
Okemos Kids Club

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COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

June 1, 2020 **Updated August 10, 2020**

The mission of Okemos Kids Club has always been to create a safe environment that earns the trust of the children and families we serve. We are as dedicated to that mission now as we have ever been. OKC will continue to lead the industry in best practices during this time, a responsibility we do not take lightly. Accordingly, we created a COVID-19 Operating Manual that details the necessary policy and procedures and aggressive actions we have taken to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19. This new operating model supplements our existing and overarching operations manual. As we move forward in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to communicate those aggressive actions we have taken to assure you of our steadfast commitment to the health and safety of our families.

OVERVIEW

All child care providers must develop and implement a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan consistent with LARA guidelines. This OKC plan will be available at Edgewood and online. A digital copy will be sent to parents and staff prior to reopening.

Our plan will include:

- How OKC will monitor symptoms of COVID-19.
- How OKC will practice social distancing, as developmentally appropriate.
- How OKC will ensure hygiene (including regular cleaning and disinfecting).
- How OKC will use safety equipment (including PPE, when appropriate).
- Communication protocol for families to report symptoms or a positive test and policies on when children will be excluded from care.
- Isolation procedure in case of symptoms or confirmed cases onsite.
- How to maintain required staff to child ratios in the event that a staff member(s) becomes ill.

PREPARING THE BUILDING

Edgewood will make changes to our physical space to make it safer for children and staff. Each suggestion helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 and encourage social distancing.

1. The conference room in the lobby area will be used to safely isolate individuals who develop symptoms during care.
2. Toys and objects which cannot be easily cleaned or sanitized between use will be removed to the fullest extent possible.
 - a. Wooden toys will be appropriately cleaned on at least a daily basis.
 - b. Cloth toys will not be in circulation at this time.
3. There will be a dedicated staff person to rotate 3 stepping (wash with soapy water, rinse with clean water, and sanitize with a bleach solution) toys and commonly used items throughout the day.
4. Common spaces such as the cafeteria and lobby areas will be used on an as needed basis and cleaned and sanitized in between groups using. Classes will eat snacks and meals outside or in their rooms as much as possible. If weather does not permit eating outside, the cafeteria will be used. Only one class will be in an area at a time.
5. Seating will be rearranged to seat children six feet apart (when possible) and limit the number of children sitting together.
6. Use touchless trash cans to provide a hands-free way to dispose of tissues and contaminants if they are available.
7. Weather permitting, we will increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
8. Ensure water is safe. Drinking fountains will be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. Water bottles from home are encouraged.

MONITOR SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

OKC will perform a health screening on anyone entering the building.

When children arrive:

1. Perform temperature checks. A touchless thermometer will be used to scan the body temperature. Children or parents arriving with fever at or above 100.0 or other symptoms will be sent home.
2. Parents will be asked:
 - a. Has your child been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19? (If yes, the family should self-quarantine for 14 days.)

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- b. Has your child felt unwell in the last 3 days? (persistent cough, temperature, difficulty breathing, cold, diarrhea and/or vomiting)
 3. Staff will visually check the child for signs of illness, including flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

As young children are not reliable reporters of their symptoms, asking children about additional coronavirus symptoms is not useful (for example, shortness of breath, change in taste).

Staff will continue to monitor symptoms throughout the day and monitor temperatures when children appear ill or “not themselves.”

Children with a fever alone, or a fever with a cough and/or diarrhea will be isolated from the group and their parents contacted for prompt pick up. Their parents should contact their primary care physician/medical provider.

When staff arrive:

1. Temperature checks will be performed when staff arrive. A touchless thermometer will be used for scanning.
2. Staff will be screened for cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, change in smell or taste, and diarrhea.
3. Staff arriving with fever above 100.0 or other symptoms will be sent home.
4. Staff should report contact with anyone outside of work who has had a documented case of COVID-19. Staff will be instructed to self-quarantine if they have been exposed to COVID-19.

Because child care staff members are part of Michigan’s essential workforce, they are eligible to be tested for COVID-19. Find a test site near you [here](#).

Families

A communication with this plan will be sent to families prior to reopening and will be posted on our website.

Parents should communicate with the center if they are concerned about possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19. Families should report possible illness if anyone in their household shows symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, including the child or family members if they or their children experience possible symptoms or have a positive test. Please contact the office at 517-706-5023, or Kim Burchman at 517-706-5031 to report an illness.

Respond to Possible or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Child care providers are a critical part of helping communities limit the spread of the virus.

- Anyone who becomes symptomatic will be sent home immediately. If possible, children and staff should leave care right away if they are ill.
- Those who can not leave immediately will be isolated in our conference room in the lobby area until able to be picked up. A staff person will stay with a child until their parent comes to pick them up. Children should be picked up within 30 minutes of the initial call to the parent. If that is not possible, another adult on the emergency contact list should be contacted to pick up.

Report exposure. If a child, staff member, family member, or visitor to your child care becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms, we must contact our local health department and licensing consultant for next steps. Staff and families of children in care are also required to report to the provider if they become symptomatic or receive positive COVID-19 test results. When notifying parents if COVID-19 was present in the facility, the privacy of individuals will be respected by not sharing health information of a specific person.

We will determine whether to close the classroom or facility based on guidance from our local health department. If an individual in a classroom is identified with a positive test for COVID-19 the classroom should be closed, cleaned and everyone in that classroom should be quarantined for 14 days initially.

Set Guidelines for Returning to Care and Work

Staff members and children should stay home and self-isolate if they show symptoms of COVID-19. It can be challenging to determine when to isolate young children because they are ill more often than adults, and the cause of a fever is sometimes unknown.

If a staff member or child has a fever or a cough, providers should follow their child and staff illness policy. At this time, it is recommended by the State of Michigan LARA department that children be fever free for 72 hours before returning to care (even if other symptoms are not present).

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

- Has been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers AND
- Other symptoms have improved AND

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- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

Most children and staff members can return to care/work based on improved symptoms and the passage of time. Local health departments may recommend that some individuals (for example, immunocompromised individuals) receive two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

The provider should allow staff who are not feeling well to remain home without penalty. Under [Executive Order 2020-36](#), employees may not be discharged, disciplined, or otherwise retaliated against for staying home when he or she is at particular risk for infecting others with COVID-19. See the Executive Order for complete details on whether employees must be paid and when they must return to work.

Families are encouraged to have back-up child care plans if the child or a family member becomes ill or is required to self-quarantine due to possible COVID-19.

The CDC recommends people use the following guidelines to determine when to return to child care or work after showing symptoms of COVID-19. You can view the full recommendation from the CDC [here](#).

Practice Social Distancing

When creating a plan to safely provide care during COVID-19, “less is best.” Limiting group sizes, limiting the number of staff members caring for the children, and limiting the number of spaces a child is in during the day as much as possible. We acknowledge that social distancing is very challenging in a child care setting. These best practices identify steps we are taking to help.

Maintain Consistent Groups

Whenever possible, Edgewood will keep group sizes at or below 10. If a classroom has more than 10 children OKC will spread out the classes across multiple rooms. This is especially important in classes with more children (for example, preschool classrooms.) As much as possible, classrooms will include the same group of children and caregivers.

In the center, consistent adults will remain with groups of similar aged children. It is particularly important that our infants less than six months stay separated from older children because they cannot be vaccinated against influenza.

Child care will be available for full time, (5 day per week), care. Part time schedules will not be permitted in order to provide consistent groups.

Contact with external adults and between groups of children will be limited.

Cribs, cots and mats will be at least six feet apart, when possible. Bedding will be placed in head-to-toe positioning.

Limit, or Eliminate, Use of Common Spaces

As recommended in the “physical space” section, one strategy to promote social distancing is to close our common spaces. Edgewood has also, canceled or delayed field trips or special events that convene larger groups of children or families. OKC will:

- Designate smaller areas such as porches to keep children from gathering outside of their group.
- Stagger times for outdoor play and gym times.
- Eliminate use of water and sensory tables, playground equipment and frequently touched objects.
- If a common space remains in use staff will clean the space in between groups.

Drop Off and Pick Up Times

To minimize the potential spread of COVID-19, Edgewood will limit the number of individuals in our facility at drop off, pick up, and throughout the day.

Edgewood will set up hand hygiene stations at the entrance of our facility so children and parents can clean their hands.

Edgewood may consider staggering arrival and drop off times and plan to limit direct contact with parents to the extent possible. Edgewood will have designated staff meet children at the front entrance, near the facility, and escort them into and out of the building. These practices will be balanced with the impact on a child’s transition time, the parent’s work schedule, and the impact on instructional time. Parents should plan to allow additional time at drop off and pick up to allow for health screenings and child transitions.

At drop off:

There will be 6 foot markers outside the front door. A staff person or persons (wearing PPE such as a mask and gloves) will be available to do a health screening prior to entering the building. If no one is outside, please ring the doorbell. If necessary, for the comfort of the child, one parent may enter the building to drop off.

- A daily health questionnaire will be administered before entering the building.
- Parents are asked to wear a mask when entering the building.
- OKC will limit the number of people dropping off or picking up a child to one adult.

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- Parents are asked to avoid congregating in a single space or a large group while inside or outside our building.
 - Staff will sign children in and out for attendance at drop off and pick up.

At pick up:

Please maintain the 6 foot distance while outside. Ring the doorbell at door #1 and tell the person who answers who you're picking up. A staff person will bring your child and their belongings to you outside.

Limit Visitors

Edgewood will limit non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities during this time.

Transportation

OKC will cancel all scheduled field trips until the pandemic is over. If travel is necessary, vehicles will be modified to allow for social distancing. For example, on a bus rope off seats that should not be used. Additionally:

- Temperatures of all children and staff members will be checked as they enter the bus.
- Cloth face coverings will be worn by everyone in the vehicle, if possible.
- CDC's cleaning protocols will be followed once travel is complete.

Reinforce Best Practices to Promote Hygiene

Child care providers are experts in limiting the spread of illness. Edgewood staff will reinforce the best practices we already use with children and staff members to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Hand Washing

Edgewood will reinforce regular health and safety practices with children and staff. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.

- Staff will continue to implement CDC handwashing guidelines. Wearing gloves does not replace appropriate hand hygiene.
- Staff will wash their hands immediately upon entering their classroom.
- Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty. If staff use hand sanitizer, they will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of their hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.

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- Edgewood staff and children will continue to cover coughs with a tissue or sleeve.
 - Hand washing will occur at least every 2-3 hours for staff and students.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Edgewood staff will continue to use robust cleaning protocols on at least a daily basis for items touched frequently. This may require designated cleaning staff.

- Common areas require at least a daily deep clean (for example, sinks, bathrooms, doorknobs, tabletops, and shared items). Custodial staff will clean at the end of each day.
- Clean toys frequently. There will be Edgewood staff designated specifically to clean toys, tables and counters throughout the day.

Items from Home

- We would like to limit the number of items brought into Edgewood because this can be a way to transmit the virus. For example, children should be brought into the center without car seats.
- Consider leaving a pair of shoes or slippers at the facility for each child and staff member. If possible, they should be washed or sanitized weekly.
- Comfort items may be especially needed during this time of transition as they may reduce stress for children and staff members. To avoid these items coming into contact with many children, efforts will be made by staff for these items to be placed in a cubby or bin and be used at naptime or as needed. If possible, a comfort item should remain at the child care facility to avoid cross contamination from another site. Items should also be washed at least weekly.
- Soft materials (such as blankets, soft comfort items, or clothing) should be washed daily, either at the facility or the child's home.

Appropriate Safety Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary in many settings to keep individuals safe. Child care providers do not need to wear N95 or surgical masks, smocks, or face shields, however, other protective equipment is appropriate.

Masks or Cloth Face Coverings: For Staff Members

- Edgewood staff will wear cloth face coverings when with children/parents.

- OKC will provide cloth facing coverings to staff. By Executive Order, Governor Whitmer has required all employers whose workers perform in person work to provide non-medical grade face coverings to their workers. This includes child care providers. Cloth face coverings, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchiefs, are best. Okemos Kids Club will provide face coverings to staff.

- Attend to children's social emotional health. Edgewood staff will use strategies to prepare children for seeing their caregivers in masks and attend to children's emotional responses to this new normal. Early Childhood teachers will video conference with children to express their excitement at their return and show what they look like with and without a mask. School Age staff will share pictures with parents of themselves with and without a mask for children to see prior to attending.

Masks or Cloth Face Coverings: For Children

*Starting Monday, July 20, all Kindergarten through 8th-grade students will be required to wear a face-covering while in the building. Children will not have to wear them while outside or while eating or drinking. 3 and 4-year-olds will have to wear a face-covering while in common areas such as the hallways and the gym. Infants and toddlers under 2 years of age should never wear a mask.

**Starting Monday, August 10, all children, ages 2 years to 4 years old are strongly encouraged to wear a mask through all parts of the day except for nap or rest time, eating or drinking, and outdoor activities. Parents are to send a cloth face covering or mask to school with their child. 3 and 4-year-olds will be required to wear a face-covering while in common areas such as the hallways and the gym.

We recommend masks with elastic loops instead of ties for the children to make it easier for them to put on and remove by themselves. We will be providing the children with a reclosable storage bag labeled with their name to put their mask into when not using it. Our hope is that this will keep them from cross-contamination with other objects and masks.

~~Edgewood will not require masks for children. By maintaining consistent groups, children will not need to wear a mask when with their consistent group. Medical professionals recognize that many young children will not reliably wear a mask, and a mask may result in increased touching of the face which would negate the purpose of the mask. Young children will take the masks off multiple times a day and in the process the mask will touch the floor and other objects making them a potential source of infection.~~

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- If children do wear masks, ensure children can remove the face covering without assistance. Cloth face coverings should never be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Gloves

Edgewood 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.

Partner and Communicate with Families

Edgewood staff will actively contact families to determine when children will return to care and discuss new policies and procedures.

Proactively Contact Families

Edgewood staff will reach out to families that have not been in care to:

- Determine when they will return to care.
- Discuss concerns or questions families have about returning to child care and how you can address them together.
- Discuss any health concerns/conditions which may make the child at higher risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19.

Edgewood staff would like to remind families that immunocompromised children and children with chronic respiratory conditions should only return to child care under the direction of their primary care provider.

It is recommended that children should be up to date with current vaccination schedules to protect from vaccine-preventable infectious disease outbreaks, including influenza. If vaccines have been delayed as a result of the stay-at-home order, families should have a plan with their child's medical provider for catch-up vaccinations in a timely manner.

Share New Policies and Expectations

Edgewood staff will review new policies and procedures before a child returns to care and set clear expectations for when sick children must stay home and when they may return.

Support Children's Social-Emotional Needs

Child care providers should provide families and staff with resources to prepare for the transition back to child care.

Children should be prepared for the return to child care by parents and the child care provider.

Resources

- [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

Partner and Communicate with Staff Members

Proactively Contact Staff Members

Edgewood administration and staff will reach out to all staff members to:

- Determine when they will return to work.
- Discuss concerns or questions staff members have about returning to work and discuss how you can address them together.
- Discuss any health concerns/conditions which may make a staff member at higher risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19. Staff with underlying health conditions or at higher risk should consult with their primary care physician/medical provider before returning to work.
- Share the steps you are taking to make your facility as safe as possible.

Share Employees’ Rights

Under [Executive Order 2020-36](#), employees may not be discharged, disciplined, or otherwise retaliated against for staying home when he or she is at particular risk for infecting others with COVID-19. See the Executive Order for complete details on whether employees must be paid and when they must return to work.

Create a Staffing Plan

- Edgewood administration/directors will assess staffing needs based on projected enrollment, the need to limit exposure across groups, and the need to practice social distancing.

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- Edgewood will have on-call staff subs to handle the potential need to quarantine staff or allow for longer absences from work than normal.

Train Staff

Edgewood administration/directors will train employees about COVID-19. This includes 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, steps employees must take to notify employers of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and a suspected or confirmed diagnosis, and measures the employer and employees are taking to limit the spread of the virus (including PPE).

Edgewood staff will specifically:

- Ensure staff are provided training opportunities to better understand COVID-19 and care for children safely. These courses may help meet our training requirements:
 - [Caring for children in care during COVID-19](#), from the federal Office of Head Start.
 - [Preventing and managing infectious diseases in Early Education and Child Care](#), free from the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Limit in person staff meetings to no more than 10 people. Maintain social distancing requirements.

Provide Resources to Support Children’s Social Emotional Needs

Edgewood staff will work together to develop a plan to support the emotional reactions of children returning to child care. 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, staff may need some new tools in their toolkit to assist the child with emotional regulation.

Provide Resources to Support 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, child care providers 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, it is vitally important to provide supports and services to the child care providers to ensure their emotional well-being.

Strategies to “help the helpers” can include professional development supports such as access to behavior health consultation, and reflective consultation, which can help providers remain emotionally available, sensitive, and responsive to the needs of the infants and young children they care for.

This plan was made with guidance from LARA, CDC, and the MI Department of Health.