

Preschool COVID Response & Preparedness Plan

Program Information

Preschool program name:

- ❖ Northwest Cooperative Preschool

Introduction

Our Commitment to Health & Safety

Northwest Cooperative Preschool is committed to protecting the health of our children, families, staff, and community. The following policies were designed in response to guidance from the Michigan Departments of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and Health and Human Services, in accordance with best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and with everyone's well-being in mind. To limit the potential spread of COVID-19, we will be making some temporary changes to our programming that include robust cleaning and disinfecting procedures and minimizing opportunities for person-to-person exposure (e.g., an infected person spreading respiratory droplets through actions such as coughing, sneezing, or talking). The following plan outlines the recommended practices and strategies we will use to protect the health of our children, staff, and families while at the same time ensuring that children are experiencing developmentally appropriate and responsive interactions and environments.

Changes to Our Physical Spaces

We will use the following strategies in our classrooms and facilities to minimize the spread of illness:

1. Rearranging tables in the classroom to seat children as far apart as reasonably possible during snack time to limit the number of children sitting together.
2. Using touchless trash cans to provide a hands-free way to dispose of tissues and contaminants.
3. Ensuring ventilation systems operate properly and increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible (e.g., keeping windows and doors open to the extent that this does not pose safety risks).
4. We have purchased an air purification system for in the classroom.

Classroom Materials

At this time, we will make the following changes to the materials in our classroom:

1. Each child will have their own Play-Doh, and designated pencil box with frequently used classroom materials.
2. Main surfaces will be sanitized daily, especially before and after snack time.
3. Toys and classroom materials will get a thorough cleaning on a regular rotational cleaning schedule.
4. Toys and classroom materials will get a thorough cleaning in the event of close contact or a school outbreak.

Mealtimes

To limit opportunities for exposure during mealtimes, we will engage in the following recommended practices:

1. Staff and children will wash hands before and immediately after children have eaten.
2. We will space seating as far apart as possible (ideally 3 feet apart) by limiting the number of children sitting together and rearranging seating.
3. Outdoor snack time may be utilized when feasible and weather permits.

Other policies related to mealtimes include:

- ❖ Each child will bring their own snack for the day, as opposed to rotating community snack responsibilities.
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Items Brought From Home

During this time, we are trying to limit the number of items brought into the facility because this can be a way to transmit the virus, so we ask that families refrain from bringing items from home as much as possible. However, we recognize that placing limits on children's comfort items may increase stress for children and staff as they may be especially needed during this time of transition.

We ask that families and staff follow these guidelines with regard to children's comfort items:

- ❖ If possible, comfort items should remain at the school to avoid cross-contamination.

Screening Families & Staff for COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure

Upon arrival to the program, staff and families are required to report if they or anyone in their household:

- ❖ have received positive COVID-19 results;
- ❖ been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19; and/or
- ❖ have experienced symptoms such as persistent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, change in smell or taste, diarrhea, and/or vomiting.

The procedures we will use to screen staff for symptoms and exposure include:

- ❖ Mrs. Wilson will report to our class representatives if she has any symptoms or exposure to COVID-19.
- ❖ The in-class adult will also report to their class representative if they have had any symptoms or exposure.
- ❖ Temperature checks will be done daily for both the teacher and the in-class adult.

The procedures we will use to screen children/families for symptoms and exposure include:

- ❖ The in-class adult working in the classroom each day will provide temperature checks in the stairwell of the school building upon arrival and will ask screening questions;
 - If the child or anyone in the family is experiencing symptoms or,
 - If the child has been exposed to COVID-19.

If families or staff are absent or otherwise off-site but experience exposure or symptoms, they should contact:

- ❖ (Board President) Brooke Aggeler at (231) 730-2448
- ❖ (Health Chairperson) Ashley Young at (616) 263-7518

Daily Temperature Checks

Temperature Checks

As fever is the key indicator of COVID-19 in children, we will check each child's temperature upon daily arrival to the program. Staff will also be asked to take their own temperatures upon arrival to work. Staff will re-check children's temperatures throughout the day if they appear ill or "not themselves" (e.g., flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue, or extreme fussiness).

When children arrive to school, temperature checks will occur before children enter their classroom, in the stairwell of the school building

Each child's temperature will be taken by:

- ❖ The in-class working parent

The following staff members will be responsible for temperature checks:

- ❖ The in-class working parent

To minimize potential spread of illness, staff will:

1. Wear a face mask while taking the child's temperature.
2. Use a contactless thermometer to limit surface contamination.

Responding to Symptoms and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Responding to COVID-19 Symptoms On-Site

If a child or staff member has a temperature above 100.4 degrees and/or symptoms such as persistent cough, difficulty breathing, chills, diarrhea, or vomiting, they will be sent home immediately with the recommendation to contact their primary care physician/medical provider. If anyone shows emergency warning signs (e.g., trouble breathing, persistent pain/pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face), we will seek medical care immediately.

If a child develops symptoms during care hours:

- ❖ Parents will be contacted for prompt pick-up.
- ❖ The child will be isolated from other children and as many staff as possible (the child will not be left alone).
- ❖ The child will wait with the following designated staff member(s): In-class working parent
- ❖ The child and designated staff will wait in the following safe, isolated location: Gross-motor skills room with the door open

If a staff member develops symptoms during care hours:

- ❖ If no other caregiver is immediately available to be with children, the staff member will remain masked and limit close interactions with children until they can be relieved by another staff member.
- ❖ Other procedures include: Class cancellation if Mrs. Wilson is sick.

Reporting Exposure

Reporting Exposure

If a child, staff member, family member, or visitor to our program shows COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for the virus, we will contact our local health department and licensing consultant. Based on the guidance of the local health department, we will determine whether to close individual classrooms or our facility, the duration of the closure, and other next steps. When communicating with families and staff about any COVID-19 cases, we will respect the privacy of individuals and not share health information of a specific person.

Our local health department can be contacted at:

(616) 632-7228

Returning to the Program After Experiencing Symptoms and/or a Positive COVID Test

If a staff member or child has a fever OR a cough (but no other symptoms):

- ❖ The class will be canceled in the event that Mrs. Wilson is developing a fever or cough.
- ❖ If the in-class working parent has a fever or cough, they must do their best to find coverage for that day when possible, and reach out to their class representative.
- ❖ If a child has a fever, they must be free from fever for 72 hours before returning to school. In the interest of public health, we also ask that the child remain at home if they have a cough.

If a staff member or child exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19, possible exposure is expected, OR an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the individual must stay home until:

- ❖ They have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers AND
- ❖ Other symptoms have improved AND
- ❖ At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

As per [Executive Order 2020-36](#), if staff or their close contacts have possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19, staff will be allowed to remain home without penalty of discharge, discipline, or other retaliation.

To accommodate for the potential need to quarantine staff or allow for longer absences from work than normal, we will implement the following staffing plan to ensure we can meet staff to child ratios:

- ❖ In the event of long-term sickness, we will ask our normal substitute, Mrs. Campbell, to come in. If she is unavailable, class will not be held.

Because child care staff members are part of Michigan's essential workforce, they are eligible to be tested for COVID-19.

Staff can visit [this resource](#) to locate a nearby test site.

Other policies related to returning to care and work include:

- ❖ In the event of a schoolwide outbreak or close contact exposure, the class will quarantine for 10 days. An emergency cleaning will occur, before returning.
- ❖ Northwest Cooperative Board members will have COVID-19 virtual learning home kits ready and available, should the need arise to supplement learning virtually due to an outbreak or CDC, LARA, MDHHS recommendations.

Maintaining Consistent Groups

During this time, we will maintain the following group sizes:

- ❖ Preschoolers, 3 years of age until 4 years of age
 - 11
- ❖ Preschoolers, 4 years of age until school-age
 - 11

To minimize potential spread of COVID-19, we will engage in the following best practices:

- ❖ Limiting non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities including groups of children or adults.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

We will use the following recommended practices during drop-off and pick-up times to protect the health of children, families, and staff.

1. Only one adult per family should be present at drop-off/pick-up. Ideally, this would be the same parent or designated person every day, though we recognize this is not always possible.
2. Staff will greet children and families curbside or outside the building and walk children in and out of the building.
3. We will have a hand hygiene station at the entrance to our building so children and parents can clean their hands.
4. We will require parents and other visitors to wear masks while in the building.
5. We ask that parents avoid congregating in a single space or a large group.

Other policies related to drop-off and pick-up include:

- ❖ At drop-off, the in-class adult asks if there's been any exposure or symptoms to COVID-19, then takes the temperature of each child in the stairwell of the school building. If all looks good, the masked child and masked parent can go inside the building for drop-off. Out of respect for our community health, we ask that families attempt to make the drop-off process as swift as possible.
- ❖ At pick-up, the in-class adult is texted when people arrive (whose phone number will be updated and attached to the door each day). They escort the child to the door for pick-up. This minimizes lingering between parents.

Hand Washing

We will reinforce regular health and safety practices with children and staff and continue to comply with licensing regulations and CDC hand washing guidelines as follows:

- ❖ Staff and children will wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- ❖ Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Staff and children should cover all surfaces of their hands with hand sanitizer, rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- ❖ Staff should assist children with hand washing (especially infants who cannot wash hands alone) and use of hand sanitizer to ensure proper use and prevent ingestion.
- ❖ Staff and children (with frequent reminders and support) will cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve and wash hands immediately after.
- ❖ Wearing gloves does not replace appropriate hand hygiene.
- ❖ Hand hygiene is especially important after blowing one's nose, going to the bathroom, before eating or preparing food (or helping children do any of these actions).

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces

We will engage in the following cleaning and disinfecting practices in accordance with CDC recommendations:

1. Daily cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, toilets, light switches, door knobs, counter and tabletops, chairs).
2. Normal routine cleaning of outdoor spaces, with special attention to high-touch plastic/metal surfaces (e.g., grab bars, railings).
3. Use of a schedule for regular cleaning and disinfecting tasks.
4. Use of CDC-recommended disinfectants such as EPA-registered household disinfectants, diluted bleach solution, and/or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol
5. Keeping cleaning products secure and out of reach of children, avoiding use near children, and ensuring proper ventilation during use to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Toys

We will engage in the following best practices to clean and disinfect toys:

1. We will set aside toys that need to be cleaned (e.g., out of children's reach in a dish pan with soapy water or separate container marked for "soiled toys").
2. We will have a regular schedule for deep cleanings, at which time we will clean toys with soapy water, rinse them, sanitize them with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry.

Safety Equipment

Face Mask/Coverings for Staff

Our plan for staff around face masks/coverings is as follows:

- ❖ Staff are required to wear face coverings at all times on-site.

Use of Gloves

Staff will wear gloves in a manner consistent with existing licensing rules (for example, gloves should be worn when handling contaminants, changing diapers, cleaning or when serving food). Staff members should wash hands before putting gloves on and immediately after gloves are removed. Gloves are not recommended for broader use and do not replace hand washing.

Face Masks/Coverings for Children

Our plan regarding children wearing cloth face coverings during care is:

- ❖ Children are required to wear face coverings/masks at all times when indoors (on-site), except during snack time.

Virtual/Hybrid Learning

Decisions to Make Changes to Learning Plans

We will survey the Northwest Cooperative Family community to make decisions with regard to comfort with in-person learning/virtual learning, should a community wide case surge occur. We have the option of doing a hybrid style version of learning as well, to accommodate many community needs with regard to schooling. This would consist of a virtual learning cohort and an in-person learning cohort.

Our virtual learning plan may consist of the following curriculum supports:

- ❖ Monthly supply and library book pick up
 - Preschool activities and instructions are sent home with each student and utilized during the entire month at home. Supplies have included playdough, paints, fine- and gross-motor skill activities, sorting beads, sand art, and even an owl pellet investigation kit in partnership with Blandford Nature Center.
 - Library books are also available for checkout during supply pick-up.
- ❖ Home learning kits
- ❖ Increased outdoor programming options
- ❖ Additional outdoor play dates for continued socialization
- ❖ Weekly 30-minute Zoom meetings that include storytelling, puppetry, playdough work, action songs, and more. Zoom meetings are led exclusively by our teacher, Kathryn Wilson.
- ❖ Blandford Nature Center trips (pending any changes that they may put in place)

Partnering and Communicating with Families & Staff

Communicating with Staff and Families

We will actively communicate with staff and families to determine when they will return to work/care if they have been out, discuss concerns or questions, share new policies and expectations, and confidentially discuss any extenuating circumstances that have emerged and/or any health concerns/conditions that may elevate risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19.

- ❖ The staff responsible for handling questions and outreach for staff is : Brooke Aggeler
- ❖ The staff responsible for handling questions and outreach for families is : Ashley Young

Training Staff

To support staff in effectively engaging in best practices and making personal decisions, we will provide learning opportunities to help all of us understand how COVID-19 is transmitted, the distance the virus can travel, how long the virus remains viable in the air and on surfaces, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and our new policies and procedures as outlined in this plan.

Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Needs

Staff and families will partner together to support the needs and emotional reactions of children during this time. We anticipate that children will experience a wide range of feelings during this transition period. Some children will be relieved, some will have initial challenges with separation from their parent(s), some may demonstrate anger at the "disappearance" of their child care provider, and some may act out toward other children. Whatever the reactions, we acknowledge that staff and families may need some new tools in their toolkit to assist the child with emotional regulation and we will work together to support all caregivers.

We will make the following resources available for staff and families to support children:

[Crisis Parent and Caregiver Guide](#), from the Michigan Children's Trust Fund

[Talking with Children about COVID-19](#), from the CDC

[Helping Young Children Through COVID-19](#), from Zero to Thrive (includes Arabic and Spanish translations)

[Georgie and the Giant Germ](#), from Zero to Thrive and Tender Press Books

Supporting Staff Members' Social-Emotional Needs

To ensure the well-being of the children, it is also imperative to ensure the well-being of their teachers and caregivers, and to provide them with the emotional and administrative supports necessary during this time of re-integration, and in the months ahead. As essential workers in the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand our staff may have worries about their own physical or psychological health, and the potential risk to their family members at home. Because young children internalize the stress of the adults who care for them, we know it is vitally important to provide supports and services to ensure the emotional well-being of our staff.

We commit to supporting our staff in the following ways:

We are a tight knit community and are run by a board of parents. We will maintain open communication about comfort level, risks, challenges, and other obstacles with our community and teacher.

Contact Information

Email address

Brooke Aggeler, Board President president@nwco-oppreschool.com

