COVID-19

Emergency Response Plan

Little Blessings Child Care Center

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



**Introduction:**

Little Blessings has received the designation of an Emergency Child Care Center by the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services for the duration of the State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This handbook is to help guide staff and families during a pandemic or other emergency. The information in this handbook is very fluid and may be adjusted based on the pandemic as well as the emergency needs of the center.

Little Blessings reserves the right to change the information in this handbook in order to align with the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the State of New Hampshire, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Child Care Licensing Unit (CCLU), or any other entity that may enact rules and regulations regarding childcare programs. Little Blessings will follow all rules, regulations, requirements issued by local, state, and federal government for the health and safety of students, families, and staff. A copy of the guidelines as well as the Frequently Asked Questions from the Department of Public Health can be found at

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-child-care.pdf> (Safer At Home 2.0)

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid-19-faq.pdf> (FAQ’s)

The COVID-19 virus has changed the way we need to look at early childhood education, please note that to respond to this virus, and still offer quality care, we will be changing many protocols at our center. In order for this to work well for our families and staff, it is important to remember that we are all doing our best to make this work with limited options. Cooperation and understanding are essential. We appreciate the fact that you work for essential businesses and need childcare. Likewise, as an essential business we need to operate in a safe and efficient manner. All families will receive a copy of this correspondence and will be required to sign a form certifying that they have read and agree to the directives in this handbook.

**Illness Policy and Monitoring:**

Children who show symptoms of COVID 19 such as a runny nose, excess coughing or sneezing, or fever WILL be sent home and asked to be tested before returning to group care. If the family chooses NOT to test their child that child MUST remain out of care for 10 days symptom free.

Children will have their temperatures checked twice daily once at home before arriving at the facility and once randomly throughout the day by an assigned staff member. Any child with a fever of 100.4 or higher must remain out of school for **10 days or test negative and can return to school when symptoms are cleared for 24 hours.** We will NOT allow a doctor’s note for returning to school before the 10 days without a negative test.

Staff are asked to assess their own health before coming into work however they will also be required to have their temperature taken before beginning their shift. Any staff member with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will be sent home and will not be able to return to work until they have been fever-free for 72 hours.

Any child showing any concerning signs of respiratory issues such as but not limited to excessive coughing, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath from continued coughing, refusing liquids with decreased urine frequency, crying without ability to be consoled will be sent home. Little Blessings staff prides on knowing each child individually and knowing when something “just isn’t right” we will be vigilant but also understanding when it comes to the health of your children. Children who are sent home with the above symptoms may not return to school for **10 days PLUS 7 additional healthy days (symptom free) or have a negative test result.** Parents are required to contact Little Blessings administration directly within 24 hours to inform the school what the illness may be. If a child is showing any of the above symptoms or a fever of 100.4 or higher parents are notified and will have to be picked up within **1 HOUR** of when the phone call is placed.

**If the child, anyone in the child’s home or an individual with direct contact with the child has a positive COVID-19 test the parent MUST inform Little Blessings administration via EMAIL ONLY (****stremblaylbccc@gmail.com****, or** **littleblessingsnh@gmail.com** **) This is in order to protect confidentiality as well as mitigate the spread of the information. The child will then be required to stay home for 14 days or longer depending on CDC guidelines.**

**Keeping Healthy:**

Little Blessings will continue to take every precaution for your child and the staff to stay healthy! We need your help in keeping children and staff healthy. It is the responsibility of the parents to be open and honest with staff about any illness or illness symptoms that their child or family member may be experiencing. If we find out that families are not being open and honest about symptoms, masking symptoms with the use of medication or not adhering to any of the policies or procedures in this handbook Little Blessings reserves the right to suspend care.

Staff and families are required to practice social distancing protocols issued by the local, state or federal agencies when outside of the center. Everyone must follow public safety guidelines set out by the Governor regarding public areas, playgrounds, and group gatherings. Any violation in this matter will require that the child or staff member have to quarantine for 14 days. Staff must also adhere to social distancing practices by limiting their outside exposure to the virus. During working hours staff will be required to limit their travel outside of Little Blessings and only leave on their break for essential needs.

**Social Distancing Strategies:**

Little Blessings adheres to recommendations set out by the CDC, CCLU, as well as other local and state agencies in regard to social distancing. The following section will be broken down into the following categories: Business Operation Hours, Arrival and Departure, Special Events, Classroom Sizes and Limitations

**Business Operation Hours**- In order to maintain order and avoid large groups of people gathering in the building as well as give the staff adequate time to clean and sanitize at the beginning and end of each day Little Blessings will be open from **7:45 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday until further notice.** This change in business hours allows Little Blessings to run on one single shift eliminating the need to have people in an out of the building throughout the day. Visitors to Little Blessings will be limited and all persons entering the building will be required to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer.

**Arrival and Departure-** In order to keep the number of people in the building low during drop off and pick up, we ask that only parent or guardian enter the building. Families with more than one child to drop off may have two parents if needed. Parents and staff will be expected to wear a face mask while in the building. Hand sanitizer/wipes will be required to be used before entering the building, children will be required to wash their hands again upon entering the classroom. Little Blessings will not allow additional individuals or family members into the center including siblings that are not enrolled in care. Once you enter the building, do not linger in the building. If you need to have a conversation with the teacher, please make it brief and do so from 6 feet away. Tours of the facility for future families will be postponed until it is deemed safe to allow outside visitors.

**Special Events-** Little Blessings is canceling all large group events for the foreseeable future these events include York Family Day which is typically held in June as well as Parent Back to School Night. We will not be entertaining any large group events until it is been deemed safe to do so.

**Class Sizes and Limitations-** The CCLU and the CDC recommend that classroom sizes be kept at a fifteen (15) person limit this includes staff and children. We will make every effort to not combine groups throughout the day, activities and schedules have been staggered so that we minimize the time children are in large groups. The number of toys and other items in the classroom will be limited, all soft toys “cozy” items, blankets, dress-up clothing and any stuffed animals will be removed unless they can easily be laundered. Nap time linens will be laundered weekly using both regular detergent as well as Lysol disinfecting detergent. Each classroom will have a “yuck bucket” for toys that children put in their mouth or other items that need to be sanitized which will be done at the end of each day. Toys and equipment will not be shared between classrooms unless they are sanitized before and after classroom use.

**Cleaning, Sanitizing & Disinfecting Procedures:**

**DEFINITIONS**

**Cleaning: Physically removing all dirt and contamination, often times using soap and water.**

**Sanitizing: Reducing germs on inanimate surfaces to levels safe by public health codes or regulations. This may be appropriate for food service tables and equipment, highchairs, toys, pacifiers, bottles, and sippy cups.**

**Disinfecting: Destroying or inactivating most germs on any inanimate object, but not bacterial spores. This is appropriate for diaper tables, doorknobs, light switches, toilets, and other surfaces especially in the bathroom.**

**Products:**

Bleach and water solutions made daily (4 teaspoons bleach to one-quart water)

Lysol (or similar alternative) Spray disinfectant

Clorox wipes (or similar alternative)

Lysol sanitizing laundry additive

In addition to daily cleaning Little Blessings staff will be routinely cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys, games and equipment. This will also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, gates, chairs, shelves, countertops, desks, cubbies, playground toys and structures. A bleach and water solution will be used in accordance with the CDC guidelines. Little Blessings staff will be required to initial checklists for cleaning in the morning before children arrive, at nap time, and in the evening after the children leave.

Tables, Highchairs, and Chairs will be cleaned and disinfected with a bleach and water solution **before and after** all meals and every tabletop activity.

Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected at nap time as well as normal daily cleaning.

Playgrounds will be cleaned and disinfected between groups. This includes but is not limited to; playground toys, bikes, slides, structures, swings, gates/latches, and door handles.

**Fresh Air:**

All classrooms will have windows open slightly to allow the circulation of fresh air and opportunities for outdoor activities will be maximized these activities may include but are not limited to nature walks (Urban Forestry), field games & activities (Urban Forestry), picnic meals (playgrounds or Urban Forestry), story time, arts & crafts, etc. We will increase the amount of time that the children are outside while observing social distancing practices and cleaning protocols.

**Drop-off Screening:**

Before you arrive at the facility, we are asking parents to take their child’s (ren’s) temperature. When you check your child in through Brightwheel you will be asked the following questions and be required to sign off that you have completed them:

If your answer is “YES” to any of the following questions, please do not enter the building and contact the office for more information.

Thank you!

**1. Do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19?**

 **a. Temperature of 100.4 F or greater, or have you felt feverish?**

 **b. Respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, or shortness of breath?**

 **c. General body symptoms not due to another chronic medical condition, such as fatigue, muscle aches, joint aches, headache?**

 **d. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?**

 **e. Change in your sense of taste or smell?**

**2. Have you had close contact with anyone with who was diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days? (Note: healthcare providers caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing all appropriate PPE should answer “no”)**

**3. Have you traveled in the prior 14 days outside of New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or Rhode Island?**

**If a Child or Staff Member Develops Symptoms While at the Facility:**

If a staff member is feeling any of the symptoms, they will notify the administration immediately. They will then be immediately replaced and will be asked to leave the facility.

If a child develops any symptoms while in care a parent will be notified the child MUST be picked up within an hour after contact is made. The set-up of the building does not allow for adequate isolation of children, the staff will do their best to keep any child with symptoms away from the group.

If your child’s symptoms persist or worsen while in care, we will call the health care provider for guidance or 911 if immediate action is needed.

It is the parent/guardian responsibility to inform Little Blessings administration immediately if a person in your immediate family or someone the child has been in contact with is diagnosed or tests positive with COVID-19.

If a parent/guardian or child test positive for COVID-19 please immediately contact **The Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496.** *The Bureau will advise on next steps.*

**Returning After COVID-19 Symptoms or Contact**

Anyone with symptoms who is not tested, and can be managed at home, and has not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, should self-isolate until:

 At least 10 consecutive days have passed since recovery. Recovery is defined as a resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications and improvement in other symptoms ***AND*** at least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If a staff member or child has been in close contact (within 6 feet) of a person diagnosed with COVID-19, the staff member or child can return to care after if:

 10 days have passed since last contact to the person ***AND*** the staff member or child is asymptomatic (not symptomatic).

If a staff member or child has been in close contact (within 6 feet) of a person being tested for COVID-19, the staff member or child can return to childcare after if:

 A confirmed negative diagnosis of COVID-19 for the person being tested and the staff member or child remains symptom free.

If there is a household member who is showing any symptoms of COVID none of the family members will be permitted into the building until the following actions are followed:

1. The suspected person is fever free for 72 hours (3 days) without the use of fever reducing medicine AND

2. Symptoms have improved for at least 72 hours (3 days) AND

3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms have passed

If the household member with the symptoms undergoes a COVID -19 test and it comes back negative (must show proof) the child can then return to the center.

If the household member with symptoms chooses NOT to get a COVID-19 test the child may not return to the center for 24 days. 10 days of quarantine due to the person with the symptom and then 14 days of quarantine from the last exposure to the person with the symptoms (in case they were infected on the last day of the original quarantine.)

**Travel Regulations**

Travelers/visitors to AND residents of NH need to self-quarantine for 10 days following the last date of any high-risk travel, which includes travel internationally (including to/from Canada); on a cruise ship; or domestically outside of the New England states of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or Rhode Island for nonessential purposes.

People meeting the criteria for high-risk travel have the option of ending their quarantine after day 7 by getting a test on day 6-7 of their quarantine to test for active SARS-CoV-2 infection (SARS-CoV-2 is the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19); this test must be a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test); antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose. If the test is obtained on day 6-7 of quarantine, the person is asymptomatic, and the test is negative, then the person can end their quarantine after 7 days, but they must still self-observe for symptoms of COVID-19 and strictly adhere to COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wearing a face mask, practicing frequent hand hygiene, etc.) for a full 14 days after their last day of travel. Any new symptoms of COVID-19 should prompt the person to isolate and seek testing again (even if the person recently tested out of quarantine). This 7-day quarantine “test out” option ONLY applies to travel-related quarantine (not quarantine due to a high-risk close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19).

**Center Closing Due to COVID-19 (positive test or Government)**

If a staff member or child enrolled in the center has tested positive for COVID-19, due to the nature of our open facility it is impossible to close one classroom as a result the whole center will have to close for 14 days. Families will be expected to continue to pay their tuition at the rate that they were paying before the closure. If a closure of longer than 14 days becomes necessary tuition will be reduced by 50% for the duration of the shutdown.

**Washing, Feeding or Holding Children**

Little Blessings priority is providing safe, health, and loving care of your children before, during, and after this pandemic. Although there are new policies and procedures the staff will strive to maintain the loving individual care that we are known for!

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and anxious children especially during these times of crisis, a child’s mental health is just as important as their physical health.

Staff will be provided with button down shirts to wear throughout the day. They will be able to remove this layer of protection if it becomes soiled and the clothing will be laundered. Staff will also be required to wear a cloth mask, or another CDC recommended face mask throughout the day when with the children.

If staff or child’s clothing become soiled, they will be removed placed in a plastic bag (child) or set aside to be laundered. Staff will wash any areas that may have some in contact with secretions and then wash both the child and their hands before returning to the group.

Staff are required to wash their hands before and after handling any food or bottles. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used for bottle-feeding should be thoroughly cleaned after each use with warm soapy water and sanitized.

**Healthy Hand Hygiene Behavior**

All children and staff must 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 administering medication or medical ointment
* Before and after diapering
* After using the toilet or helping children use the bathroom
* After coming into contact with bodily fluid
* Before and after playing outside
* After handling garbage
* After handling dirty laundry

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. Staff will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion. Infants are not permitted to use hand sanitizer.

**Attachments**

COVID 19

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Parent Form

 

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(print name) parent/guardian of

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ child(rens) name(s) certify I have read and agree to the directives set forth in the COVID 19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN. I understand that the regulations are fluid and may change while Little Blessings Child Care Center is operating a State of NH designated Emergency Child Care Center.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date

 

COVID 19

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

STAFF FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(print name) certify I have read and agree to the directives set forth in the COVID 19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN. I understand that the regulations are fluid and may change while Little Blessings Child Care Center is operating a State of NH designated Emergency Child Care Center.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date

**CHILDREN & FAMILIES CHECKLIST – DROP OFF**

*\*Parents should be advised to not bring additional siblings into the center unless they are there for care.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Prior to entering the building answer the following:** | Yes or No? |
| **In the past 14 days have you or your child…** |
| Been in close contact with someone confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19? \*For Health Care workers -- see next question | Y / N |
| If you are a healthcare worker, are you symptomatic? | Y / N |
| Traveled domestically (anywhere in the country – including NH)? | Y / N |
| Traveled internationally (out of the county)? | Y / N |
| Have you given your child any symptom relieving medication (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Cough Medicine, Lozenges) in the last 24 hours? | Y / N  |
| **Do you or your child have any of the following symptoms?** |
| Temperature above 100.4°F (check temperature w/ forehead thermometer) | Y / N |
| Cough | Y / N |
| Sore throat | Y / N |
| Runny nose | Y / N |
| Shortness of breath | Y / N |
| Mild flu-like illness (fatigue, chills, muscle aches) | Y / N |

***\*If you answered “YES” to any of the above, the child or parent may not enter the facility. Follow CDC protocol for each of the symptoms. See “Returning After COVID-19”, for more information on returning to childcare\****

If none of the boxes are marked with a “YES”, proceed inside the building for drop-off.

**Before entering the building – WASH YOUR HANDS OR USE HAND SANITIZER**

**STAFF CHECKLIST**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Prior to leaving your house to come to work ask…** | Yes or No? |
| **In the past 14 days have you…** |
| Been in close contact with someone confirmed or being tested for COVID-19? | Y / N |
| Traveled domestically (anywhere in the country – including NH)? | Y / N |
| Traveled internationally (out of the county)? | Y / N |
| **Do you have any of the following symptoms?** |
| Temperature above 100.4°F (check temperature w/ forehead thermometer) | Y / N |
| Cough | Y / N |
| Sore throat | Y / N |
| Runny nose | Y / N |
| Shortness of breath | Y / N |
| Mild flu-like illness (fatigue, chills, muscle aches) | Y / N |

***\*If you answered “YES” to any of the above, please contact Shannon or Kelly, remain at home, and follow CDC protocol for each of the symptoms. See “Returning After COVID-19”, for more information on returning to work\****

If none of the boxes are marked with a “YES”, proceed to work as normal.

**Before entering the building – WASH YOUR HANDS OR USE HAND SANITIZER**

**Important reminder:**

You have chosen to work in Emergency Childcare. You are responsible for avoiding exposure to the COVID-19 virus to the greatest extent. You are not only responsible for your own health, but the health of the children and families you care for, and the community. You are responsible for exercising proper hand washing & exposure precautions along with social distancing with every activity you partake in (grocery shopping, getting gas, going to the post office, etc.). Please be mindful of how your actions can affect the health of all within our center.