



Stepping Stones Childcare Learning Center COVID-19 Preparedness Plan:

1. HANDWASHING: Staff and children regularly wash their hands as posted on the daily schedule.
 - a. **STAFF:** All will wash their hands at the sink while entering their classroom, following all proper guidelines for hand washing. Hand sanitizer is readily available for use when a sink is not available and can be used throughout the day. Staff members will wash hands after contact with outside public, and after parent drop off/pick up.
 - b. **CHILD:** All will be required to wash their hands in the nearest sink upon entering for the day. Current handwashing routines will continue to be in place for each child (before and after meals, after outside time, diaper changes etc.) throughout the day.
2. CLEANING AND DISINFECTING: High traffic surfaces and areas will be cleaned in the morning and at the end of the day following proper cleaning procedures found on the cleaning checklists. Toys will be properly disinfected after every use using a bleach solution and then placed out to dry. Toys and supplies are **NOT** freely accessible throughout the day. Classrooms will only use supplies found in their classrooms. Any outside supplies will be limited as much as possible. All touched surfaces between the entry door and the classrooms will be thoroughly sanitized after dropping off/pick up.
3. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:
 - a. **STAFF:** All will be required to wash their hands and have their temperature checked, using an infrared thermometer at the door. Staff are encouraged, but not required, to wear gloves when in contact with Parents/Public.
 - b. **CHILD:** A staff member will approach each vehicle to pick up the child when they arrive and will also bring them back to the vehicle upon departure. Each child will have their temperature checked using the infrared thermometer and will wash their hands in the sink following our handwashing procedure.
 - c. **CARSEATS:** If a child is dropped off with a car seat, at pick up time; for warmth and convenience purposes only Stepping Stones staff will place the child back into the car seat buckling them into the harness with their daily clothing. Please understand we may not be certified in Car Seat Training. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian and authorized pick-up individuals to verify the safety harness of the child prior to placing/latching them into the base or seatbelt of your vehicle. Please provide a warm blanket or car seat cover to keep child warm during transfer. We will not place child into car seat with full winter attire such as jackets/snow suits.
4. PLAN FOR SICK CHILDREN, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEER: All personnel showing signs of illness are required to follow our health and safety guidelines posted in the handbook and on parent bulletin. All sick personnel are encouraged to stay home a minimum of 24 hours symptom free. If a positive case of COVID-19 has been exposed, the MDH will be contacted for further direction.
5. SOCIAL DISTANCING THROUGHOUT THE DAY: Classrooms will be encouraging safe distancing when able. Older children will be directed to stay in their **"Bubble"** and a visual will be used to help direct distancing. Visuals will be placed in areas of lining up and gathering. Children and staff will stay in their respected classrooms throughout the day and limit any extra hallway traffic. Cots will be spread to a safe distance, as classroom space allows. Children will be placed head to foot when on cots.

- ~~6. **SOURCE CONTROL AND FACE COVERING:** Face coverings will be allowed to be worn by staff members if preferred, but not required. Children 5 years of age and under are not required to wear a face shield or face covering in a childcare setting. The age groups we provide for cannot reliably handle a face covering and they would present a potential choking/strangulation/suffocation hazard. Volunteers, tours, and any other public personnel will have their temperature checked and will be asked to wash their hands when entering the facility. A face covering will be encouraged, but not required due to optional exemptions for childcare. **Face coverings will be required to wear in all areas within the center as of 12/7/2020.**~~
7. **WORKPLACE VENTILATION:** Our center will continue to maintain routine maintenance on our air ventilation systems. Outdoor time is always encouraged, weather permitting.
8. **PLAYGROUND USE:** Outside time is staggered following our daily schedule. Our safe distancing “**Bubble**” is encouraged during play.
9. **MEALS AND SNACKS:** Typically, we serve Family Style, but due to COVID-19, each child’s meal is plated and given directly to them to minimize the sharing of serving utensils.
10. **FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS:** Field trips and events are postponed until further notice.
11. **COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING:** All COVID-19 protocol will be posted on the main bulletin and will be available to view on our website. A mass email will be sent out to all Parents/Guardians and Staff and will be available upon request.
- ~~12. **OPTIONAL EXEMPTIONS TO FACE COVERINGS:** We choose to follow the same guidelines for all staff and children within our center including care for children over the age of 5 that may attend other programs before/after school. (Our school-age program is Kindergarten through 12 years old)~~
13. **EXCLUSION FROM CHILDCARE:** If someone in your household is being tested for COVID-19 due to a positive exposure or you have COVID-19 symptoms. We ask that you keep your children home with you until the test results come back. We understand that the risk of exposure for other individuals is no greater than the risk of contracting the virus in the general community and Stepping Stones is taking extra precautions and we ask that everyone work together to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and keep us informed.
14. Parents/Guardians and authorized individuals provide an Infant Car Seat Carrier for my Infant during the **Arrival and Departure** from Stepping Stones Childcare and hereby give permission for Stepping Stones Staff to buckle my Infant into the car seat carrier that I have provided. I will verify and take all responsibility to validate that the restraint system is properly fastened in the vehicle before leaving the premise to avoid the potential risks involved in this activity.
15. Classrooms will now be separated into “**Learning Pods/Groups**” with a consistent staff that will log who they were in Direct Close Contact with for the day. *Direct Close Contact means (within 6ft for longer than 15 minutes)* This will not only increase social distancing capabilities but will limit quarantine needs if some do arise. If a positive case arises in your child’s “**Learning Pod/Group**”, you will be notified and asked to quarantine. *(Please understand the movement of staff may need to take place to accommodate day to day functions in certain situations)*

All staff members have been trained in Safety Practices for Childcare Programs in the Face of COVID-19 from Childcare Education Institute. WE are in constant contact with local, state, and federal health agencies to monitor the situation and are basing our response on industry best practices, governmental agency recommendations, and what is best..... WE are following all CDC guidelines and remaining agile and flexible as new information becomes available and new prevention measures need to be taken.

Thank you for being loyal and we are honored to serve your childcare needs.