

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Midwest Child Development, LLC dba The Learning Garden

PLAN COMPONENTS:

1. Hand Washing
2. Cleaning and Disinfecting
3. Arrival and Departure
4. Plans for sick children and staff
5. Social Distancing
6. Source Control and Face Masks
7. Workplace Ventilation
8. Playground Use
9. Meals and Snacks
10. Field Trips and Events
11. Communication

1. Frequent Handwashing

- Reinforce hand washing routines, especially upon arrival, after having been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Ensure children are supervised when using hand sanitizer and that it is inaccessible to them when not in use.
- CDC guidance on handwashing can be found at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#HandHygiene>

LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR HANDWASHING:

1. All staff and children will wash hands upon arrival and wash hands frequently and as recommended according to the Hand Washing Procedures posting.
2. All parents and visitors who enter the building will use the hand sanitizer provided at the entry and/or wash their hands upon entry to the building or classroom.

2. Cleaning and disinfecting

- Protocols related to cleaning and disinfection of programs should be detailed so that staff know what is expected of them. Follow MDH and CDC guidance for frequent cleaning and disinfecting of your program:
 - o <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.pdf>
 - o <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Ensure high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, stair rails, counters, tables and chairs, shared toys, program equipment and other items are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

- Minimize the use of shared supplies (e.g. arts and crafts, office supplies) that cannot be sanitized and consider using designated bins for clean and used items.
- Establish procedures for cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the program.

LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING:

1. All classrooms will have a mouthed toy bucket for toys that become in contact with body fluids
2. The schedule has been modified at all locations to allow for a staff member to wash mouthed toys and bins of classroom toys each night.
3. The cleaner for each location has been instructed to clean high-touch surface areas each night as part of their nightly cleaning in addition to their regular cleaning duties.
4. When there is low attendance or additional staff available, additional cleaning tasks will be assigned.
5. Sensory materials will be used on individual trays and discarded if they become contaminated with body fluids (mouthed or sneezed on).
6. Nap blankets, pillows, dress up clothes and soft toys will continue to be washed weekly.
7. Classroom surfaces will be sanitized each night using the higher strength bleach solution in a spray bottle
8. Touch screen computers will be disinfected daily or when visibly soiled.
9. When a family reports a potential or confirmed case of COVID-19 all materials and surfaces in the classroom will be cleaned and sanitized. This may require children to move to other classrooms temporarily or for the program to close for all or part of the day.
10. Teachers and staff will continue to use the 4-step cleaning and sanitizing procedures before and after meals and after changing diapers.

3. Arrival and Departure

- Whenever possible, pick-up and drop-off should occur outside and/or limit the extent to which parents enter the program and interact with each other.
- Consider use of multiple entrances and exits when these can be used safely by the staff, volunteers and visitors.
- Before children enter the space, screen them to ensure those with symptoms are not attending.
 - o Screening process for children: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#ScreenChildren>

LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:

1. Parents may enter the building with their children provided they wear a mask, use the hand sanitizer provided or wash their hands upon entry to the classroom and assist their children with washing their hands.
2. All children at all locations will have their temperature checked by a staff member upon arrival and it will be recorded on the Daily Covid Symptom Screening Log.

4. Plans for sick children, staff, and volunteers

- Conduct daily health checks. This includes screening for children, staff, volunteers, and household members for family child care programs to ensure those who exhibit any symptoms of illness are not present.
- Follow exclusion guidance and ensure children, staff, and volunteers stay home when sick: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf>
- Use CDC guidance to develop a plan for what you will do if someone becomes sick with COVID-like symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#General>
- If a child, staff member, or volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19 or if you have questions about a child, staff member, or volunteer who is exhibiting symptoms, reach out to MDH at health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us and follow their direction.
- Shortened quarantine periods may be offered on a case by case basis and determined by vaccination status, amount of spread, and nature of exposure. You can find more information on shortened quarantine

here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>

- Using the MDH and CDC resources above, create a communication plan for how and when you will notify parents, staff, and volunteers if a child, staff member, volunteer or household member for family child care programs has been exposed, is exhibiting symptoms, or has tested positive.
 - o Contact MDH if you have questions (at the email address above)
 - o Ensure the parent or guardian contact information in each child's record is up to date.

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR SICK CHILDREN, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS:

1. Daily health checks will be done by the teachers for the children in their care. Staff will use the decision tree to determine whether a child is well enough to remain in care.
2. If a child becomes ill with a fever of 99 degrees or more and exhibits additional symptoms of COVID-19 the child will be moved to the office space, parents will be called and required to pick up their child within one hour and a completed COVID exclusion form will be given to the parent.
3. If a staff member becomes ill with a fever of 99 degrees or more and exhibits additional symptoms of COVID-19 the teacher will be replaced by another staff member immediately and sent home.
4. Children and Teachers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 or have had close contact with a person who tested positive will be quarantined for 14 days.
5. Staff will be told of potential exposure from children or family members and asked to pay close attention for symptoms in themselves or the children in their care.
6. Parents and staff will be informed when a child, staff member or parent in the program tests positive by electronic communication via Procure Messaging, Email or Daily Notes.
7. Our program will work with MDH and our Health Consultant in responding to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff member or child.
8. Only Parent Volunteers will be used in our program during this time.
9. The Learning Garden has a limited number of at home Covid-19 tests to provide to families if needed. Please reach out to your centers site supervisor if this is something you should need.

5. Social distancing throughout the day

- Limit group sizes as much as possible and create consistent groups of children and providers, staff, or volunteers who stay together throughout the day.
- Add visual cues or barriers to direct traffic flow and distancing. For example, you may want to tape "Xs" on the floor to let children know where they should sit to promote social distancing.
- At nap time, ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible. Consider placing children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

1. All classrooms have a specific group of children who are assigned to a team of staff to be with throughout the day. Children will only be together when absolutely necessary to maintain ratios.
2. Teachers will arrange cots so that children are at least 3 feet apart or head to toe to reduce the spread of viruses.

6. Source control and cloth face coverings

- Cloth face coverings are an important piece for mitigating the spread of the virus but are most effective if it can stay in place without being pulled on or touched by the person wearing it or others. Within this context, the provider, staff members, and volunteers are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings during the work day as much as possible, recognizing the development needs of the children in their care.

- Children should not wear cloth face coverings unless they can reliably wear, remove, and handle the cloth face covering throughout the day. Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on infants or children younger than 2 because of the danger of suffocation.
- Face covering guidance is available here:
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/masks.html#child>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR SOURCE CONTROL AND CLOTH FACE COVERINGS:

1. Masks were provided to all Learning Garden employees at all locations. They are required to wear masks during the day, but they can take “mask breaks” while in their own classroom and when not sitting close to children or other staff.
2. Disposable masks were purchased for parents to use when entering the building if they do not have their own.
3. Masks, sanitizer dispensers, sanitizer and gloves were available and purchased through our vendor, Van Paper.
4. Visitors to the program will be required to wear a mask while on site.

7. Workplace ventilation

- Recognizing this may be difficult in center or school buildings, where possible work to maximize the amount of fresh air being brought in, limit air recirculation and make sure ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Take steps to minimize air flow blowing across people. It could mean keeping windows open where possible, removing, or repositioning fans, and encouraging outdoor time.

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR VENTILATION AND AIR FLOW, IF POSSIBLE:

1. Windows can be opened at all locations to allow for ventilation, weather permitting
2. Teachers are required to take children outdoors daily weather permitting, both in the am and pm

8. Playground use

- Stagger playground use rather than allowing big groups to play together.
- Wash hands before and after touching play structures. If possible, consider cleaning high touch areas of the play structure between groups.
- If you choose to bring children in your care to a public playground, be careful to ensure children wash hands after touching play structures and maintain six feet of space from other children as much as possible.
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/playground.pdf>

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR MITIGATING COVID-19 IN PLAYGROUND USE:

1. All locations have specific playground times for each group and are to adhere to them.
2. Groups can bring children to the local public playground provided they check the playground for hazards before use, leave if the playground should become crowded and children wash their hands upon returning.

9. Meals and snacks

- To the extent possible, serve meals in individual classrooms. If using a cafeteria, the meal should be served to one small group of children at a time, with cleaning and sanitizing occurring in between groupings.

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR MITIGATING COVID-19 DURING MEALS AND SNACK TIMES:

1. Children will eat with their own group in their own classrooms.
2. Children will not serve themselves seconds.
3. Any children with a cough or runny nose will not be allowed to self-serve.

4. Teachers will supervise family style meals closely.

10. Field trips and events

- In the event of a center event, all attendees will be required to wear a face covering and adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- If you have an in-house field trip, screen the presenter. It would be best if in-house field trips are held outside in small group settings. Remember that social distance needs to be maintained, groups should not be mixed, and whenever possible, cleaning and sanitizing should occur between groups.

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR MITIGATING COVID-19 DURING FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS:

1. In-house events will adhere to social distancing guidelines and face-covering requirements.

Communications and training

- The plan must be available to the Commissioner and offered to families. Be sure to communicate to families, using plain language, the expectations for parents and children in implementing this plan (e.g. outdoor pick-up/drop-off protocols).
- The plan must be posted in a prominent place and readily accessible to all of your employees, adult caregivers, substitutes, and volunteers who need to review it. Provide training to ensure everyone is following your plan. Keep these individuals updated on any changes to the plan.
- Staff with concerns about their employer's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan or questions about their rights should contact MNOSHA Compliance at osha.compliance@state.mn.us, 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742.

THE LEARNING GARDEN PLAN FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING:

1. All staff received Bloodborne Pathogen Training in October of 2021.
2. New staff receive training on Health and Safety Policies and Procedures upon hire as part of their orientation.
3. This plan was given to each classroom. Each staff member is required to read the plan and sign off that they read it.
4. Administrative staff and coaches will train and re-train on the spot as needed.
5. The plan will be posted on our website www.thelearninggarden.us
6. The plan will be posted on or near our Parent Communication Board at each location.
7. Staff and Parents will be informed via Procure Messaging or email of any changes or modifications to the plan