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INTRODUCTION
Greater Somerset County YMCA is committed to ensuring the safety and health of our youth, families, and employees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This guide outlines the processes and procedures to be implemented during the reopening of our Early Education Center (Center) facilities. These standards are based on the current guidelines and recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF) Child Care Licensing, as well as the State and local Health Departments, and are subject to change.

HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
All staff will be required to wear a face mask when interacting with members, program participants, general public and other staff members. Masks must be worn properly.

Children over the age of 2 will be encouraged, when feasible, to wear masks. (5.29.20 NJDCF)

Cleaning and Disinfecting
Staff will be required to sanitize areas before and after use including classroom equipment and furniture, as well as outdoor playground equipment.

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of toys, equipment, and surfaces, especially doorknobs, light switches, countertops, and restrooms will be increased to minimize the potential for the spread of germs. Toys that are not easily cleanable (such as stuffed animals, play dough, and pillows) will be temporarily removed and toys that are out at any one time will be rotated so that they can be adequately cleaned and sanitized. If groups of children are moving from one area to another in shifts, cleaning measures must be completed prior to the new group entering the area.

Cleaning crews will clean and disinfect all indoor and outdoor areas daily after operating hours.

Cleaning Supplies and Equipment
The Center will be stocked with cleaning supplies and equipment that will be readily available but inaccessible to children within in classrooms and other areas of the center. Supplies include gloves (gloves required for cleaning), paper towels, soap and water solution, and disinfectant.

An EPA-approved disinfecting solution or equivalent will be used to sanitize equipment and surfaces. The effective preparation and use of disinfectant is
necessary to properly sanitize materials and surfaces. If using a bleach dilution, NEW bleach solution MUST be prepared every morning prior to the welcoming of children into classrooms. Spray bottles should be clearly labeled with the mix instructions if not already done so. The proper mix of bleach and water is: 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

EPA-approved disinfectants that are approved for use by the Y may also be available. Staff must follow the directions on the label for correct dilution and use. All materials and surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water prior to the application of the disinfecting solution.

**Health Screening at Entry**
All centers shall screen staff and children for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry to the program each day. **Children and staff with a fever in excess of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, exhibiting other symptoms of COVID-19, or that have exposure to person known to have COVID-19 during the preceding 14 days shall not be allowed to enter the facility. (5.29.20 NJDCF)**

**Temperature screening**
Daily temperature and symptom checks of staff and children will be upon entry. Temperature may not exceed 100.4 F. If a temperature reads above 100.4 F, staff will reattempt one time.

Person taking temperature must be behind a physical barrier, wear mask and gloves. Thermometer must be cleaned in between each use.

Temperature Daily log report must be completed and submitted on by 11:00am each day. *(5.29.20 NJDCF)*

**Questionnaire screening**
Children and staff will be asked about the following every day prior to entering the Center:

- Have you administered medications to lower the child’s temperature.
- Is the child experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath, and/or symptoms of a cold or flu?
- Ask if anyone has been complaining of sore throat or body rash?
- Has the child been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days; or has anyone in the household had symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath).
- Are you, parent or guardian, essential personnel?
- Is there any reason these symptoms exist for you? (regarding issues with seasonal allergies)
**Isolation Area**
A designated isolation area for sick children will be identified and equipped with the appropriate equipment and PPE.

**Healthy Hygiene Practices (5.29.20 NJDCF)**
Centers shall teach and reinforce washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.

**Hand washing:** Children and staff shall practice frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and shall be required to wash their hands upon arriving at the center, when entering the classroom, before meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, and prior to leaving for home. Children should be monitored to ensure proper technique.

**Face covering:** Centers shall teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings among children, where appropriate, and staff. Face coverings are most essential at times when social distancing is not possible. Staff and children should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.

**Adequate supplies:** Centers shall have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), and tissues. Centers shall set up hand hygiene stations at the entrance to the facility so that children can clean their hands before entering.

When washing, feeding or holding infants and toddlers:
- Child care providers can protect themselves by wearing a large button-down, long-sleeved shirt or smock and by wearing long hair up off the collar. The shirt must be changed if there are secretions on it and staff shall wash their hands after changing.
- Staff shall wash their neck, hands, and anywhere touched by a child’s secretions.
- Staff shall change the child’s clothes if secretions are on the child’s clothes.
- All contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine. Infants, toddlers and providers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand.

**PREPARING TO REOPEN**

**Staff Training**
Prior to returning to work, employees will be required to attend virtual training on the Reopening Plan and onsite training on personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting, social distancing and additional health and safety
procedures. Staff will signoff to acknowledge upon completion of the online training and understanding of the policies and practices herein.

**Preparing the Facility for Children**

Teachers should approach the return of children to the Center in the same mindset as we would plan the first day of school. Children will take time to adapt back into the setting and adjust to the changes made to the environment. Schedules and routines will be vital from day one. However, staff should be prepared to be flexible as per their social emotional and intellectual needs.

All centers need to consider which rooms will be used, based on projected enrollment, space and furnishing needs.

Classroom arrangements will be revised to accommodate changes in maximum group size and to allow for physical distancing. There should be enough tables and chairs to permit adequate spacing at play time. Consider staggered meal times if there is not enough table space. Floor markers may be installed to help with physical distancing.

Cloth toys, books, wooden toys and toys that are not easily cleaned will be removed temporarily. Easily mouthed toys will also be temporarily removed from the classrooms. Toy sets for each individually child will be organized for infants.

The daily schedule including curriculum, meals and naps will be re-designed to accommodate time for hand washing, cleaning-sanitizing of surfaces and materials, as well as to help the children learn and adjust to physical distancing in the classroom.

**Messaging to Families**

Prior to opening, current families will receive information pertaining to the new health and safety guidelines.

Virtual information sessions may be provided to present appropriate information and address any questions. Facility tours may be provided one family at a time and as long as no else is in the center. Families must wear masks during the tour, have their temperature taken prior to entry, and wash hands upon entry.

**DAILY PRACTICES & PROCEDURES**

**Drop-off and Pick-up**

Drop-off will take place outside of the building at a designated area. Children and staff will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry. Multiple screening stations may be employed to accommodate higher volume drop-off times.
Screening includes temperature checks and a symptom questionnaire plus handwashing upon entering. Temperatures will be checked by non-contact forehead heat-scan thermometers. Upon completion of screening, child will be checked in and escorted to their classroom by staff.

Parents should drop off children at the designated drop-off area, limiting adult entry into the facility. Children and parents will queue according to social distancing guidelines while waiting. Parent must stay with child(ren) prior to completion of screening and intake. Staff should meet children as they are dropped off.

The following guidelines will be implemented during drop-off and pick-up:

- Do not combine groups in the morning or afternoon.
- Stagger drop-off and pick-up times for each small group to avoid a large number of people congregating outside the facility or in front of the facility. Parents need to commit to a specific time so that we can effectively stagger arrival and dismissal. Drop off and pick up windows will be determined by the Center Director and may be limited to specific hours.
- Parents should be asked for an estimated pick-up time for that day, and that should be noted for a planned and uneventful pickup without the parent entering the building. For infants: staff will record when the child last ate and how much (to allow for staff to plan the child’s schedule for the day)
- No pen should be shared. Parents should use their own pen when signing in. If check-in is electronic, provide alcohol wipes and frequently clean the screens or keyboards.

Children should come to the center equipped with two changes of clothes in a zip-lock bag with their name on it. All lunch and snacks in washable containers, if appropriate. No backpacks.

**Physical Distancing**

Though complete physical distancing is difficult to achieve in a child care environment because child care staff will be in close contact with children, centers are required to implement strategies to minimize chances of viral transmission.

These shall include, at a minimum:

**Eliminate large group activities:** No field trips, assemblies, large meetings, and performances.

**Cancel or modify activities where children are likely to be in close contact:** For example, modify physical education activities to reduce contact between children, avoid large gatherings or mixing of classes for music lessons.

**Reduce group size:** Reduce group sizes to no larger than 10 children total. Keep groups together throughout the day; do not combine groups (e.g., on the playground, at opening and closing). As feasible, maintain the same groups from
day to day. Groups will be assembled by age and not mix throughout the day. Groups should move individually through the building best they can for restroom trips and outside time. Appropriate, compliant signage should be posted as well.

Maximize space between people: Aim to keep three to six feet between individual children and minimize the amount of time children are in close contact with each other. For example, increase the distance between children during table work and limit the amount of time children spend standing in line. Large rooms can be divided into two rooms. When dividing a room, create a clear barrier (e.g., with cones, chairs, or tables) to ensure a minimum of 6 feet between the two groups.

Limit item sharing: If items are being shared, remind children not to touch their faces and to wash their hands after using items. Only share items and toys that can be cleaned and sanitized.

**Daily Classroom Schedule and Activities**

Classroom materials should remain limited.

**Play Areas**

Play areas will be established for one-at-a-time use or table activities enabling three to six feet of space between children individually working with materials.

**Shared Items**

Shared materials should be avoided wherever and whenever possible. Materials should be cleaned and sanitized between uses. All classrooms should employ the use of a Dirty Toy Bin for frequent cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day. Unnecessary materials, toys and cloth-based items (stuffed animals, pillows, etc.) should be removed from classrooms and stored in closed plastic trash bags (the cloth-based items) until further notice.

**Naptime**

Crib{s and cots should be minimally six feet apart, arranged “head to toe” during rest and nap. Naptime bedding should either be laundered by the Center on a daily basis or sent home with the parent and cleaned daily.

**Child Comforting**

Throughout the day, especially for infants, toddlers, physical comfort will need to be provided. Gloves and masks should be worn whenever staff physically encounter children within three feet.

**Restroom Use**

Toilets and faucets must be cleaned and disinfected between toileting routines.
**Outside Time**
Offer outdoor play in staggered shifts. Playground should be used by one group at a time and must be sanitized in between groups.

If multiple groups are outside at the same time, they should have a minimum of six feet of open space between outdoor play areas or visit these areas in shifts so that they are not congregating.

Children and staff should always wash hands immediately after outdoor play time.

**Meals and Snack Time**
During meal and snack times, prior-existing food handling requirements are in play in accordance to childcare licensing requirements, including the use of gloves and/or utensils ALWAYS when handling children’s food. Follow existing food safety practices as required in N.J.A.C. 8:24, Retail food regulations.

Staff and children MUST wash hands (hand-washing signage) before and after meal and snack times.

Tables, containers and surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized before and after each use by groups.

Meals and snacks shall be provided in the classroom to avoid congregating in large groups. Eliminate family-style meals.

Ensure staff are conscious of how they deliver food and handle silverware and plates (recommend disposables). When handling do not touch food contact surfaces and ready to eat food without gloves, or utensils. The Center will continue to use disposable plates and utensils.

Children must be seated three to six feet away from each other so that they will not touch each other or each other’s food while eating.

Eating in shifts with staggered food times can be arranged to provide for mealtime social distancing. Staff cannot eat with children.

**Visitors (5.29.20 NJDCF)**
Visitors shall not be permitted to enter the center during operating hours, with the exception of emergency or law enforcement personnel in their official capacity. NJDCF personnel for child protection or child care licensing purposes, and person providing emergency repair services within the center.

Unless emergency circumstances, visitors to the center shall be subject to the screening process.
RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR EXPOSURE (5.29.20 NJDCF)

Any confirmed or suspected exposure to COVID-19 occurring in a child care center must immediately be reported to both the local department of health and the DCF Office of Licensing.

Children or staff members who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at the facility

If a child or staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at the facility (e.g. fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath), immediately separate the person from the well people until the ill person can leave the facility. If the child has symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath), the caregiver waiting with the child should remain as far away as safely possible from the child (preferably, 6 feet).

If symptoms persist or worsen, they should call a health care provider for further guidance. Advise the employee or child’s parent or caregiver to inform the facility immediately if the person is diagnosed with COVID-19.

Children or staff members who test positive for COVID-19

Centers that become aware of a COVID-19 positive case in their facility shall contact their local health department for guidance. See “COVID-19 Notification Procedure.”

Health officials will provide direction on whether a center should cease operations following the identification of a positive case in the facility. The duration may be dependent on staffing levels, outbreak levels in the community and severity of illness in the infected individual. Symptom free children and staff should not attend or work at another facility during the closure.

All rooms and equipment used by the infected person, and persons potentially exposed to that person, should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with CDC guidance referenced above. Centers uncertain about the extent of potential exposure shall clean and sanitize all rooms.

Cleaning and Disinfecting after a Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case (5.29.20 NJDCF)

For additional guidance on the cleaning and disinfection of rooms or areas that those with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 have visited, please see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Coronavirus Disease 2019 Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations.
Returning to Child Care After COVID-19 Diagnosis or Exposure

If a staff member or child contracts or is exposed to COVID-19, they cannot be admitted to a center again until the criteria for lifting transmission-based precautions and home isolation have been met. Those criteria are included in the Department of Health’s guidance available here:

COVID-19 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Staff protocol for internal notification a confirmed positive COVID-19 case

When you are contacted by someone indicating they have tested positive for COVID-19:

- Inform your supervisor with name, time and exactly what the person shared.
- The Branch Executive MUST be the contacted immediately and provided the information.
- Branch Executive will contact the local Board of Health. Information the Branch Executive should have available:
  - What relationship does the person with the confirmed case have to our Y
    - If staff: name, last worked, area and contact information
    - If member: name, last scan and if program area used known and contact information
  - Document to start listing facts of the situation
  - Reopening Guide access if need to reference for next steps
- Branch Executive will text COO* when contacting Board of Health
  *COO will communicate with CEO
- Branch Executive will call COO with information** obtained from Board of Health call
  **COO will connect with VP, Marketing and Communications and launch Crisis Communication protocol
- Once Branch Executive and COO discuss next steps based on Board of Health guidance the following may occur:
  - Leadership Team notification
  - Program Team notification
  - Program impact (closure of area, program, etc.)
  - Program participant notification
  - Other staff and member notification
- Branch Executive will update the Board of Health and other agencies as required. (Example: Licensing for Child Care)
RESOURCES

New Jersey Department of Children and Families: Guidance for New Jersey Child Care Facilities on COVID-19 Related Health and Safety Requirements 5.29.20

- **Safe and Healthy Diapering** - Must be posted in a prominent location near all diaper changing areas in the Center
- **Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting** - Must be posted in a prominent location in the Center
- **Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19** - Must be distributed to staff and posted in a prominent location in the Center
- **Proper Hand Washing**
- **Daily Log of Child and Staff Entry Health Screenings and Attendance**