

Little Acorns Child Development Center Covid-19 Health and Safety Practices

Please welcome the new addition to our current health and safety practices...

(Drum roll, please)

“Practically Perfect Preschool Pandemic Practices and Protocols”

(say that ten times...then read this document while laughing at yourself!)

Each family and staff member are required to sign a COVID-19 acknowledgement prior to their first day of attendance. The document can be found attached to this email. Please make sure to have read the acknowledgment completely and understand the requirements that must be met for your child to attend.

If you answer Yes to any of the following statements your child should not come to school (or if anyone in your household answers Yes to any of the questions):

- Is showing or has shown, in the last 14 days, symptoms of Covid-19
- Has tested positive for Covid-19
- Has knowingly encountered someone with Covid-19
- Has traveled to any area known as a “hot spot” for Covid-19

Symptoms that require Absences:

I understand that to enter upon the facility premises my child must be free from COVID-19 symptoms. If, during the day, any of the following symptoms appear my child will be separated from the rest of the people in the center. I will be contacted, and my child MUST be picked up from the facility within 30 minutes of being notified. Symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit (Little Acorns staff uses an infrared no-touch thermometer)
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19



While we understand that many of these symptoms can also be related to non-COVID-19 related issues we must proceed with an abundance of caution during this Public Health Emergency. Your child cannot return until there are improvements in respiratory symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath), 10 days have passed after symptoms first appeared and your child has been symptom free for at least 72 hours.

Conditions to return

- Your child cannot return until there are improvements in respiratory symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath), 10 days have passed after symptoms first appeared and your child has been symptom free for at least 72 hours.
- In case your child has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional, your child is assumed to have COVID-19 and you may not return until the same 3 criteria listed above have been met.
- If your child has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and you want your child to return to school before completing the above self-isolation period, you must obtain a medical professional's note clearing your child for return based on an alternative diagnosis and they must be symptom free for 72 hours (3 days)

When to return to school:

- Your child has met the CDC guidelines /school policies for returning
- You have communicated with school administration, prior to your child returning, any documentation, or wellness requirements, to meet guidelines for attendance. Due to changing recommendations, these precautions may change at any time. Little Acorns CDC reserves the right to refuse attendance to any child due to concern regarding health and the potential spread of Covid-19.
- Little Acorns cannot be held liable for any exposure to the virus.

Reduced Ratios

- Reduced ratios apply with actual number of children in classroom according to CDC guidelines where possible/HHS-Child Care Licensing Standards still apply.

Social Distancing

- We will adhere to the smaller group sizes in our classrooms and keep the same groups together with the same teachers (as much as possible) throughout the day.
- With screening in place upon entering the building – we believe this allows us to let our students play without having to worry about being too close to another student or teacher.
- We ask that parents follow all guidelines when going through the screening process at the beginning of each day.

Individual Groupings

- Little Acorns CDC will follow ratios as closely as possible to CDC guidelines.
 - Where there are more than 10 children in one classroom, the classroom will be divided into two groups and a teacher will be responsible for each group.
 - Please remember that we always encourage social distancing and masks being worn for staff and the following classes: Parrots, Toucans, Flamingos, and Owls. Children in the Penguins class must wear a mask upon entry and exit into and out of their classroom. Though it is recommended, the wearing of masks by children in the Penguins class during the school day will be subject to the parents' discretion.
 - Those groups will stay the same until the CDC/childcare guidelines are changed to allow for state licensed ratios to be followed

Each group will have their own:

- Bins of materials for each child (including – crayons, glue sticks, markers, scissors, etc. (age-appropriate))
- Designated outdoor play time (or indoor for inclement weather)

Arrival/Dismissal Protocols:

- All children will be dropped off outside of the building using a carpool line, between the hours of 8-9 AM. If your child is not enrolled in Morning Extended Care, please be aware of the wait time we give you for dropping off. Parents remain in the car and be masked.
- Please create a name card for your child, by writing their name in large, bold letters, along with their class name (Penguins, Owls, Parrots, etc.)
- The child should be accessible in the back seat and unbuckle only when an adult comes to take them out of the car.
- Children will enter the building and sanitize their hands, then guided to their classroom.

For Dismissal:

- Once parents have pulled into the carpool lane, they will hold up their name card to have their child brought out by the teacher. Siblings who are not in the same classroom will be brought out individually. The teacher will assist the child into the car and close the door. Once the teacher has walked away from the car, the parent may step out and buckle their child. Little Acorns CDC does not take responsibility for the correct securement of the child into the vehicle.
- All children in the Parrots, Toucans, Flamingos, and Owls classes are required by the CDC to wear a mask at school. We ask that parents respect and have patience with this simple practice, as it protects our staff, as well as those who are at higher risk for infection. Simply, our staff is choosing each day to subject themselves to a potentially deadly virus. The small act of wearing a mask, along with other health and safety practices deemed appropriate, could be what allows us to stay open the entire year. If the CDC loosens their requirements for masks, and we have been approved by our licensing representative to loosen our requirements, we will communicate that to you. Children should arrive in a mask and have 2 more masks available to change into (cloth masks, disposable masks, and face shields are all acceptable for children) at Little Acorns CDC.

GENERAL DAILY PROCEDURES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

- Adequate supplies to support hand hygiene behaviors and routine cleaning of objects and surfaces will be available.
- Children and staff will wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, children and staff will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Children and staff will always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Staff will supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.
- Touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Staff will cover all coughs and sneezes and guide children to do the same.

The following procedures will be followed...

- o Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or into elbow if tissue not available.

o Throw away used tissues in a lined trash can. o Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Staff will always cover their mouth and nose with a mask or face covering.
- Drinking fountains will be closed and covered. Disposable cups with lids and straws will be provided in each classroom for a child who needs water.
- Children's personal belongings will be limited to necessary items only. Personal belongings must be fully contained in a labeled bag or backpack. Each child may only bring one (1) bag each.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Little Acorns Child Development Center will follow the guidance of the CDC which provides national standards for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection of educational facilities for children. Staff will receive a thorough training and handouts on how to thoroughly clean and disinfect prior to returning to work. Toys that can be put in the mouth should be cleaned and sanitized (see below). Other hard surfaces, including diaper changing stations, doorknobs, and floors can be disinfected. Cleaning and disinfection efforts will be intensified:

- The cleaning and disinfecting schedule provided by CDC will be followed.
- Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games, will be routinely cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected. This will also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap mats, toilets, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- Cleaning products will be used according to the directions on the label.
- Surfaces which are visibly dirty, will be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Disposable wipes will be provided to staff members so that commonly used surfaces such as desks and tables can be wiped down before use.
- All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products will not be used near children, and staff will ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children from inhaling toxic fumes.

Clean and Sanitize Toys

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry. Toys may also be cleaned in the mechanical dishwasher.
- Machine washable cloth toys will be used by one child at a time or will not be used at all. These toys will be laundered before being used by another child.
- Toys will not be shared with other groups of children.
- Toys that need cleaning will be placed in a container with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for "soiled toys." Containers containing soiled toys will be kept out of reach from children.

- Enough toys will be provided so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.
- According to the CDC, children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

- Only bedding (crib sheets, nap pillows, blankets, nap mats) that can be washed will be used.
- Children's bedding will be kept separately and stored in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or bags.
- Mats will be labeled for each child. Mat sharing will not be permitted.
- Bedding that cannot be washed daily will be sprayed with sanitizing spray after each use and sent home for washing on a regular schedule

HEALTHY HAND HYGIENE BEHAVIOR

- All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:
 - o Arrival to the facility and after breaks
 - o Before and after food or drinks
 - o Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
 - o Before and after administering medication or medical ointment (Director and Assistant Director only)
 - o Before and after diapering
 - o After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
 - o After encountering bodily fluid
 - o After playing outdoors
 - o After handling garbage
- Staff and children will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. 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.
- Children will be supervised when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Staff will assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
 - o After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.
- Posters describing handwashing steps will be placed near all sinks.

SOME FINAL AND PERSONAL THOUGHTS

- Please feel free to ask any questions that might come up versus discussing with outside sources, gossiping with other parents, or assuming you know the reason behind a difficult decision. Choose to take the high road, knowing that your children are learning, growing, adjusting, and enjoying some normal routines back into their lives.

- Please choose to believe that the staff and leadership at Little Acorns has sought multiple resources and advice on reopening our school in a pandemic. The protocols on which we have settled came after many conversations, all of whom coming to the same consensus. Little Acorns does not seek to mimic any other center in our area, because other centers are not Little Acorns. Depending which centers you visit, some will be stricter, and others will be less strict. We make the best decisions for the community at Little Acorns, alongside following requirements, and recommendations of our state and local officials, as well as the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services, with whom we are licensed.
- Is there anything we can do to help you, or your child/children adjust to this “new normal”?
- We will encourage students to share how they have been feeling during this time – to allow them to process their experience in an emotionally-safe space, and with staff who is trained to walk this journey alongside them.
- We will work together – parents, teachers, other staff – to allow our young students to enjoy their time at Little Acorns and to support them in any way we can to meet their needs
- Thank you for being part of our family! We are not who we are without you. May God bless our school year together.



PARENT AND/OR STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received the current COVID-19 Policies and Procedures for Little Acorns Child Development Center and agree to abide by the policies and procedures as stated. I understand that these policies are subject to change at any time, based solely on the guidance of the CDC and Texas State Licensing.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Printed Name _____

Name(s) of Child(ren) enrolled at Little Acorns Child Development Center:

Little Acorns Staff (staff who are also parents of enrolled children sign both sections)

Staff Signature _____

Date _____

Printed Name _____

For Little Acorns Director/Assistant Director Only:

This form was received on _____

By _____