

**2020/2021 COVID-19 Guidelines for
The Flock Preschool and Epworth's Learning Center for Elementary Children**

***These Guidelines are in alignment with the Cabarrus County Health Alliance and the Centers for Disease Control.**

***We should recognize that these guidelines will need to be revised, as we continue to learn more about the virus, as we navigate through the reopening of all our ministries and programs at Epworth UMC, and as we discern what is in the best interest of our children, staff, and families.**

1. Staff and participants in the Flock Preschool and Epworth's Learning Center will be encouraged to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illness.

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover cough and sneezes.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
- It is required for staff to use cloth masks when working at The Flock Preschool or the Learning Center. We also ask that our parents/guardians follow the guidelines that have been given by our state to help us slow the spread of the virus and practice the three W's: Wash your hands; Wait – Social Distance; and Wear your mask.
- The CDC does not recommend masks for children 2 and under. Masks will not be required for preschool children. However, they will be encouraged for our elementary children who attend the Learning Center.

2. Sick children and staff should stay home.

- Continuous communication with parents will occur to stress the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- Staff must be vigilant in watching for symptoms and staying in touch with the Director of Family Ministries if or when they start to feel sick OR if they have come into contact with someone who has COVID-like symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- If children and staff come to the preschool or Learning Center sick or become sick while at preschool or the Learning Center, they will be sent home as soon as possible.
- Sick children or staff will be kept separate from well children. The Narthex will be used for individuals to wait if they need to wait for a parent/guardian or individual to pick them up from campus.
- Sick staff members or children who are diagnosed with COVID-19 should not return to preschool or the Learning Center until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation, as determined by the Cabarrus Health Alliance. If a staff member or child is not diagnosed with COVID-19, they may not return to preschool or the Learning Center until their temperature is below 100.4 for 24 hours without the assistance of medication OR for 24 hours with no signs of symptoms.

3. If someone becomes sick while at preschool or the Learning Center, specific procedures will be used to ensure the safety of all other participants.

- Children/staff who are sick will be isolated and any areas in which they have been will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.
- Our contracted custodial services will be contacted so that they are aware someone in the building was sick. They will then come in behind our staff and children and disinfect areas where the sick individual may have been.
- If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member:
 - All areas used by the person who is sick will be closed off.
 - Outside doors and windows will be opened to increase air circulation in the areas.
 - At least 24 hours later, cleaning and disinfecting will occur. This will allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
 - All areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas will be cleaned thoroughly before anyone may enter the church again.
 - If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - ***Please be advised that cancelling of preschool or the Learning Center is a possibility, if directed to do so by the Cabarrus Health Alliance or if it is appropriate to keep the children and staff safe.***

4. Due to the fact that absenteeism of employees could be an issue, careful monitoring and planning will occur to ensure the safety of the children and continue to follow the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

- Substitutes will be secured for any staff who are sick or are required to quarantine. Maintaining appropriate staff/child ratios is imperative. We will continue to honor our small class sizes, and we will not move children to other rooms if a teacher is absent. Also, we must continue to honor our Safe Sanctuaries Policy, with either two teachers in a room or a roamer who is continually checking on the classrooms.
- ***Cancelling preschool or the Learning Center is a possibility if directed to do so by the Cabarrus Health Alliance, or if it is appropriate to keep the children and staff safe. We will use the direction of our local health officials to determine what we need to do in order to operate safely.***
- It is recommend that individuals at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions) consult with their medical provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home if there is an outbreak in our community. It is also advised to consult your medical provider to determine if working or attending preschool or the Learning Center is in their best interest medically. In addition, anyone who is in contact with someone who is at high risk should consider the risks of working or attending preschool or the Learning Center.

5. Group gatherings and events are temporarily suspended.

- Guidance for gatherings and events with large numbers will come from our state's governor. Updates will continue to be monitored and specific guidelines will be followed as they are released from our state. At this point, all group gatherings have been suspended. These kinds of events have always been wonderful for our preschool children and families to develop Christian community. We will strive to continue our community atmosphere, as this continues to be an important vision and mission of God at the Flock Preschool, through other avenues such technology.
- Visitors will not be encouraged. Only those who are directly supervising children should be on the hallway, in the classrooms or other areas where children and staff are located. Also, other church staff and individuals not directly involved in the preschool or Learning Center are discouraged from being on the hallway or in classrooms or other areas to try to minimize exposure and decrease likeability of spreading germs. This is to adequately protect the staff and children.

6. Daily procedures to help keep children and staff safe will be implemented.

a. Social Distancing practices will be implemented.

During the operation of the Flock Preschool and the Learning Center, all children will be assigned to a teacher and a room. These same teachers and children will remain together the entire day. Groups will continue to have a small student/teacher ratio as well.

Each group of children will be in their own classroom for most of the day to prevent the spread of germs. The sanctuary will not be used until it is deemed safe for the children to be together for daily worship. In the meantime, worship will continue to occur in the children's classroom for our preschoolers and devotions/prayer will occur in the individual classrooms with the elementary children. In addition to their individual classrooms, all children will also have the opportunity to go outside. Playground times will also be staggered to keep all groups separate. In addition, multiple play areas are being established to ensure that all groups are able to go outside at least two times a day.

Staff members will be required to [wear face coverings](#), and elementary children will be encouraged to wear face masks. Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.

b. Parent drop-off and pick-up will be modified.

Several staff members will be used to greet children at the door and take them to their classroom or meeting area. Parents will not enter the building. This will limit contact between parents and staff members and adhere to social distancing recommendations. This will continue until we are given further directions by the CDC or Cabarrus Health Alliance.

Children will be dropped off and picked up at the “back door” of the church for preschool and on the playground areas for elementary children. We will also have staggered drop-off times and staggered pick-up times.

Staggered Drop Off

1 year olds – 8:40 am
2 year olds – 8:50 am
3 year olds – 9:00 am
4 year olds & TK – 9:10 am
Learning Center – 8:30 to 9:00 am

Staggered Pick Up

1 year olds – 12:40 pm
2 year olds – 12:50 pm
3 year olds – 1:00 pm
4 year olds – 1:10 pm
Learning Center – 1:00 pm

Parents will drive to the back of the church to “drop off” and “pick up” children. Parents will not get out of the car.

- Children will be greeted outside as they arrive.
- Each child will be screened and their temperature taken. A child with a fever of 100.4 or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted into the preschool or the Learning Center.
- In addition to temperatures and checking for other signs of illness, parents/guardians will be asked to complete a COVID-19 daily checklist concerning possible exposure/symptoms. A child will not be able to attend preschool or the Learning Center if they, or someone with whom they are in close contact, has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or quarantined due to COVID-19. Guidance from the Cabarrus Health Alliance will be used in order to determine when it is safe for the child to return to preschool or the Learning Center.
- Parents will be encouraged to be alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. During this time, we will ask all our parents to be very vigilant in helping us keep our facility, and the entire staff, children, and families at The Flock safe.

After each child is screened, the parent/guardian will hand the staff person the COVID-19 checklist and verify their answers. The preschool children will be taken into the building by a designated staff member and go directly to a sink to wash his/her hands. Learning Center children will begin their day at one of our play areas.

When staff arrive, each one will be screened and have their temperature taken. They will also complete a COVID19 checklist. Any staff with a fever of 100.4 or above or any other signs of illness will not be admitted into the church.

*****Parents may pay tuition/fees at drop off. We ask that you put money in an envelope with your child(ren)’s name on the outside and be ready to hand the envelope, along with the COVID-19 checklist, to the staff member when they are getting your child(ren) out of the car.**

c. Cleaning and disinfecting efforts will be intensified.

All classrooms and areas for learning will be cleaned throughout the day by our teachers, especially places that are “high touch” areas such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, counter tops, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, and cubbies. In addition, the playground and extra play areas outside will be sanitized between each class that uses it and toys, sensory bins, and bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

An approved cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting solution will be used to clean surfaces that is EPA approved. We will be using a premixed, a ¼ cup of household liquid chlorine bleach mixed with a gallon of water, solution to clean daily, as well as a new solution called Hypochlorous Acid, which is very safe for children. In addition to sprayers for each classroom, we will also be fumigating classrooms with a fogger. This will occur on a daily basis to sanitize our rooms during the day, as well as at the end of the day. Our cleaning contracted services will be disinfecting our classrooms and hallway on a daily basis as well. When they are available, we will also use Clorox and Lysol Brand Disinfectants that are on the EPA approved list for childcare centers. All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children.

Cleaning and sanitizing toys is essential.

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Dirty toys will be cleaned with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinsed again, and air-dried. We will also be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child’s mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.
- Machine washable cloth toys will be used by one individual at a time or will not be used at all. These toys will be sanitized before being used by another child.
- Toys will not be shared with other rooms, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one room to the other. Toys should only be moved from room to room by the Flock Staff.
- Toys that are in a child’s mouth will be set aside to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Procedures for diapering and cleaning areas are important.

- Prepare to change the child(includes putting on gloves)
- Clean the child
- Remove trash (soiled diaper and wipes)
- Replace diaper
- Wash child’s hands
- Clean up diapering station
- Wash hands

In the Learning Center, all children will be encouraged to have their own supplies and refrain from sharing items. If a child needs any supplies, parents, teachers, and Learning Center Staff will work together to ensure that all students have what they need.

d. Comforting children is an essential and important to what we do as staff.

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious toddlers and preschoolers, and they often need to be held. The Flock Staff will continue their long tradition of providing for the emotional and developmental needs of children, while at the same time practicing good hygiene and social distancing. Comforting children is essential and a very important part of what we do as a staff at the preschool.

We also recognize that there may be times that elementary children also need to be comforted. A child's social and emotional well being is of utmost importance, no matter what their age. We will practice social distancing. However, we will also make sure that children get the comforting they need as well.

e. It is extremely important that staff follow specific procedures when they come into contact with bodily secretions.

- Staff will wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions.
- Staff will change a child's clothes if secretions are on the child's clothes.
- Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for parents to wash.
- We will ask all our preschoolers and staff to have multiple changes of clothes on hand.

f. Healthy hand hygiene behavior is essential.

- All children, staff, and volunteers will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:
 - Arrival to the facility and after breaks
 - Before and after preparing food or drinks
 - Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
 - Before and after diapering
 - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
 - After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
 - After playing outdoors or in sand
 - After handling garbage
- Individuals will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.
- Children will be supervised when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Children will be assisted with handwashing. After assisting children with handwashing, staff will also wash their hands.
- Posters describing handwashing steps will be placed near sinks, as well as all entrance doors.

g. Vulnerable/high risk groups should always consult their healthcare provided before working or participating in The Flock Preschool or the Learning Center.

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Staff members or volunteers age 65 or older, or with serious underlying health conditions, should talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk.

If a child has underlying health conditions, their parents should consult with their healthcare provided about their risk for participating in The Flock Preschool or the Learning Center. If it is safe for a child to participate, a health plan should be established to ensure all staff/volunteers are aware of their underling risks and how to respond.