

THE DISCOVERY CENTER COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

Updated 1-12-2022

Guidelines used by The Discovery Center for COVID-19 preparedness and exposure control follow those put forth by the State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) in “Guidelines for Safe Child Care Operations During COVID-19,” the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD), the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (MIOSHA) “COVID-19 Workplace Guidelines”, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In the event of differences in guidance among these entities, The Discovery Center follows guidance from the WCHD, as we believe it to be the best assessor of local conditions and therefore best positioned to provide guidance relative to our Ann Arbor preschool. Also, because most of our young children remain unvaccinated, public health guidance for them differs from guidance for adults and children over the age of 5. For the WCHD’s most recent guidance, please refer to their website, <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/22509/WCHD-Summary-Guidance-for-K-12-Schools-1-6-22?bidId=>, page 8, “Preschool and Childcare Guidance.”

We strive to create a school culture of support, respect, and collaboration. In doing so, we also work together to promote best practices in hygiene, screening, distancing, and mask usage to promote well-being and good health for our students, staff, and families. We have a mutual responsibility to keep each other healthy and well; adhering to the following guidelines and policies supports this goal.

Child Screening

Families are required monitor their children’s health daily and keep them home if ill, and also encouraged to complete a health questionnaire daily before bringing children to the building using the QR code app provided by the Center to all families. At drop-off, our staff will conduct visual assessment and checks for illness and will ask follow-up questions if needed.

Fever is the key indicator for young children. If a child’s temperature is above 100.4 degrees, the child will be excluded from care. Cough and/or diarrhea in addition to fever is suggestive of coronavirus. A visual check will be performed, looking for signs of illness such as flushed cheeks, rapid or difficult breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness. The Discovery Center will continue to monitor children for symptoms throughout the day and check temperatures when children appear ill or “not themselves.” Children with a fever alone, or a fever with a cough and/or diarrhea, will be isolated from the group and their parents contacted for prompt pickup. Their parents should contact their primary care physician/medical provider.

Parents must report any child’s contact with anyone who has had a documented case of COVID-19. Families must quarantine any child who has been exposed to COVID-19.

Drop-Off

The Discovery Center asks that only one parent or other authorized adult accompany a child for drop-off and pick-up. See section, below, for details about picking children up at the end of the day. That person must adhere to all of our requirements, including items noted above and using hand sanitizer in the

entry foyer/airlock for themselves and their children. Parents will take their children into their classrooms, complying with all guidance in this document, including minimizing time in the building. At this time, parents are not permitted to use observation areas in classroom offices and halls, nor will they be permitted to use our restroom facilities or linger at drop-off or pickup.

Pick-Up

Pick-up is to occur at the classroom, provided that parents comply with all of the following protocols:

- Agree not to enter the building if you have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 or if you have had an exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and
- Use the hand sanitizer at the entry foyer/airlock, and
- Wear a mask at all times when inside the building, and
- Comply with our one-parent rules for entering the building to drop off and pick up children, and
- Minimize time in the building, with a maximum time inside of 15 minutes, and
- Keep a 6' distance from others while both inside and outside the building, and
- Avoid using restrooms and the office or hallway observation areas.

Communication about the child's day will be relayed at pickup. Ongoing communications between parents and teachers can also be maintained through the smart phone classroom Dojo app and other written communication.

Staff Screening

All staff must conduct checks on their own health for COVID-19 symptoms before they enter the building each day. Symptoms of illness, including cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, change in smell or taste, and/or diarrhea, are indicators that staff should not enter the building, staying home instead and seeking medical attention, including COVID testing, where needed. In case of a positive COVID-19 test, staff must isolate in accordance with WCHD's current guidance. Staff must report contact with anyone outside of work who has had a documented case of COVID-19, and they must self-quarantine in accordance with WCHD's current guidance if they have been exposed to COVID-19.

Hygiene and Sanitizing

Regular handwashing is required with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds for staff and children.

Center staff will regularly disinfect all surfaces, toys, play equipment after each use, and they will employ safe practices for use recommended by LARA.

Staff must wear gloves in a manner consistent with existing licensing rules (for example, gloves will be worn when handling contaminants, changing diapers, cleaning or when serving food). Staff members will wash hands before putting gloves on and immediately after gloves are removed. Gloves are not recommended for broader use.

Hand sanitizer will be located in the entryway, lobby, and in all classroom and staff office areas.

Blankets and sheets will be washed after each use, immediately following naptime.

Social Distancing

Children will remain with their classroom group at all times. There will be no mixing of classrooms. This includes all school events, outdoor play, and use of the Rainbow Room (large motor room).

There will be head-to-toe positioning of cots for naptime, with cots spread out away from each other to the maximum extent possible.

Outdoor play will occur regularly throughout the day for fresh air and movement.

Masks

Staff. All staff must wear disposable or cloth masks at all times except as noted in the next sentence. Staff may remove their masks to eat with children during meal and snack times and, if necessary, during group and story time, as well as when supervising outdoor play. Where practical, use of plastic face shields (provided by the Center) is encouraged as an adjunct to (not a substitute for) masks. Employees may provide their own masks or request them of the Director from the supply maintained for operations.

Children. In compliance with the recommendations and requirements contained in the Gathering Prohibition and Face Mask Order issued by the MDHHS (most recently updated on March 19, 2021), we require that all children who attend The Discovery Center wear disposable or cloth masks at all times while within the building except for naptimes and when eating snacks or meals. Children are exempted who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing and whose ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. When outdoors, children are not required to wear masks unless parents have specified otherwise for at-risk individuals. Masks are to be provided by the family.

Parents, vendors, and other necessary visitors. Only necessary visits are permitted, including parents dropping off and picking up children, vendors delivering supplies, repair personnel needing access to interior equipment and spaces, and others. These visitors must avoid entering if they are unwell or have tested positive for COVID (even if asymptotic), apply hand sanitizer at the lobby entryway, wear masks at all times when in the facility, and maintain social distancing.

Items from Home

Items brought from home should be limited in number.

Comfort items may be especially needed during this time of transition as they may reduce stress for children. To avoid these items coming into contact with multiple children, such items will be kept in the child's cubby except when needed, e.g., for use at naptime.

Soft materials (blankets, soft comfort items) should be sent home for washing or washed daily at school.

Responding to Possible or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

For children who show signs of illness, both COVID-19 and other, The Discovery Center will isolate the child in a safe location until the child can be picked up.

If any staff begin to feel ill during the day, they must go home immediately.

If a child, staff member, family member, or visitor becomes ill with COVID-19 (with or without symptoms), those individuals must report it immediately to The Discovery Center, which will contact the health department for next steps and its licensing consultant (where needed). Such notification will be made consistent with the confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy law.

Staff and families of children in care are required to report to The Discovery Center if they become symptomatic or receive positive COVID-19 test results, even if they experience no symptoms.

If an individual in a classroom is identified with a positive test for COVID-19, The Discovery Center will contact the WCHD for guidance. In addition, the classroom will be closed and cleaned, and everyone in that classroom who isn't fully vaccinated will be advised to quarantine (or isolate if they have tested positive for COVID) and not to return until they have met WCHD criteria to discontinue home quarantine or isolation. The Discovery Center will provide information to staff and parents based on additional requirements and/or recommendations as issued by the WCHD, and it will report to the WCHD all requested demographic and other required information for COVID-19 cases.

Guidelines for Returning to School and Work

NOTE: Because of the changing nature of public health guidelines, the timelines and intervals in this section may change with or without prior notice. The Discovery Center follows and complies with the advice of various public health agencies as noted above. In the event of conflicting advice from agencies or regulators, we will comply foremost with that from the WCHD and from LARA's guidelines for safe child operations during COVID-19. Parents and families are also encouraged to contact the WCHD to obtain detailed guidance specific to their circumstances and to review the contents of the WCHD link on page 1.

Children. In the case of close contact exposure (at least 15 minutes in a 24-hour period) to a COVID-positive individual and no symptoms and no positive test result, a fully-vaccinated child at least two weeks after the second dose is not required to quarantine, provided that the family has provided vaccination records to The Discovery Center for their child's health file. In the case of close contact exposure to a COVID-positive individual and no symptoms and no positive test result, an unvaccinated child must quarantine for 7 days following the last contact with the COVID-positive case and may return to school on day 8 provided that parents obtain a negative COVID test result (either PCR or rapid antigen test) from a healthcare professional on day 6 or 7 and provide the document to The Discovery Center in advance of the child's return as proof of fulfilling this requirement. This is referred to WCHD's "test to return" option (7-day quarantine with test) as shown on page 8 of the link provided on page 1. There is no "test to stay" option for preschools, nor is a home test result acceptable evidence of readiness to return to school. Last, if parents choose not to have their children tested, those children must quarantine for 10 days, returning on day 11.

In the case of a child with COVID symptoms, the child must isolate for 10 days and until the child has been fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 24 hours. If a child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms OR if a child tests positive for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms), the child must isolate at home until that individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers AND other symptoms have improved AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Staff. In the case of close contact exposure to a COVID-positive individual (at least 15 minutes in a 24-hour period) with no symptoms and no positive test result, a fully-vaccinated staff member who has received a second vaccination at least two weeks prior may continue to work, provided s/he remains asymptomatic and does not test positive. In the case of a staff member experiencing COVID symptoms, getting a COVID test is strongly recommended. If the test is positive, or if no test is sought, the staff member must isolate for 5 days following the last contact with the COVID-positive case and may return to school on day 6 provided that they take a rapid antigen test (can be a home test) on day 5 and return only if the test is negative. On days 6-10 after returning, the staff member must wear a well-fitting mask at all times except when eating. The WCHD recommends that this mask be a KN95, N95, or surgical mask, not a cloth mask.

Fully-vaccinated individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 are not required to quarantine, per current WCHD guidance, provided that such individuals are at least two weeks beyond their final vaccination, as long as they remain asymptomatic and have not received a positive COVID test result.

Most children and staff members can return to care/work based on resolved symptoms and the passage of time. The WCHD may recommend that some individuals (for example, immunocompromised individuals) receive two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

In summary, and as previously noted, quarantine or isolation (when needed) must comply with current WCHD guidance, starting the day after the last date of known exposure. Symptomatic individuals must follow the guidelines for return separately addressed for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, noting that guidelines now differ for adults vs. children.

Appendix A

The Discovery Center Exposure Control Plan

MIOSHA guidelines call for employers to prepare an exposure control plan. This exposure control plan for The Discovery Center addresses the following key elements, as identified by MIOSHA. Parenthetical citations to applicable elements in our Preparedness and Response Plan are included by reference in this exposure control plan.

Exposure Determination (See “Child Screening” and “Staff Screening”.)

All individuals will be screened before entering the building.

Children will be monitored for symptoms throughout the day, with temperature checks when children appear ill.

Engineering Controls

A Plexiglass panel at the front desk will separate the staff member working at the desk from individuals who approach the desk.

All drinking fountains will be covered so they cannot be used.

Windows will remain open whenever practicable to promote fresh air circulation.

Administrative Controls (See “Drop-Off”, “Pick-Up”, “Hygiene and Sanitizing”, “Social Distancing”, and “Items from Home”.)

Child drop-off and pick-up procedures have been redesigned to maximize social distancing and limit the number of individuals entering the building.

Class sizes and staffing will not exceed the level needed to properly care for the children in attendance.

There will be no mixing of children from multiple classrooms.

Tables and cots will be positioned to maximize social distancing.

Outdoor play will occur regularly throughout the day for fresh air.

Frequent handwashing will be enforced.

Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building, and its frequent use will be encouraged.

Soft materials (blankets, sheets, comfort items from home, etc.) will be washed daily.

Hand Hygiene and Environmental Surface Disinfection (See “Hygiene and Sanitizing”.)

Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer will be required of both staff and children.

Personal Protective Equipment (See “Masks” and “Hygiene and Sanitizing”.)

Staff and children will wear disposable (preferably KN95, N95, or surgical masks) or cloth masks at all times except when precluded by specific activities (such as during meals and naps). Staff are encouraged to wear plastic face shields (provided by the Center) where practical as an adjunct to (not substitute for) masks.

Staff will wear gloves as required by existing licensing rules.

Health Surveillance (See “Responding to Possible or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19” and “Guidelines for Returning to School and Work”.)

Staff, families, and other visitors must report to The Discovery Center if they become symptomatic or test positive for COVID-19. The Discovery Center will contact the WCHD and (where needed) our licensing consultant for guidance.

Symptomatic children and staff members will be isolated and sent home.

If an individual in a classroom receives a positive COVID-19 test, the classroom will be closed and cleaned, and all unvaccinated individuals in that classroom will be advised to remain home until they have met the WCHD criteria to discontinue home quarantine if exposed (or isolation if infected). Fully-vaccinated staff will be asked to work on other assignments if/as needed.

Everyone with COVID-19 symptoms, a positive test, or close contact exposure (if they themselves are not vaccinated) should self-quarantine (or isolate) and may not return to The Discovery Center program until they have met criteria for ending quarantine or isolation.

Training

Training in exposure control will be provided to all new hires. Ongoing training and procedural updates will be provided via the Executive Committee.