**SonShine Child Care Center COVID-19 Protocols and Procedures**

Parents: If there is one thing we have learned over the last year, it is that COVID-19, and all that is involved in it, is ever-changing and fluid.  And, so goes the information here.  Protocols like cleaning are straightforward.  But procedures like the Welcome Center may need to be perfected as time goes on.  We ask for your patience as we move ahead contending with the virus and running our “small village” here at SonShine!

**A Word About Cleaning Procedures**

Staff of childcare facilities are not strangers to cleaning/disinfection and handwashing.  These practices are repeated throughout a typical program day…every day.  Teachers clean and disinfect tables, countertops, toys, nap mats, faucets, handles.  You name it.  They bleach it.  And, they wash their own hands and the children’s hands…before and after eating, after using the bathroom, after diaper changing, after coming in from outdoors.  And the list goes on.  These are all NYS Regulations for Child Care.  And so, SonShine purchases a lot of soap and bleach every year.  And we clean.  And we disinfect.  EVERYTHING.

This is laid out to point to the fact that, whereas other businesses who re-opened recently implemented cleaning, disinfecting and hand washing because of COVID 19, childcare centers already had the procedures in place.  We are already trained in the implementation of them.  And we amped up what we already knew to meet the challenge before us.

What is included here as far as cleaning protocols are the heightened procedures we are implementing due to COVID-19.  Practices that are already in place are not communicated here.  For instance, toys that are mouthed by infants have always been placed in a bin out of their reach to be cleaned at a later time.  That will not be listed in these procedures.  But, you will see that cribs will be cleaned and disinfected after their use, which is an amped up procedure due to COVID-19.

Cleaning Staff has been appointed to accompany all eleven hours that the childcare is open.  This is one of many COVID-19 added expenses but one that is absolutely necessary.  Appointed staff go wherever necessary throughout the day to clean and disinfect whatever is necessary.

**A Word About Masks at SonShine**

Adults, including SonShine staff, parents, delivery people, etc. must wear a mask inside the building.

Unless they will be off the grounds or in public, children are *not required* to wear a mask at daycare, per NYS Regulations.  Children under the age of two should not wear a mask.

For ages 3 and up, please send a mask into SonShine with your child daily.  Although we do not anticipate exposure to the public during the childcare day at this time (teachers have been directed not

to go on walks off SonShine grounds until further notice), one would be needed in the unlikely event that the children are exposed to the public in an emergency.  We cannot require pre-k/school aged students wear a mask but we will encourage it and implore you to also encourage it if your child attends one of our pre-k/school aged programs.

**General Protocols and Procedures Throughout SonShine:**

**Welcome Center:**

The Welcome Center is located at the top of the first flight of stairs just inside the primary doors of entry to the building. Like other childcare centers, we are offering an area where parents will accompany their child(ren) through a check in process.  Here, each child will receive their daily health check consisting of a health screening and a temperature check.  Parents will then walk each child to their classroom, stopping on the way to wash hands in the bathroom closest to the Welcome Center if the child had not done so already. Each destination has arrows to allow a safe, socially distanced flow throughout the building that all parents/families should use. There will also be hand sanitizer at entrances and throughout the building.  To minimize the risk of exposure, we are asking all parents to drop off at the doors of each classroom instead of entering.

Parents will need to allow more time than normal for drop off and pick up as the sign in/out process could take more time than the usual morning/afternoon routine.

When you arrive in the parking lot for drop off or pick up of your child, there may be times when parents are required to call first due to heavy traffic.  In an effort to avoid over-congregating inside the building, the receptionist may ask that you wait just a few minutes before proceeding to come inside.  We will do our best to keep wait time to a minimum.  It shouldn’t be long before the receptionist calls you back so you can proceed to the building. Parents will be notified via email when there is a “temporary call first policy” in place.

Parent/Teacher Communication:

We hope that policy does not stand in the way of the ever-present sense of family at SonShine. If you have information you need communicated to your child’s teacher and feel policy is standing in the way, as always, you may call the center at any time of day to be patched through to your caregiver directly. Please reach out to a member of administration if you need further assistance in this area. We would love to help!

Pausing Parent Drop off/Pick up at Classrooms:

At times, it may be necessary to pause parents going to classrooms due to COVID concerns.  Parents will be notified via email if this becomes the case. Staff will then be appointed to deliver children to and from classrooms at the beginning and end of the day from the Welcome Center.

Masks and the Welcome Center:

I**f your child is waiting with you to be checked in at the Welcome Center, those age three and over will need to wear a mask.**  This is because the parents around that child are considered “the public.”  If there are no parents around a child, it is up to the parent whether or not to have their child wear a mask. When they get to their classroom the parent can safely fold the mask and place it away to go home at the end of the day.

**Personnel:**

**General Building**

* Children’s bathrooms will be cleaned/disinfected after each use by the Cleaning Staff.  Staff bathrooms will be cleaned/disinfected on a routine basis throughout the day.  To help with this process, each bathroom has a tag that reads, “Clean” and “Unclean” on respective sides.  When a classroom is finished with a bathroom,  that teacher turns the tag so that it reads, “Unclean.”  This alerts other classrooms not to use that bathroom and the Cleaning Staff to clean it.  After cleaning is accomplished, the Cleaning Staff fills out the Cleaning Log for that bathroom and turns the tag so that it reads, “Clean,” alerting other classrooms that the bathroom can now be used again.
* High contact surfaces (tables, countertops, door knobs, hand railings, faucets, etc) will be targeted by Cleaning Staff throughout the day on a routine and as needed basis by teachers and staff.
* Minimum contact will be practiced for deliveries, services and other visitors to the building to the greatest degree possible until further notice.
* Visitors will be discouraged.  If a visitor does need to enter the building (i.e. required maintenance), their temperature will be checked, they’ll fill out a health questionnaire, they’ll need to wear a mask and will record their name and phone number at the Reception Desk.
* All visitors will need to sign in and fill out a COVID-19 related questionnaire in order to gain admittance to the building.

**Procedures as They Relate to Children:**

* Parents should wash their child’s hands at the sink at the building entrance (when provided) with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds before entering the building each day.  If the sink is unavailable, proceed to the Welcome Center and you can wash the child’s hands on the way to the child’s classroom.
* Children’s temperatures will be taken upon arrival to the program and every four hours of the day.
* Staff will be educated in the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and the COVID-related illness in children.
* Staff will monitor children for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and the COVID-related illness in children and will take appropriate measures if a child is found to have any symptoms.
* If a child is found with symptoms of COVID-19 they will be brought to a separate classroom accompanied by a staff member until the parent arrives to come pick them up.

**Procedures as They Relate to Staff:**

* Staff should wash their hands at the sink at the building entrance (when provided) with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds *each time they enter the building* throughout the program day.  If the sink is unavailable, staff should use hand sanitizer upon entering the building and wash their hands upon admittance to any classroom.  Advanced hand washing procedures should take place throughout the program day.
* Staff will have their temperature taken when they clock in each day and midway through the program day.
* Staff will self-monitorfor signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and will immediately go home to contact their doctor if they are found to have any symptoms.
* Staff will fill out and a copy will be kept on file of the **CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER, PARENT, CHILD AND ESSENTIAL VISITORS HEALTH SCREENING ONE-TIME ATTESTATION.**

**Classrooms:**

* Classroom size is limited to fifteen children maximum (not including teachers).  *Please keep in mind that if an age group’s maximum group size is less than fifteen, that continues to be the maximum group size for that age.*
* All classes will consist of the same children every day.  Children will not visit classrooms or go to a different room during or at the end of the program day.
* Activities:
  + Activities where children would normally group together will be replaced with activities that avoid groupings as much as possible (taking a sensory table out of a classroom and replacing it with individual sensory bins).
  + Children will be spaced apart for activities to the greatest degree possible (Example: use of more tables during lunch to spread children apart while they eat to avoid spread of germs),
* Cribs and mats will be spaced either six feet apart or children will be placed in an alternate head and toe fashion to avoid face to face transmission (in which case cots will be at least two feet apart).
* Cribs and mats will be cleaned/disinfected *daily.*
* Classroom traffic by staff will be kept to a minimum.  Deliveries to rooms, such as food or supplies, will be placed outside the door.  Teachers will need to have a purpose for entering a room such as taking the place of a teacher for the end of her shift.  These teachers, to the greatest extent possible, will be the same everyday.
* All classroom toys and equipment will be washed/disinfected on a rotating basis.
* Continued education in proper hand and respiratory hygiene will be delivered to the children at age appropriate levels.
* During this time, we ask that toys from home not be brought into the center (comfort items are fine).
* To the greatest extent possible, the same teachers will accomplish breaks and take over for shift changes in the same classrooms at the same times each day.

**Indoor Large Motor Areas:**

For use in these areas, each classroom will have a mesh bag of toys full of easily cleanable equipment for that class’ use only.  When classes go to the large motor space, instead of pulling toys from the closet there, they will use the toys from their mesh bag.  Upon leaving the large motor area, they will take the bag back to their classroom with them for cleaning/disinfection.  For the cleaning and disinfection of the large motor space, we are allowing enough time in between each group for cleaning staff to tend to the entire area as well as well as any miscellaneous equipment that may have been used (i.e. the horses in the Bike Room).

**Outdoor Space:**

Bleach and a mixture of soap and water are supplied outside everyday so that frequently touched areas of the playground can be washed and disinfected as they are used.  These products are stored so that they are not accessible to children and bleach solution will remain effective.

**Extra Activities:**

Sadly, the following are suspended until further notice

* Soccer Shots
* Fits Kids
* Dance

Fortunately, we are still able to do small versions of the chapel in the large space of our auditorium. We will do this with separate sections for each class and disinfect in between each class period.

**Staff Training:**

* Prior to re-opening on June 1, SonShine held two training days for staff.  The director, Lori Potter, presented on PPE, SonShine COVID-19 Protocols, social distancing in the classroom and the Health Care Plan.  The nurse, Sue Titus, provided training on COVID-19 signs and symptoms  in adults and children, the COVID-related illness in children as well as other pertinent virus related facts.  This material, in addition to all staff meeting agendas, memos and the COVID regulations from NYSOCFS are presented to incoming staff as they come off of leave or are hired as their training as well.
* Upon Resuming Work, staff received: “Health Related COVID-19 Instructions/Procedures Training” by SonShine Nurse, Sue Titus, Trainings delivered to staff by the director (Social Distancing in the Classroom, PPE Guidance, SonShine Health Care Plan, SonShine CCC COVID-19 Protocols and Procedures and Misc Memos/Agendas from Staff Meetings)

**If There is a Case of COVID-19 at SonShine**

* If anyone in the building is found to have COVID-19, the Director or Person in Charge will notify parents, the Onondaga County Health Department’s Communicable Disease Unit and the Office of Children and Family Services immediately.  Guidance will be closely followed from there.  Please note,
  + The DOH provides guidance on a *case by case basis* and only on a *positive* COVID-19 test result.  Their specific guidance for a case at SonShine would be communicated to families when the health department in which the diagnosed person resides receives that person’s lab result.  This could take time.  At that point, the DOH  would communicate specific guidance to SonShine and parents.  Meanwhile, SonShine will move forward in pursuit of its number one priority: *making the environment safe once again for its children, teachers and families.*
  + It is impossible to give one plan, or a set of plans mapping out exactly what steps would be taken should a case of Coronavirus be found at SonShine as every scenario cannot possibly be mapped out.  The DOH has made it clear that they only give guidance on a positive result and on a case by case basis.
  + Should there be a case of coronavirus at SonShine, it is foreseeable that next steps may  include a brief or extended closure of a classroom or the center.
    - The classroom will be closed.  It will be cleaned/disinfected by SonShine’s cleaning company before it is reopened again.
    - The classroom will reopen upon completion of quarantine of the lead and assistant teachers of the classroom.
    - Families are encouraged to have a back-up plan in place should SonShine need to close, preferably one that includes telework and not someone new or an older relative coming into the home to take care of the children.
    - In the absence of childcare, it is discouraged to get together with other families to care for each other’s children due to the current pandemic environment.

**Parent Responsibilities:**

* Parents will fill out and a copy will be kept on file of the **CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER, PARENT, CHILD AND ESSENTIAL VISITORS HEALTH SCREENING ONE-TIME ATTESTATION.**
* For center-wide closure due to COVID-19, classroom staff will be placed on furlough.  The building will be maintained and other essential functions will continue.  Parents will be charged at a rate of 15%.
* For temporary classroom closure due to COVID-19, staff are paid through the closure.  Parents will be charged at a rate of 50%.
* If a sibling from a classroom that is open is unable to attend care due to the quarantine of a child from a closed classroom, there will be no charge for the days the sibling is not allowed to attend.  However, should that sibling’s classroom fall into a different COVID-19 closure situation, the charge will change to 15% or 50%, depending upon whether the closure is center-wide or classroom related.
* Be sure to turn in any updated contact information at the Reception Desk.
* Update all Medication Consent Forms (forms needed to have prescription medication administered to a child at daycare) every six months.
* If your child has a Special Healthcare Condition, please let your child’s teacher or the office know.

As always, we thank the parents of SonShine Child Care Center for their continued support!  We so appreciate all of the kind words and gestures during this difficult time as we strive to continue to provide the best care possible for your family and our staff while keeping in best practice for the good of all including our greater community!

*Policies subject to change at any time with or without notice.*

This protocol can be found on our website.