COVID Health & Safety Regulations and Protocols

In order to reopen, all childcare providers in Massachusetts must comply with new standards. These protocols include changes in the following areas, which we will update as things change.

KEEPPING HEALTHY

ILLNESS: Parents, children and staff must stay home when sick.

LIMITING VISITORS: Non-essential staff, parents and visitors are restricted from entering the program. Drop-off and pick-up will occur outside the building. Tours will be virtual or on weekends and vendors will drop off supplies outside the building.

DAILY HEALTH CHECKS: All individuals will be required to self-screen at home before arriving at the program, (including a temperature check) and then screened prior to admittance into the program for temperature and symptoms of infection. They will also need to answer a questionnaire about their health. Any individual with a fever (100.0°F or above), cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal upset, new loss of taste/smell, muscle aches, chills/shaking, or any of the other signs of illness will not be permitted to enter the program.

HEALTH MONITORING DURING THE DAY: Staff will actively monitor children throughout the day for symptoms of any kind, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting and children exhibiting signs of illness will be separated from the larger group.

SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT: We will have set aside a private space where a child with symptoms of Covid-19 will be isolated with immediate family pick-up. Self-isolation of any family members or staff exposed to or displaying symptoms of the virus is required.

If the child has symptoms but has not been exposed to COVID-19, they may return to childcare following our usual guidelines in the Parent Handbook.

EXPOSURE: If a child or staff has been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of whether the individual has symptoms or not, the child or staff will not be permitted to enter the program. Exposed individuals must stay home for at least 14 days after the last day of contact with the person who is sick. We will follow guidance from the local board of health on quarantine for other children and staff and what additional precautions will be needed to ensure the program space is safe for continued childcare services. We will notify parents if there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 among the children or staff, while safeguarding the privacy of the individual.

ISOLATION: Exclusion protocols from the board of health will be followed for any child, staff or family member with a positive test for COVID-19 or who are symptomatic and presumed to have COVID-19.
CLASSROOMS

**SMALLER CLASSES:** The number of children allowed in classrooms is less than usual, and determined by EEC regulations; these may change over time.

**NO MIXING OF CLASSES:** Groups of children will not mix with each other indoors or outdoors. The Community Room has been divided into two, to accommodate use by one class of older and one of younger children. Another class may not use the space until all items have been disinfected, so generally only two classes will be able to use the space each day.

**LIMITED SHARING:** Children’s belongings will be separated, and children will be given individual art/learning supplies to minimize the spread of germs. Plastic toys are washed after each child uses them.

ENHANCED HYGIENE

**INCREASED HANDWASHING:** Children will wash hands after using any toys or sitting at a table. When outside or during activities where soap and water are not readily available for use, we will have carefully monitored use of hand sanitizer appropriate to the age of the child.

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** At parent discretion, CDC and EEC encourage the wearing of masks/cloth face coverings for children age two and older.

Smocks will be worn by any staff member entering classroom other than their own (and this will happen only as necessary) and staff may wear them while holding children who may be crying, drooling, or otherwise contaminating the adult’s clothing

**GLOVES:** Staff wear vinyl gloves at all times during diapering and toileting and sunscreen application.

**TOYS FROM HOME:** No toys from home will be allowed (except a comfort item for sleeping).

**TOOTHBRUSHING:** Toothbrushing has been suspended.

PHYSICAL (SOCIAL) DISTANCING

**SIX FEET:** Children will be kept 6 feet apart as much as feasible and activities that encourage physical contact or close physical proximity will be suspended or held outside. Children will eat meals and snacks spaced out at the tables or with picnic mats on floors, and will be outside as much as is practical. Rest maps will be placed six feet apart (instead of our usual three.)

**NONESSENTIAL VISITORS:** For the duration of the pandemic, the program will not be admitting any nonessential visitors. Tours will be held after hours, with masks required. Parents doing co-op jobs will do them after hours, wearing masks.

Adapted, with thanks, from the First Circle Learning Center Covid-19 handbook
http://www.firstcirclelearning.com/