

Procedures and Policies for Re-opening amid COVID-19

The Children's Place Montessori School

Proposed reopen of Toddler – Kindergarten, June 8, 2020

General Preparedness and Planning

Policies included in this document include some policies already in place at The Children's Place Montessori school and some adopted during the heightened transmission concerns surrounding COVID 19 infection. As of the time of this writing these policies are based on the most current publicly available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control for schools and daycare facilities.

Should new knowledge about transmission or the virus become available or should guidance from scientific studies warrant, these guidelines may change in order to keep our community safe. Such changes will be shared with all enrolled families in writing. Please do not hesitate to speak with Jennifer Richards-Jenquin, the school director should you have any questions.

Handwashing

Handwashing is defined as thoroughly wetting and sudsing both hands front and back as well as between fingers for no less than 20 seconds. For a reference point, the song Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star is about 20 seconds long. Handwashing dislodges the virus from the skin's surface and thus is the most effective way to keep hands clean. If handwashing is not possible hand sanitizing lotion thoroughly applied to all surfaces of the hands is acceptable.

STAFF will wash hands:

- Upon arrival at school
- Before touching or preparing snack, drinking water or assisting with lunch items
- After using the restroom or blowing their nose
- Before assisting any child with using the restroom or blowing their nose

- After assisting any child with using the restroom or blowing their nose
- After touching any classroom pet
- Before assisting an injured student with any broken skin (scrape, cut, etc.)
- After assisting an injured student
- Before returning to the classroom from a personal break
- Upon reentering the classroom from the outdoors
- Any time hands are visibly dirty

STUDENTS will wash hands:

- Upon arrival at school
- Before having snack, pouring water or opening lunch items
- After eating snack or lunch, before touching toys or classroom materials
- After using the restroom
- After blowing their nose
- After touching any classroom pet
- Upon reentering the classroom from the outdoors
- Any time hands are visibly dirty

In the rare situation where handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizing lotion thoroughly applied to all surfaces of the hands is acceptable and must be overseen by a teacher who applies and observes the application. Hand sanitizer is not a good choice for young children unless there is no reasonable alternative.

Masks

All persons entering the school premises during school hours will be required to wear a mask, cloth or disposable, that covers both the mouth and nose. While we are also enacting social distancing policies, described below, mask wearing combined with

handwashing, is the most effective thing we can do to help prevent the spread of infection among young children. This requirement will be strictly enforced and we remind parents to think of it as one uses a seatbelt in the car. The seatbelt is not entirely comfortable or convenient but as responsible parents we simply would not consider starting the car before our child was safely buckled in.

Social distancing is difficult and imperfect at this age as it is very difficult for young children to fully understand (again, read below how we will work to accomplish social distancing). A mask is concrete and visible so it is much more clear for young children. If the school and parents make mask wearing a non-negotiable issue it will be far easier for students to accept as a normal part of the return to school.

Parents will be asked to supply their child with a clean mask to wear to school each day. If the same mask is to be worn it must be cleaned at home before returning to school the next day. Children who arrive without a mask will not be accepted into class. For the safety of the other children and their families we can make no exceptions to this at this time.

Arrival at School

Students will be met at the door during our arrival window of 8-8:30am by a staff member wearing a mask. Each child will be checked with a no-touch thermometer for a fever before entering. Parents will be asked to confirm that the child has no persistent cough difficulty breathing. Parents will then be asked to sign their student/s in and say goodbye at the door.

No parents or siblings will be allowed on school premises at the current time. A teacher will escort the student to wash his/her hands immediately upon arrival and to join his/her class group.

If a child arrives after 8:30 a staff member will not be stationed at the door but one will come to greet and escort the child to class. Do not leave your child before a staff member has greeted them, checked his/her temperature and you have signed them in. This is for your child's safety and well-being.

While teachers will be wearing masks and may 'look funny' please know that we are aware that most children will need help adjusting to the new routines and visuals. We

will guide them with the same warmth and gentle humor we have shared in the past. We want your child to be comfortable and happy at school.

As always please don't share your worry or stress about the changes with your child – they will pick up your attitude and comfort level even if it's unspoken. As adults we all help the children by modeling patience and gentle confidence. Please leave your fear and stress behind before you bring your child to the door or you will make it more difficult for him/her. What is helpful is verbally sharing the things you know will be different at school as well as discussing how wonderful it will be to see friends and get back to classroom activities. Answer questions as best you can with simple, honest answers. If your child brings up fears or concerns address them honestly and calmly. If you have questions for us ask.

During arrival time our attention will of course need to be on the children especially on those first, new days – questions and information is best shared at another time or perhaps with the office by phone or email.

Departure from School

Children will be picked up from the gate (never used during the regular school year) on the south side of the building. Enter the narrow pathway from the parking lot along the side of the building and alert staff to your presence. Do not enter the yard but wait for a staff member to bring your child/ren to you while you sign them out.

Please only one parent in the side yard at a time, once you have your student move out so another family can pick up.

Children attending ½ days will be ready for pick any time between 12:30 and 12:50pm. When you arrive a staff member will walk your student to you and ask that you sign him/her out.

Children attending for School Day schedule will be ready for pick up at the gate between 3:30 and 4pm. When you arrive a staff member will walk your student to you and ask that you sign him/her out.

Class Groups

Students will be in stable groups of no more than 8-10 and will be with a single lead teacher throughout the day, with the exception of her personal breaks and lunch period. By stable we mean that each group will remain together and we will not mix student groups either inside or out. We reserve the right to use our judgement to form these groups based on developmental stages and needs once we have feedback from parents about readiness to return to school. Age is one factor we will consider but it is not the only one.

We expect to place Ms. Lawana's students to all be in her class group. This includes those at transitioning age and we anticipate her group will also include some Primary Class children. We will not have any students younger than 2 years of age for the time being.

The toddler space will not be used at this time because air circulation is maximized in the more open space of the larger classrooms. Each stable student group will be assigned to a separate indoor class area and will not interact with the other group's area. Groups will use the same outdoor space at different times but each will use a separate door to access the outdoor area.

Except for nap time, inclement weather and pickup and drop off times, one group will be outside while another group is inside. During class time outdoor tables will be used for activities similar to those used indoors – we will be creating an 'outdoor classroom' in our covered area.

Sun Protection

Students will be outside often at school. Please send your child to school already wearing sun screen. Please send your child also with a brimmed hat for comfort and protection on sunny days.

If you would like us to reapply sunscreen before lunch to your child's forehead, ears, neck and exposed limbs a sunscreen container clearly marked with your child's name must be provided and a permission slip must be completed and signed.

Personal Items, Clothing, Bedding

Please do not bring toys or books from home during this time. Items from home should be “waiting in the car” for your child’s return from school. A small stuffed comfort item can be used for a napping child with the following conditions:

- The item should be brought on the first day of the week and will remain rolled up with the child’s bedding throughout the week.
- The item will be returned to the family, along with bedroll to be washed at the end of the week.
- Items should be laundered or otherwise disinfected (spray disinfectant and sunlight exposure are good over-the-weekend options for this virus)

Cubbies will be emptied each day. Extra clothes will be stored for each child in a marked bag at the school. Please bring appropriate clothes to replace used clothing as needed.

Bed rolls will be sent home each weekend to be laundered at home.

Disinfecting

Disinfecting of surfaces will take place at an increased level. Bathroom surfaces, including sink and toilet handles will be disinfected after each group use and 3 times daily additionally.

Table tops and chair seats / backs will be disinfected twice daily and carpeted areas used during the day will be steamed daily during the summer months. Plastic cots will be disinfected daily after nap bedrolls are removed and stored in their individual plastic bags.

Kitchen counters will be disinfected before preparation of snack and at the end of the day.

Cloth items such as classroom stuffed animals and toys will be removed for the time being. Material such as blocks, shovels, pitchers, etc. will be cleaned with soap and water or with an alcohol solution each day.

Rather than our usual outdoor water table group activities we will be instead have a number of individual (one child per spaced apart dish pan) soapy water pans which will allow children to enjoy the science and fun of water exploration while keeping hands and surfaces clean.

Doors will be opened and fans employed to increase air circulation from outdoors even in the indoor spaces. We are very fortunate to have a large, open classroom design as the circulation of fresh air is a benefit to safety in the current pandemic.

Distancing

To the very best of our capabilities we will have children working and playing 6 feet apart. Tables in the classroom areas being used will all be individual spaces and will be spaced 6 feet apart within the room. Shelf activities have been rearranged so they can be accessed by children without passing close to another child.

As children this age are very motivated to be social we will have children, while distancing, facing each other so conversations can occur in the classroom space both indoors and outdoors. Teachers will be lead the group activities while outdoors in distanced story time. Any movement and singing activities will be conducted outdoors at a distance of greater than 6 feet between children. Ensuring that the children have activities in which they can interact lessens the incidents where they might try to thwart the guidelines.

Children will be instructed in the protocols and given lessons on health and safety in support of them. These lessons will be designed to arm the children with knowledge and a sense of power to protect themselves and their classmates. If a child has, or develops, concerns or fears please share them with us so we can address them openly and directly.

To aid the children in understanding social distancing each child will have a personal 'pool noodle' to use, which will be marked with their name. This noodle will help them understand distancing in a fun and safe way, especially while outdoors during free outside play time. Pool noodles are safe, colorful and familiar and are also easily disinfected.

Children will remove masks during lunch time after they have been seated 6-8 feet apart. When they are ready to clean up their lunch which involves moving from their lunch seat they will be asked to put their mask back on.

Naptime cots will be positioned so children's feet and heads are alternating and are no less than 6 feet apart.

Schedules

We will be adjusting available school hours based on safety protocols as well as community interest. Our reopening hours are based on information shared by families about their current comfort level and needs for school hours. Please see our current schedule options as listed on our separate Schedule Page.

We understand that families have different needs now than they did pre-COVID-19. We are doing our best to maintain the long-term stability of our program while also meeting the interests and needs of our families. We appreciate you letting us know what your preferences are – as we have more families looking for more hours we will be able to make more school hours available. We look forward to getting back to our full schedule as soon as it makes sense to do so.

Illness

During this time we must be especially vigilant and firm about excluding any staff or student who is ill. Exclusion from school includes:

- Fever of 100.4° or more within the previous 24 hours (using medication to bring down a fever **does not** make a child any less ill, it only suppresses that specific symptom)
- Persistent cough
- Digestive upset including vomiting or diarrhea
- Headache
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Eye discharge, rash or other potentially infectious condition

- Weariness or altered condition such that the child is unable or unwilling to participate in class activities (this is often the earliest sign of an oncoming illness)

If you participate in our program at this time we will ask you to **assure us that someone will be available to pick up your child, should they become ill, within 30 minutes of our call.** This keeps our staff and students safe and it is what you would want another family to do in order to keep your student safe as well.

Staff that are sick will not be in to school, any staff that becomes ill will go home immediately and any children that become ill will be isolated away from their classmates until picked up.

Should a child or staff member become sick during the school day the class will move to a different space and the area will be sanitized before the group is able to return.

Should there be any known cases of COVID-19 in your family contacts we need you to let us know. Should we find out of any active cases in our community (including classmate families) we will inform you and conduct a thorough deep cleaning of the facility per CDC guidelines. In such a case no details of the infected individual will be shared other than proximity to your child.