result if you quarantine for a full 14 days.

CREDITS/TUITION:

Tuition will not be adjusted if the Center is closed for any period of time due to Covid-19 exposure and quarantine. A courtesy credit may be issued based on the circumstances however it is NOT guaranteed.

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF ITSY BITSY'S PANDEMIC HANDBOOK

I, _____, certify that I have read and agree to comply with all of the policies and procedures noted in the Pandemic Handbook (Updated 1/1/2022). I acknowledge that if I fail to comply with these policies and procedures, it may result in termination of care and services. I also acknowledge that my child's enrollment may be terminated if my actions unnecessarily expose another child, employee, or family to Covid-19,

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Parent's Name(Print): _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Name(Print): _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

