

# Child Care COVID Response & Preparedness Plan

## Little Lambs Preschool – Fort Collins

### Introduction

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#### **Our Commitment to Health & Safety**

Little Lambs 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 Colorado Office of Early Childhood and the Larimer County Health Department, 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'll 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

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

- Where possible, limiting or eliminating use of common spaces in the classrooms/facility. When commonspaces must be used, we will rotate use of the space and clean between groups.
- Rearranging classroom areas to seat children as far apart as reasonably possible and limiting the number of children sitting together.
- Using touchless trash cans to provide a hands-free way to dispose of tissues and contaminants.
- 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).
- We will increase our time spent outdoors. When feasible, bible time, story time, and other academic activities will be held outdoors.
- Drinking fountains will be shut down. Water bottle fill stations will remain open and sanitized regularly.

### Availability of Toys and Classroom Materials

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#### **At this time, we will make the following changes to the toys and materials in our classrooms:**

- We will remove toys and objects which cannot be easily cleaned or sanitized between use.
- Given that cloth toys are not recommended at this time, we will remove these from classrooms.
- We will temporarily suspend use of water and sensory tables.
- Toys will be washed and sanitized before being moved from one group of children to another.

### Mealtimes

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

- We will space seating as far apart as possible by limiting the number of children sitting together.
- At this time, Little Lambs will not be providing meals OR snacks. Snacks, meals, and a labeled refillable water bottle will be brought from home.

## Naptime

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### **To reduce potential for viral spread, we will engage in the following recommended practices:**

- Using bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed.
- Storing each child's bedding in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags.
- Labeling each child's cot.
- Ensuring that children's naptime cots are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart.
- When possible, children will be placed head-to-toe (i.e., one child with their head at the top of the cot, the next child over with their head at the bottom of the cot).

### **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 each child brings only a cot sheet, blanket, and one soft item (pillow or stuffed toy).

### **We ask that families and staff follow these guidelines regarding children's comfort items:**

- To avoid these items coming into contact with many children, efforts will be made for these items to be placed in a cubby or bin and be used at naptime or as needed.
- If possible, comfort items should remain at the child care facility to avoid cross-contamination.
- Items should be washed weekly (at our facility or the child's home) and daily if the comfort item is a soft material (e.g., blanket, stuffed animal, clothing).

## Screening Families & Staff for COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure

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### **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:**

Upon arrival each morning, all staff members will conduct a self health check. They will fill out and sign a health questionnaire, take and record their temperature, and then thoroughly wash hands before entering their workspace. If any staff member reports experiencing symptoms, has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or records a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, that staff member will be sent home. All daily health records will be kept in a binder in each staff member's file.

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

Prior to coming to the center, a parent or guardian will conduct a health check of their child each morning. This brief health check form will be provided by Little Lambs and submitted digitally each day to the center. Upon arrival to the center, the child's temperature will be taken and recorded in the parking lot by a staff member.

If a child or any member of a child's family is displaying symptoms or has been exposed to COVID-19, no member of that family will be permitted to enter the building.

In addition to the daily screening, we also ask families to advise us of any out-of-state travel plans. Any need for post-travel quarantine will be determined on an individual basis with the help of our nurse consultant.

**If families or staff are absent or otherwise off-site but experience exposure or symptoms, they should contact the director.**

## Daily Temperature Checks

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### 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 the program, temperature checks will occur before children enter the building.**

**The following staff members will be responsible for temperature checks:**

Director, teachers, assistants, or church staff.

**To minimize potential spread of illness, staff will:**

- wear a face mask while taking the child's temperature.
- wear disposable gloves, which will be changed before the next check if physical contact with the child occurred.
- wash or sanitize their hands between checks.

## Responding to Symptoms of COVID-19

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### 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 and designated staff will wait in the following safe, isolated location: First classroom from school entrance. This classroom is currently not being used for another purpose.
- Parents/guardians will pick their child up from the exterior classroom door located on the far south side of the building, to the right of the main entrance.

**If a staff member develops symptoms during care hours:**

- They will be asked to go home immediately.
- If no other caregiver is immediately available to be with children, the staff member will put on a cloth face covering (if not already on) and limit close interactions with children until they can be relieved by another staff member.
- Children may need to be picked up if no other caregiver is available.

## Responding to Positive Cases of COVID-19

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If a child, staff member, or visitor to our program tests positive for the virus, that individual will be excluded from our facility for a required 14-day quarantine period and we will contact our local health department and licensing consultant. In this event, our whole facility will be closed for a minimum of 48 hours for cleaning and contact tracing. Based on the guidance of the local health department, we will then 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: 970-498-6700**

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

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### **If a staff member or child has any symptom(s) of COVID-19 (Isolation Protocol)**

he or she must be excluded from child care until all of the following conditions have been met:

- a minimum of 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms AND
- no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND
- symptoms have subsided

### **If a staff member or child tests positive for COVID-19 or has a known exposure (Quarantine Protocol)**

If a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or has a known exposure (i.e. been in close contact - same household or within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, he or she will be excluded from child care for a mandatory 14-day quarantine period. If at the end of the 14 days, he or she is still symptom-free, a return to care is permitted. If symptoms develop during the 14-day quarantine, then the protocol for returning to care after symptoms listed above shall be followed.

**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:**

background-checked substitute teachers as well as background-checked church office staff members will be on-call to step in to help meet staff to child ratios if and when necessary. Additionally, the director can fill in for an absent staff member during administrative release time.

## Maintaining Consistent Groups

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**During this time, we will maintain the following group sizes:** Up to 20 children in a classroom with two teachers

We will adhere to any changes in group size that may be mandated by local health departments, the Colorado Office of Early Childhood, or any other governing agency.

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

- To the extent possible, classrooms will include the same group of children and providers each day.
- Each group of children will be kept in a separate room.
- We will limit the mixing of children across groups by staggering times for outdoor play and other activities where children from multiple classrooms are typically combined.
- Canceling or postponing field trips and special events that convene larger groups of children and families.
- Limiting non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities including groups of children or adults.

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

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

- 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.
- Staff will greet children and families curbside or outside the building and walk children in and out of the building.
- We will have a hand hygiene station at the entrance to our building so children can clean their hands before entering.
- We will require any parent or visitor who must enter the building to wear a mask.
- We ask that parents avoid congregating in a single space or a large group.
- Staff members will use a staff kiosk to sign children in/out at their vehicles each day. Parents will sign an attendance form to verify accuracy at the end of each week.
- If a child is having an obviously difficult time separating, his or her parent/guardian may enter the building as long as a mask is worn and hands are sanitized. We do not want to make this a habit, but we do understand that rough days happen.

## Hand Washing

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**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 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

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### Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces

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

- Daily cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (e.g., sinks, toilets, light switches, doorknobs, counter and tabletops, chairs).
- Normal routine cleaning of outdoor spaces, with special attention to high-touch plastic/metal surfaces (e.g., grab bars, railings).
- Regular cleaning of electronics (e.g., keyboards, parent/staff check-in kiosks) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Use of a schedule for regular cleaning and disinfecting tasks.
- Ensuring staff wear disposable gloves to perform cleaning, disinfecting, laundry, and trash pick-up, followed by hand washing.
- Cleaning dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Use of CDC-recommended disinfectants such as EPA-registered household disinfectants, diluted bleach solution, and/or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol
- 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:**

- We will clean toys frequently, especially items that have been in a child's mouth.
- 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").
- We will clean toys with soapy water, rinse them, sanitize them with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry.

## Safety Equipment

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### Face Mask/Coverings for Staff

Staff are required to wear face coverings at all times on-site unless outdoors and six feet away from others.

### Use of Gloves

Staff will wear gloves in a manner consistent with existing licensing rules (for example, gloves should be worn when handling contaminants, assisting with toileting, applying sunscreen, 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

Children over age 3 are required to have masks at school but are only encouraged - not required - to wear them. Parents/guardians will determine if/when their child shall wear a mask. Children who wear masks will be carefully supervised. No child will wear a mask during nap time. If the wearing of a mask is presenting health/safety issues for a child (i.e. constant face touching, difficulty breathing, etc.), the child will be asked to remove his/her mask.

## Partnering and Communicating with Families & Staff

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### 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.

### 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 commit to supporting our children in the following ways:

We will be dedicating a large amount of time during the first few weeks of school to making children feel comfortable and educating them on why school is different this year. We have prepared several children's books to discuss health and safety in a way that is meaningful for them. We will strive to create an environment that is as "normal" as possible despite the added health and safety measures. We will faithfully communicate with parents regarding any social-emotional challenges that may arise.

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

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

[Helping Young Children Through COVID-19](#), from Zero to Thrive

Any applicable materials provided by St. Peter Lutheran Church

### 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.

## Contact Information

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