

June 8, 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

Will you sanitize shoes upon arrival?

No. The guidance does not include this recommendation. Aren't shoes dirty? Of course they are! Shoes pick up many germs on sidewalks and on public transportation. This is one of the ways we're exposed to germs, including the novel coronavirus - we touch the floor, or other surfaces, and contaminants on those surfaces are transferred to our hands. When we touch our hands to our mouth, nose, or eyes, germs can be introduced into our bodies. That's why we model, teach, and reinforce these two critical hygiene practices: (1) wash your hands properly and often, and (2) don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth if you haven't just washed your hands.

What safeguards are in place when the class leaves the center?

The Philadelphia Health Department prohibits field trips and visits to public playgrounds during the Yellow Phase. We are encouraged to go outside, though. It's healthy to get outside, get some exercise, and breathe fresh air. We can take walks, and spend time in public grassy areas. We will avoid areas with too many other people around.

How will you know if a child or staff member has been exposed to COVID-19 outside the center and may be carrying the virus without showing symptoms?

Questioning staff members and family members of children about their exposure to COVID-19-infected close contacts is part of the daily screening procedure. A 14-day self-quarantine for those individuals is mandatory. This policy is stated explicitly in the Children's Village Reopening Plan for staff and for parents.

Will children be taught how to wear their masks properly?

If children come to school wearing masks, we will encourage them to wear their masks properly. However, if children are touching them frequently or sharing them with friends, we are required to remove them, because this becomes more hazardous than protective. Older children are more likely to have the maturity and control to keep their masks on without touching them. It's a learning process. Children - and adults - should not wear masks while eating, sleeping, or exercising vigorously.

What happens if a second wave of the virus hits Philadelphia?

If Philadelphia reverts to the Red Phase because of a COVID-19 spike, child care centers must close. Governor Wolf or Mayor Kenney make that call.

What classroom cleaning and sanitizing procedures will be in place when we reopen?

Toys not easily cleaned and sanitized will be removed for the time being. This includes stuffed animals and dress up clothes. As usual, mouthed toys will be set aside in designated receptacles for cleaning and disinfecting before they are returned for circulation. All toys children play with will be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis. Cots will be cleaned at least weekly. Blankets will be sent home every Friday for home washing before they are returned on Monday.

Will children be kept 6 feet apart in the classroom?

No. Classroom groups are assumed to be clusters of close contacts (those who are within 6 feet for longer than 10 minutes). Children will sit next to one another at mealtime. We try to spread out cots at nap time, but the class isn't big enough for them to be 6 feet apart. We will make certain, however, that cots are placed head to foot, to keep children's faces as far apart as possible. Children will play next to and with one another. We don't think it's developmentally appropriate to expect otherwise.

Does this mean an increased risk of disease transmission? Yes, of course. This is why it's so important for those who are sick to stay home. This is why there are no visitors permitted in the classroom at this time. For example, early intervention services are suspended during this period. There will be no tours. Children will not go to the Children's Library at this time. Mr. Anthony, our local musician, will be back when visitors are allowed again.

How many children will be in each class? Will there be reduced numbers?

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in Pennsylvania has stated that class sizes have not been modified during the Yellow Phase. However, we expect that families will return gradually. Some will be back right away, others will want to wait a few weeks or months. This will give us lower numbers initially.

How and when will you conduct eligibility determination for preschool funding, like Head Start, PreK Counts, and PHL PreK?

These will be conducted virtually this summer. Expect to hear from us by phone or email.

What about other correspondence like injury reports, emergency forms, or new parent/provider agreements?

We will send these out by email. If we don't hear back, we'll give you a call. Teachers can always slip a note in the nap time blanket bag on Fridays if they want.

When Philadelphia enters the Green Phase, all of these extra precautions will be dropped?

Probably not. We'll be looking to the guidance of the Health Department as we approach the Green Phase. Recent reports have hinted that many precautions may carry over into the Green Phase.

If my child's class is closed for 14 days for quarantine due to a case of COVID-19, do I have to pay for those two weeks?

July 1st marks the beginning of the new fiscal year. For private-paying families, the fiscal year is July to June. Starting July 1st, families may be charged for up to (but not exceeding) 10 days of emergency school closure. If a class has to close for two weeks due to COVID-19 exposure, that will be considered an emergency closure for the children in that group.

I receive ELRC subsidy (formerly called CCIS). Will a two-week mandatory quarantine count towards my 40-day absentee limit for the year?

We're still awaiting a response from the state in regards to this question.

Can I send my child to school with bottled water?

No. Children's Village's plumbing system and water has been tested and approved as safe and high quality. Disposable cups will be available for children to use for drinking purposes, and sinks are routinely disinfected. Bottled water is not tested as rigorously as tap water and does not have to meet as high a

standard for purity. We are committed to a high standard of hygiene for children, and we encourage children to stay hydrated. We do keep bottled water on hand in case of an emergency when tap water is unavailable.

How will classroom practice be modified to protect children and teachers?

As teachers and children return to their classrooms, there are a lot of new things to consider. Taking adequate precautions to protect against COVID 19, as well as maintaining our high quality standards will continue to be our priority. We are asking teachers to modify their lesson plans to include activities related to COVID 19. This will include proper mask use, as well as the emotional impact of the quarantine and continued precautions that we all need to take. As you all know, we have many procedures in place already to minimize the spread of germs, such as proper hand washing throughout the day. Teachers will enhance their cleaning procedures when it comes to classroom materials and surfaces, including the sanitizing of materials after each use.

In regards to children wearing masks in the classroom, this is not something that we require, but it is encouraged, except for children under two years of age. Masks worn by children will be placed in clearly labeled paper bags during such times when masks are not appropriate, such as mealtime, rigorous physical activity, or rest time. All Children's Village staff are required to wear masks. As recommended by health experts, if a child is consistently wearing his/her mask incorrectly, it will be taken away and properly stored as improper mask use poses a bigger risk than if there were no mask at all.

We will still be strongly encouraging classrooms to spend time outside, following all state and local health guidelines. We will work with staff to coordinate schedules so that classrooms minimize contact with each other in the hallways, as well as not overcrowd outdoor spaces. We will also ask teachers to be mindful of the outdoor spaces they visit, and to plan to find a different location or return to the center if that space is too crowded. Within the classroom, we are not asking teachers to socially distance themselves or keep students 6 feet apart, but all children and staff assigned to a classroom will not intermingle with other classes. If other support staff need to come into the classroom, and end up being there for longer than ten minutes, teachers will track those contacts.

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Children's Village is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

A copy of Children's Village's official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

