



***Creative Minds
Child Development Center***

Infant * Toddler * Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK
COVID-19 Pandemic Response Supplement

June 18, 2020

(408) 445-0101
www.creativemindscdc.org
4977 Dent Avenue, San Jose, CA 95118

Health & Safety Statement

The Creative Minds CDC philosophy centers around respect for our children, families, teachers, and community. One way we can all show that respect for one another right now is by investing in extra health and safety precautions to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Naturally, our program has always focused on meeting or exceeding child care health and safety regulations and guidelines. This year, the unprecedented pandemic crisis forced a temporary program closure and now brings additional health protection requirements as we re-open to serve our families again. We are doing our part to go even deeper with our regular cleaning, disinfecting, health checks, smaller group sizes, and other policies. We are also counting on all of you to do your parts as we work together to care for our community.

The updated policies in this handbook supplement are based on guidance from the national Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as public health officials from the State of California, Santa Clara County, and San Jose. Best practices published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children are also considered. Everything is focused on reducing the risk of virus transmission while preserving our ability to provide quality care for our children.

Some of these measures are probably temporary (such as wearing masks) and some may become permanent; it's too soon to know. All policies are subject to change at any time depending on updates from public health officials and on the needs of our program and families. We appreciate your partnership on this journey!

Terminology

To clarify, these are some of the terms you will see in this supplement:

Asymptomatic

Someone who is showing no symptoms but actually has the COVID-19 virus and may still be contagious. This is more common in children and otherwise healthy young adults.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting

“Cleaning” means removing dirt, grime, food, or other physical ickiness from the surface, usually by wiping or washing with soap and water. “Sanitizing” or “disinfecting” means spraying or wiping the surface with an EPA-registered disinfecting chemical (such as a bleach-and-water solution) that actually kills the germs.

Coronavirus vs. COVID-19

Technically speaking, the virus itself is called “SARS-CoV-2,” which is the specific type of “coronavirus” causing all this trouble. The illness it causes is called “COVID-19,” short for Coronavirus Disease 2019. In practice, everyone is using these terms interchangeably, so we will use the term “COVID-19” here for simplicity.

High-Risk Individual

A person at higher-than-average risk of contracting COVID-19 or of experiencing severe complications from the virus if they do become ill. These risk factors include *any* of the following:

- Age 65+
- Pregnant women
- Smokers
- Compromised immune system due to cancer, HIV/AIDS, organ transplant, or other conditions
- Other underlying health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, moderate to severe asthma, severe obesity (BMI 40+), or chronic kidney or liver disease
- Living in a nursing home, dormitory, shelter, or other high-density communal setting

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Masks, face shields, gloves, protective eyewear, smocks or aprons, barriers, or anything else that shields people from transmitting or receiving germs.

Symptoms

Part of what has made the COVID-19 pandemic so difficult to control is that many of its early symptoms are mild, look different in different people, or may seem the same as a common cold or flu.

This means the only choice is to err on the side of caution. For now, we have to treat any of these symptoms like they may be from COVID-19, even if they turn out to be something simpler.

These symptoms include:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher anytime in the past 72 hours
- Chills, clammy skin, and/or flushed cheeks
- Cough
- Shortness of breath, rapid breathing, and/or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Unexplained muscle pain, headache, fatigue, or extreme fussiness
- Vomiting, nausea, and/or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell (*this one appears to be unique to COVID-19*)

This list is the same for children, family members, or teachers.

Please note that the usual school policies for symptoms of illness unrelated to COVID-19 (such as head lice or pink eye) are also still in place during this time.

Updated Creative Minds CDC Policies: Logistics

Group Size & Ratio

The toddler (Rose) and preschool (Blue and Purple) classes will be temporarily reduced to 10 children each with the same teachers dedicated to each class each day. Children and staff will *not* be crossing over between classrooms.

This requires us to lower our total enrollment for now and to focus on full-time children to maintain stable groups. We will do our best to work with our current families to prioritize those enrollment slots in an equitable way, and will re-open additional enrollment slots (including part-time slots) as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so.

The infant (Green) room will also be temporarily reducing enrollment and will follow the same policies about teachers working in only one classroom. We plan to utilize both the crib room and main classroom for naps so the children can be spaced at least 6 feet apart while sleeping.

Hours

To enable the same teachers to stay with the same class all day, our school day will be shortened. For at least the month of July, we will open at 8:30 am and close promptly at 4:30 pm. This will allow teachers time for extra cleaning and disinfecting in the classroom. We hope to extend to a longer school day in the future when possible, but we have no timeline yet for when that can happen.

Contact Information

Many parents' jobs or work locations have changed due to the pandemic. (For example, some companies are assigning people to different cubicles or offices, which will change their work phone number. Other parents gave us only their work emails but have now been laid off, so that email will no longer go through.) If *any* of your phone numbers, emails, or other contact information has changed, please let us know immediately. It's crucial that we be able to reach you right away if needed.

Drop-Off Procedures

To reduce the number of people coming and going in the classroom, children will now be dropped off in the parking lot and received individually by a teacher. Drop-off times will be staggered with assigned time slots to control the traffic flow. Parents will stay in the car and teachers will escort the children into the classroom. This is the procedure:

- Bring your own pen and thermometer.
- Teachers will wear a mask and gloves, and parents will wear a mask. All children ages 2+ will wear a mask. *Please help your child put their mask on when you leave home so it's already in place when they meet their teacher in the parking lot.*
- The teacher (wearing a mask and gloves) will hand you the sign-in sheet. You will sign your child in, record their temperature, and verify that no one in your household is showing symptoms.
- The teacher will do a visual health check on your child and will have a thermometer available in case you forget to bring one. The teacher will then unbuckle your child and help them out of the car. For everyone's safety in the parking lot, car seats should be on the *passenger* side of the vehicle.
- You will hand the sign-in sheet back to the teacher.
- The teacher will walk your child, their lunchbox, and the sign-in sheet into the classroom.

It is recommended that each family appoint a single pick-up and drop-off person. Again, this is meant to reduce the total number of people interacting on campus and therefore reducing the total chances for cross-exposure. This person should *not* be a “high risk” individual (i.e. age 65+, pregnant, smoker, or with an underlying medical condition).

Please note that the teacher's health inspection at drop-off is required by public health policy. It's not that we don't trust what you're saying when you verify that no one in your household is ill; we're just complying with regulations.

We are not able to store car seats at school during the day anymore, even in the office. Please make sure everyone who picks up or drops off your child has an appropriate car seat properly installed in the rear passenger seat of their vehicle.

Pick-Up Procedures

Afternoon pick-up will also happen in the parking lot and will essentially be the reverse of drop-off. If you wish to pick up your child before 4:00 pm, please call the school office at (408) 445-0101 when you arrive in the parking lot and a teacher will bring your child out. After 4:00 pm, there will be a teacher stationed in the parking lot to assist you.

Meals

Children at Creative Minds already bring their own meals and snacks to school. The following *additional* guidelines are meant to further protect everyone.

- Lunchboxes should be disposable paper bags or be made of a material you can easily sanitize at home every night (such as thick plastic or vinyl).
- Foods should be edible cold or at room temperature — we will not be heating children’s food in a shared microwave for now.
- Include an ice pack — children will not be able to use the classroom refrigerator for now.
- We will still offer milk or water at meals but will use only disposable cups.
- Only disposable utensils will be offered.

We recognize that the emphasis on disposable or single-serve containers is the opposite of our usual message about respect for the environment. This is an unfortunate necessity under current public health guidelines. When the pandemic has passed, we hope to be able to return to a more balanced approach.

Water Bottles

We have eliminated the water bottle baskets and turned off the water to the shared drinking fountains in the bathrooms. Each classroom will have a water dispenser with disposable cups available throughout the day, indoors as well as outdoors.

Naps

Each class will nap in their own classroom. Cots will be spaced 6 feet apart whenever possible, or at least 3 feet apart with an alternating head/foot arrangement. For now, school will provide all sheets and blankets. Nap linens will be changed every day and washed on-site at school. No pillows or “lovies” (stuffed animals, toys, or special blankets) are allowed.

What to Bring to School

Please be sure to bring these things to school every day:

- Lunch in a disposable or easily sanitizable bag, with food that children can eat cold, and an ice pack if needed
- Extra clothes (at least one full set for preschool, at least two full sets for toddlers, at least three full sets for infants)

Please do *not* bring any of the following to school for now:

- Sharing
- Toys or lovies
- Blankets, pillows, or other soft nap items
- Plastic “potty seats” — all children who are toilet training are required to use the small toilets in their classroom

Updated Creative Minds CDC Policies: Infection Control

Masks & Face Coverings

All adults are required to wear non-surgical masks or face coverings at school. Adult masks may only be removed while eating or drinking. All children at least 2 years (24 months) will need masks during pick-up and drop-off; once they are in their stable group environment, masks are optional for children. In case you forget a mask for yourself or your child, we have a limited supply of masks that we can provide.

Children under 2 years old (i.e. Green Room children) are not expected or allowed to wear face coverings due to risk of suffocation.

If your child is using a washable fabric mask, please be sure to wash it at home in hot water and dry it on high before reusing it. For this reason, we suggest either using disposable paper masks (the non-surgical type) or having at least 5 fabric masks available so you're not having to do laundry every night.

We recognize that masks can be irritating for some people, especially for children with sensory challenges. Unfortunately we are *not* able to make exceptions to this rule. There is a wide variety of non-surgical masks and face coverings available now, so we recommend that you look around to find one your child can wear comfortably.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing is one of the single most important things we can all do to cut down on virus transmission. We will expect adults and children to wash their hands vigorously with soap for at least twenty seconds at least every two hours and at these times:

- First thing upon arrival in the classroom
- When coming in from the playground
- Before and after handling food
- Before and after handling or administering medication or ointment
- Before and after holding or cuddling an infant
- Before and after changing a diaper, even though gloves are also worn
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
- After coughing, blowing their nose, picking their nose, touching their eyes, or putting their hands in their mouths (*of course we encourage them not to touch their faces at all; the hand washing is in case it happens anyway*)
- After coming into contact with any other bodily fluid, or anything touched by a bodily fluid, including dishes after meals
- After handling animals
- After handling garbage
- Before leaving the classroom

Teachers will sanitize the bathroom sinks between each use.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will also be available as a backup option in case hand washing at the sink is unavailable in a given moment. Children will always be supervised when using hand sanitizer.

Social Distancing

This will be one of the more dramatic shifts in our program for now. Physical distancing is challenging because young children are naturally so social and because our program is built on community and cooperation. These modifications will be necessary for a while, though, in order to protect our community. These modifications will include:

- Cancelling all combined large-group activities such as petting zoos, fire truck visits, special guest speakers, musical performances, ice cream socials, etc.
- Cancelling all field trips until further notice
- Cancelling all optional visitors, tours, and volunteers
- Using tape marks on the floor to help children space themselves apart where necessary

Toddler and Preschool Rooms

In the classrooms

- Having children spread out to sit in every other space on the rug at circle time
- Having children spread out to eat lunch at all three tables in their classrooms

Outdoors

- Assigning each classroom to one playground for the whole week (no mixing and far below capacity)
- Encouraging children to spread out on the playground and avoid crowding on the climbing structures

Infant Room

The nature of infant care makes it impossible to practice the same social distancing that older, more independent children can handle. Instead, the Green Room teachers will use additional PPE and pay extremely close attention to cleaning and disinfecting. Specifically:

- To the extent possible, teachers will wear long-sleeve smocks or oversized button-down shirts that can be easily changed whenever a child's saliva, mucus, food, or other fluids come into contact with the fabric. These protective shirts will be laundered daily on-site.
- Teachers will frequently wash their hands, necks, faces, or anywhere else that has come into contact with a child's secretions.
- Teachers will wash their hands before and after handling bottles or foods. Whenever possible, teachers will feed only one child at a time.

Curriculum Activities

You can see the challenge of having a hands-on learning philosophy at a time when children are supposed to touch and share materials as little as possible! We see this as an opportunity to get creative in our curriculum strategies while prioritizing your children's safety. Among other things, you will notice some specific changes during this time:

- No dress-up costumes or stuffed animals in the pretend area
- No dancing scarves or fabric toys
- No shared or reused sensory bins or water play tables (individual trays are allowed)
- More plastic and hard-sided toys
- Fewer total toys on the shelves
- More outdoor time

Paper is not believed to be a serious source of transmission, so we have been advised by the CDC not to worry about sanitizing art paper, books, or pre-K worksheets.

Cleaning & Sanitizing Procedures

We will be stepping up our usual cleaning and disinfecting (sanitizing) procedures throughout the day.

- Tables, chairs, high chair trays, and countertops — clean & disinfect before and after use
- Dishes and utensils — use disposable if possible, or clean & disinfect in the dishwasher between each use
- Bathroom sinks and toilet handles — clean & disinfect between each use
- Pacifiers — assign to one individual child, store in a solid container labeled with the child's name, clean & sanitize daily
- Mouthed toys — set aside immediately in a basket, then clean & disinfect before returning to the shelf
- Toys not in children's mouths — clean & sanitize at least daily
- Door & cabinet handles, light switches — clean & sanitize multiple times a day
- Floors — sweep after each use, mop or vacuum nightly, or more often if necessary
- Naptime sheets & blankets — launder daily at school, wash on hot and dry on high
- Crib mattresses, cribs, and cots — clean & sanitize daily, or more often if necessary
- iPads, phones, cameras, other devices shared by adults — wipe after each use
- Diaper changing tables — clean & sanitize after each use, plus use disposable liner paper for each child
- Playground equipment — sanitize shared surfaces (such as slides, railings, tricycle handles, and balls) between groups of children
- Trash cans and diaper pails — clean & sanitize daily, or more often if necessary
- Thermometers — wipe with an alcohol swab between uses, even with a non-contact thermometer

Changing Clothes

Teachers and children will be expected to have extra clothes available at school every day. This is so they can change clothes right away if they accidentally get contaminated with respiratory fluids (such as sneezing, coughing, or drooling) from themselves or others. The contaminated clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag to be washed.

Fresh Air

Windows will be opened as often as possible to keep fresh air circulating. On hot days, we are also required by state licensing to use the air conditioning to keep the indoor temperature within a certain range, so please understand that it's a balancing act. We will also continue to use the heavy-duty air purifiers we already have in each classroom.

Immunizations

Our usual immunization policy is still in effect — all children and teachers *are* still required to have *all* the immunizations required by state law and to have documentation of each dose on file at school. We recognize that getting in to see the pediatrician has been scary and/or more difficult in this season, but we cannot make exceptions to our immunization policy. If your child is due for any immunizations, please contact your pediatrician right away and email Richa the documentation before your child returns to school.

Scientists are actively working on a vaccine for COVID-19, but no one knows when it will become widely available. When the time comes, we expect it will probably be legally required for children in group care (just like the flu shot and others are now), but of course we will follow public health guidelines and state regulation at that time.

Staff Training

Teachers will be required to check their own temperatures twice a day at school and self-monitor throughout the day in case of new symptoms of illness.

Our teachers are already trained in first aid, cleaning and sanitizing procedures, and OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen and Universal Precautions. We will provide refreshers on these topics as well as specific additional training in:

- Recognizing and responding to COVID-19 symptoms in themselves and others
- Proper use of sanitizing sprays and wipes in the classroom
- Proper use of personal protective equipment
- The importance of staying home when even slightly ill

Our school has a list of qualified substitutes and does provide teachers with paid sick leave so they are able to respect these rules.

Updated Creative Minds CDC Policies: Exclusion & Quarantine

COVID-19 is obviously highly contagious, so the single most important thing we can all do to slow the spread is to **stay home if we feel sick at all**. All the cleaning, sanitizing, and hand washing procedures are meant to slow or prevent the accidental transmission of the virus between people who show no symptoms but might still be carrying the virus without realizing it. There is no amount of cleaning that can overcome an actively sick person spreading germs in a shared environment. Think of it like pouring water on a fire — buckets of water will put out little campfires and embers, but simply can't keep up with a full-scale wildfire.

Staying home when sick has always been our school's policy, but we also recognize that in the past, our society as a whole has often seen "toughing it out" and still going to work/school while sick almost as a badge of honor or sign of a strong work ethic. *This can no longer be the case*. Being around people while feeling sick, even if you're wearing a mask, puts everyone at risk. This is disrespectful and potentially deadly. In order to protect our whole community and enable our program to stay open, it is *essential* that everyone at Creative Minds be able to trust one another to respect this policy. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

When to Stay Home

Teachers and children will need to stay home from school in case of *any* one or more of the following:

- Shows any of the listed symptoms
- Tests positive for COVID-19
- Lives with someone who shows any of the listed symptoms
- Lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19
- Known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- Travel out of the area in the past 14 days
- Close contact with someone who has traveled in the past 14 days

If Symptoms Start at School

If a child or teacher is fine in the morning but develops symptoms during the school day, they will be separated from the group and immediately sent home. Their classroom will be given additional cleaning and sanitizing and the rest of the class will be sent outside if possible. A notice of possible exposure will be posted and sent out by email. As always, we will respect confidentiality; the name of the affected individual will not be given.

COVID-19 Testing

Anyone who shows or reports symptoms of COVID-19 is strongly encouraged to get tested. There are more than 30 sites in Santa Clara County offering free testing. The current list is available at <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/covid19-testing.aspx>.

Returning to School

In order to return to school, the child or teacher must be cleared by their health care provider or meet *all* of the following criteria:

- No fever for **72 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medication (*please note that this is an important change from our typical 24-hour policy*)
- Coughing and/or shortness of breath have improved
- At least 10 days have passed since initial symptom onset

If you have to stay home from school because someone else in your household (i.e. not your child) is showing symptoms or has tested positive, *that person* must meet the criteria listed above before your child can return to school.

Quarantine

If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed or someone at school tests positive, it's possible that children or staff members who had "prolonged close contact" would be asked to stay home (quarantine) and self-monitor for symptoms as a precaution. We will follow public health guidance about this on a case-by-case basis if it becomes necessary.

Program Closure

Following state and local policies, Creative Minds closed temporarily from mid-March through June 2020 in response to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is everyone's fervent hope that this is a one-time experience and that our state's collective efforts to slow the virus's spread will be enough to keep the infection rates low in the future. We recognize that this is new territory for everyone, though, so we can't rule out the possibility of another temporary closure in the future. This could be due to a state- or county-wide order, or to a specific order from the Department of Public Health in certain situations beyond our control. Of course we will do everything we can to avoid that happening. You can help in this effort by following the health and safety policies contained in this handbook supplement.

Resources

Public Health Agencies

National CDC Guidelines for Child Care

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

State of California

COVID-19 overview

<https://covid19.ca.gov>

Department of Public Health

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

Santa Clara County COVID-19 Updates

COVID-19 overview

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/home.aspx>

Weekly newsletter

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/newsletter.aspx>

City of San Jose emergency updates including COVID-19

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/news-stories/news/emergency-notifications>

Family Support Services

CalHOPE Emotional Support & Mental Health Resources

If you or your family needs help during this stressful time, call 1-833-317-4673 or visit

<https://calhope.dhcs.ca.gov>.

Financial Help, including rent and mortgage relief

<https://covid19.ca.gov/get-financial-help/>

Food Assistance

<https://covid19.ca.gov/food-resources/#top>

Sesame Street’s “Caring for Each Other” Initiative

<https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>

Stress Management

<https://covid19.ca.gov/manage-stress-for-health/#top>