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South Shore YMCA Health Care Policy COVID Addendum/ Frequently Asked Questions

We greatly appreciate everyone's support and patience during this time. We know the last few months have not been easy for anyone, but we look forward to working together to create our 'new normal' and get the children and families back to the Early Learning Center. Although this will look a bit different from what it was a few months ago, we are all working hard to provide your child with the best possible experience under these circumstances. Caring for your children is our top priority and although we have been given strict restrictions, we have every intention of still providing your child with the comfort and care they deserve and need.

During this time, communication is going to be very important. We are all navigating through our new normal and will do the best that we can, however there may be moments where we need to adjust our plan to better meet the needs of our program, families and staff. Face to face communication is going to be limited so please don't hesitate to reach out to us via email or phone. We are more than happy to set up a time to meet with you as well if needed.

Below please find some important information that will be helpful as transition back. 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 100.0 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.

Daily Screening

- Each morning parents/guardians will be asked to complete a Health Self-Attestation/screening for the children in paper form upon/ or at arrival at the center. 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. Upon arrival the staff will ensure the form is completed and ask if the information is still true and up to date.
- We will be taking temperatures of the children and staff upon arrival using a contactless thermometer.
- Individuals who decline to complete the screening will not be permitted to enter the program space.

Drop off procedures

- Each center has a designated drop off location where staff will greet families, collect health screening information, support the goodbye transition and bring the child to his/her classroom.
- Upon arrival to the room, child's belongings will be stored in an individual cubby/locker and will wash their hands before engaging in play.
- Face masks must be worn by the drop off parent/guardian.

Daily Self-Attestation

- Parents and staff will be required to sign written daily self-attestation form regarding any household contacts with COVID-19, and symptoms prior to entry.
- The forms will be available at the drop-off area.
- Individuals who decline to complete the screening/self-attestation will not be permitted to enter the program space.

Pick up procedures

- Each afternoon when parents arrive at the designated pick up location, a staff will gather the child's belongings and escort the child from the classroom to the parent.

Personal belongings

- Children's personal belongings, including nap items, must be secured in a zippered backpack/diaper bag/tote.

Operating hours

- Staff will be present at the SSNSC from 9-4

Early Intervention/Individual Education Plans

- While we understand the importance of these services, EEC is requesting all services be delivered virtually. Parents are encouraged to work with their provider and schedule virtual services while at home.

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 children of the comforts of home. Parents and teacher will work together to support each child. Items from home must remain in the child’s cubby.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- EEC is requiring staff to wear masks when unable to be 6 feet apart from others. In addition, staff conducting intake screening will wear masks and gloves.
- Masks are recommended for children 2 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. Parents may provide masks for their child, 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 the 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

- **Groupings/Group Sizes:**
 - Children will remain with the same group each day and at all times while in care.
 - Groups will not be combined at any time.
 - Our Program will stagger outside play one group at a time or ensure that groups have specific outdoor locations that are at least 6 feet away from other groups.
 - Program will limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain physical distancing.
 - Program will not host events that encourage non-essential adults to visit the program.
 - Group sizes will be restricted to a maximum of 15 children. If additional adults are required to support supervision of children during breaks they will be assigned to a group.
 - Ratios- Staff to Children
 - Preschool: 1:10
 - Due to the new requirement of 42 square feet per child some classrooms may not be able to enroll as many children as the ratios allow.

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.

Sharing Materials and Promoting Social Distancing

- Physical Distancing: Everyone at the SSYMCA Early Learning Center will do our best to maintain at least 6 feet of distance at all times and limit contact between individuals and groups, whenever possible.
- When 6 feet is not possible, individuals will do their best to wear masks or cloth face coverings. In order to encourage a distance of 6 feet between individuals, the program will have a minimum of 42 square feet per child to maintain proper physical distancing.
- Physical distancing will be encouraged for children and staff at all times, including but not limited to:
 - During transitions (e.g., waiting for bathrooms)
 - During meal times
 - While traveling to and from the outdoors
 - During all activities
 - During sleep, rest, or quiet play time
- Prevent risk of transmitting COVID-19 by limiting regular immediate contact (such as shaking or holding hands, hugging), as well as by mediated contact.

- Store children's belongings in a manner where they do not touch. Individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or separate designated areas.
- Refrain from games and activities that encourage physical contact or proximity of less than 6 feet, like tag.
- Spaces for children will be organized in a way that allows staff to enforce and maintain consistent physical distancing guidelines. Physically arrange the rooms to promote individual play, including setting up individual play activity stations like puzzles and art. Space activity areas/centers as far apart as possible.
- Shared items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected at all (e.g., playdough) will be removed from activity rotation or each child will be given their own that is kept in a clearly marked container.
- The South Shore YMCA will do our best ensure that there are adequate supplies to assign to a single child per use (such as art supplies and equipment) or limit the use of materials by one group of children at a time with the items being cleaned and disinfected between uses. This will minimize the sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible.

Nap

- Children's cribs/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 zippered bag or sealed container

Handwashing

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 Early Learning Centers 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 Center 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 Center 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 be taking temperatures of children upon arrival daily. Although this is not currently a requirement, it helps provide an additional layer of safety, and monitoring.
- 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 24 hours. If there are other symptoms related to Covid-19 present we will ask that the child be fever free for 72 hours and may require a negative Covid test for the child to reenter the program.**

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 Vice President of Youth Development, and the Associate Executive Director of Youth Development.

- The Vice President of Youth Development, and the Associate Executive Director of Youth Development will work with the COO in notifying the Local board of health if a staff or child is COVID-19 positive for further guidance.
- Vice President of Youth Development 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 with 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

- Tuition has been changed from weekly to monthly. All other tuition policies including policies on vacation and absences will remain in effect.

Staffing

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of our SSYMCA Programs since March 16th, 2020, the South Shore Y had to furlough, or lay off many of our staff due to the closures extending beyond our initial hopes. We have had some minimal staff that have remained working as they have assisted the Y in running our 2 Emergency Childcare Programs in North Quincy, and Hanover since March through today, June 26th. These staff will support us in the transition back, and as we work to recall.

Our staff are, and remain the backbone of our programs. We are working hard to get as many of our staff back. As we work through the recalling process with our staff, there are some staff that are making the personal decision to not return at this time. We do hope as we progress through this new phase, we will continue to bring back as many, if not all of our staff. More information on the staff that will be scheduled in your child's class will be sent in an email from the Directors. We appreciate your patience as we continue to rebuild, and work through this process.

- Group sizes will be restricted to a maximum of 15 children. If additional adults are required to support supervision of children during breaks they will be assigned to a classroom.
- The same staff will be assigned to the same group of children each day for each week and at all times while in care. Staff will not float between groups either during the day or from day-to-day, unless needed to provide supervision of specialized activities, breaks or coverage.
- The SSYMCA will provide staff with information about COVID-19, including how the illness spreads, how to prevent its spread, symptoms, and when to seek medical assistance for sick children or employees.
- The Director will monitor absenteeism to identify any trends in employee or child absences. Kristine Swan, Vice President of Youth Development has been designated the individual for responding to COVID-19 concerns and employees will know who this person is and how to contact them.
- All staff will be trained in all areas to ensure protocols are implemented safely and effectively in all programs.

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).

We are so excited to see you all next week, or upon your return. Please know you too can reach out if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Kristine Swan

Vice President of Youth Development

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