



# PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN

Addendum to The Caring Center's Parent Handbook

## [Abstract](#)

This addendum to The Caring Center's Parent Handbook describes The Caring Center's Pandemic Response Plan, including important updates and changes to policies and procedures, in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The policies and terms contained in this addendum supersede any policies and/or terms described in any previous versions of The Caring Center's Parent Handbook.

*Updated March 2021*

## Changes to Operating Hours

Beginning in August 2020, we resumed our regular operating hours (8am – 6pm), Monday through Friday. There will be NO Early Care service (7-8am) until further notice.

## Class Cohorts

While we will practice social distancing with the children, we know that it is simply not possible to prevent young children and infants from coming in close contact with one another and their teachers. Instead, the goal is to limit the number of people who are in close contact with each other, in order to lower the potential risk of transmission of illness.

With this in mind, we've created class / staff cohorts, to ensure that classes include the same small group of children and staff each day. Initially, we will open only a handful of classrooms, while multiple classrooms remain vacant. At first, class sizes will be capped at a maximum of 10 children (max. 4 in infant classes). Our teaching staff will consistently work in the same classroom all day, every day – so that they interact with only a minimal number of children from the same cohorts. Children will NOT be moved between classes. Staff will not work with more than 2 cohorts of children.

We are monitoring local health goals and outcomes regularly, and we will increase our enrollment slowly as public health outcomes continue to improve. Per our current capacity guidelines, we *aim to* place 12-15 children in a class. Infant rooms will be capped at a max. of 6 infants; School Age classes will be capped at a max. of 18 students.

**Children will stay with their class cohort at all times**, but they will not be 'stuck inside.' To increase fresh airflow and ventilation, they will spend significant amounts of time outside each day (weather-dependent). Classes will follow a rotating schedule for use of the play yard, parking lot and other common spaces, to ensure spaces are only used by one age group at a time. High-touch surfaces in these common spaces will be cleaned and disinfected in between each group's use. At nap time, space between cribs and cots will be maximized and cots will be alternated so children nap in head-to-feet positioning, to reduce the risk of transmitting illness.

## Drop-off and Pick-Up Routines

Health and safety standards require that we limit direct contact with parents as much as possible. As a result, *except for parents of infant children*, Caring Center parents are NOT be allowed to enter the building. **Building access is restricted to enrolled children and essential personnel only.** Express prior permission must be obtained from administrators before any parent or visitor may enter the facility.

**All parents / guardians, and all children ages 2+ must wear a mask or face covering at all times during drop-off and pick-up.** We request that parents/guardians with serious underlying health concerns and/or those who are above the age of 60 please do not participate in drop-off or pick-up, to help limit their risk of possible exposure to illness. If possible, we ask that the



same parent or guardian handle drop-off and pick-up each day to reduce the number of different people visiting the facility. Masks are required at all times.

**Parents/Guardians will drop-off and pick-up child(ren) at a pre-assigned door or checkpoint\***

**Drop-off / pick-up times are restricted, as follows:** (Call ahead for assistance: 215-386-8245)

- **Drop-Off (between 8:00 am - 9:30 am)**
- **Pick-Up (between 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm)**

*\*Please refer to the diagram on the last page of this document for drop-off / pick-up locations*

**Before entering the building, everyone (children and adults) must successfully complete ALL of the following pre-screen procedures each day:**

- Submit an approved [Daily Health Questionnaire](#) (can be submitted in advance of arrival – i.e., parents can complete the survey at breakfast each morning, or in the car – BUT it must be submitted each day on the actual date of attendance)
- Pass a **Temperature Check**: no one with a temperature of  $\geq 100.4$  degrees Fahrenheit will be permitted to enter the facility for any reason
- Pass a **Visual Inspection** by Caring Center staff for signs of COVID-like illness (defined as: cough, shortness of breath, or *any two (2)* of the following symptoms: fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell)

### **Pick-Up**

**Please call the front desk (215-386-8245) before you arrive for pick-up, OR you can text us (646-475-3380).** Please let us know when you're about 10 minutes away; we'll get the children ready and bring them out to you!

### **Parking:**

- For security, and to allow for additional outdoor spaces for the children, the main parking lot is closed each day, from 9:30am-3:00pm.
- The Enrichment Academy parking lot and the loading zone on 31<sup>st</sup> Street will remain open all day.

### **Mask Policy**

**All Caring Center staff and children ages 2+ MUST wear an approved face mask throughout the day**, except when eating/drinking, during naps, or during strenuous physical activity outdoors - if they are able to maintain appropriate social distance. Infants and children under 2 years old are *NOT* required to wear masks. All parents / guardians **MUST** wear a mask at all times during drop-off and pick-up. Any other essential personnel who may need to enter the facility (e.g., electrician or plumber) are required to wear an approved face mask at all times. The Caring Center can provide masks for children and adults to be used on-site; or they may bring their own.

**Approved face masks must be worn properly at all times (i.e., they MUST snugly cover both the mouth AND nose), and they must be washed daily.** Approved face masks must provide a solid covering with no openings – they may NOT have any vents or valves in them. Gaiters, neck



warmers and/or face coverings made from a shirt pulled up over a person's face are NOT acceptable as an approved face mask, and they may not be used at any time.

Health experts recommend, in addition to a mask, that childcare staff wear a clear plastic face shield – especially when engaged in higher-risk activities, like changing diapers – to help protect against the possibility of infection via the eyes. Face shields have been provided to all Caring Center staff. The use of a clear face shield is encouraged, but not required. Please note that, by itself, the use of an optional face shield does NOT meet The Caring Center's mask requirement. Whether or not a person chooses to wear a clear face shield, they MUST still wear an approved face mask at all times.

### **Handwashing**

All children and employees, and any pre-approved visitors (e.g., maintenance personnel) will be required to wash their hands with soap and water, and/or disinfect their hands using hand sanitizer, immediately upon entering the facility, and at least hourly throughout the day.

When children and employees enter a classroom, their hands will be washed with soap and water. Children and employees will wash hands with soap and water immediately before and after all meals. Children and employees will wash hands with soap and water immediately after toileting. Children and employees, as well as any visitors to the program, will also wash their hands with soap and water, or disinfect their hands using hand sanitizer, immediately prior to leaving the program.

### **Communication Between Staff and Families**

Communication between parents and staff will continue in-person, as well as via Instagram, Email, Zoom and/or phone. To promote social distancing, we ask that parents speak with teachers outside on the play yard, and/or on the sidewalk outside the building -- but parents are always encouraged to speak with their child's teachers during drop-off and pick-up (please just be mindful of others waiting to sign-in or sign-out). If a parent or guardian wishes to speak with teachers and/or administrators, they may call or email, and/or they may ask to schedule a Zoom meeting/conference. If an in-person meeting is required for some reason, parents should call, in advance, to schedule an appointment.

**Please Remember Your Role! Parents should teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions that help keep everyone safe.** Research shows that older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at the highest risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Especially to help protect those who may be at higher risk, it's important that we *all* practice healthy hygiene behaviors. Information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, and suggests that some children may experience only mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children may develop much more severe illness. Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands, practice social distancing and wear masks. Please help keep yourself, your child and everyone in our community safe!



- Talk to your child. Explain that hand washing and mask-wearing can help keep them and others healthy, and stop the virus from spreading.
- Be a good role model - if you wash your hands often, and regularly wear your mask, your child will be more likely to do the same.
- Practice wearing masks as a family, every time you leave the house.
- Make handwashing a family activity.
- Encourage your child to play outdoors - it's great for their physical and mental health. Take a walk with your child or go on a bike ride. Get lots of fresh air together!
- Learn more about what you can do to protect children from illness.

### **Health / Illness Policies**

IMPORTANT: If your child has any underlying health conditions, please talk to your pediatrician about their risk. Please be sure to inform The Caring Center's administrative staff, and to provide us with a copy of your child's written medical plan of action (such as an [asthma action plan](#)), if appropriate.

### **Exclusion from Care**

If a child meets the criteria for exclusion from group care, he or she must strictly follow The Caring Center's policies regarding exclusion and quarantine (see specific circumstances and procedures below). In the event that a licensed doctor or pediatrician has medically cleared a child or employee for return to school, The Caring Center may, at its sole discretion, still require the child or employee to follow exclusion / quarantine procedures before they are allowed to return. The Caring Center *may* consider allowing the child or employee to return to school sooner, but will ONLY do so if the doctor / pediatrician states in writing "(Patient's Name) was seen and evaluated by me, (Doctor's Name), on (Today's date). I have diagnosed him/her as follows: (Diagnosis). I have determined that the patient does NOT have COVID-19 and is able to return to a group childcare setting without placing any other child or adult at risk." The letter must include the doctor's name, address, telephone number, as well as their signature AND medical license number.

**After three (3) or more consecutive *unplanned* absences, a doctor's note is required before a child may return to school.** If you are planning a trip, or you know that your child will be out for a few days, please let their teacher know in advance. A doctor's note is NOT required for planned absences.

### **Fever**

All children and all Caring Center employees will have their temperatures checked at least twice daily - once upon arrival, prior to entering the facility, and a second time at another, randomly-selected time during the day. Anyone with a fever of  $\geq 100.4$  degrees Fahrenheit, and/or who meets the criteria below, will be removed from a group setting immediately and quarantined in a separate room. The child's parent / guardian will be contacted, and they will be required to pickup the child within 1 hour. The child (or employee) must remain fever-free for at least 48 hours, without the use of any fever-reducing medications, before he/she can return to school.



### **Fever + Cough**

Children or employees with both fever AND a cough will be required to see a doctor within 24 hours. Parents and employees are required to contact The Caring Center within 24 hours to provide a copy of the doctor's diagnosis (in writing). The child or employee must remain out of school for a minimum of 10 days (a 7-day quarantine/observation period, plus 3 additional healthy days -- *symptom-free, without the use of medication* -- after those 7 quarantine days have passed), AND they must be cleared for return to school, in writing, by a doctor. If a doctor has cleared a child or employee for return to school sooner, she/he MUST state in writing " (Patient's Name) was seen and evaluated by me, (Doctor's Name) , on (Today's date) . I have diagnosed him/her as follows: (Diagnosis) . I have determined that the patient does NOT have COVID-19 and is able to return to a group childcare setting without placing any other child or adult at risk." The letter must include the doctor's name, address, telephone number, signature AND medical license number.

### **Respiratory Symptoms**

Any student showing any signs of a potentially-concerning respiratory issue, such as: excessive coughing, tugging in the chest, wheezing, shortness of breath, etc., will be sent home immediately, and may not return for at least 10 days (a 7-day quarantine/observation period, plus 3 additional healthy days -- *symptom-free, without the use of medication* -- after the first 7 days have passed), AND they must be cleared for return to school, in writing, by a doctor.

### **Staff Health & Wellness**

Staff will receive additional training on infection control and workplace disinfection. Staff will check their temperature at the beginning of each shift and notify their supervisor if it is  $\geq 100.4$ , as well as self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They will notify their supervisor immediately if they develop a fever or any respiratory symptoms. Staff will not be allowed to work if they are feeling ill or experiencing respiratory symptoms.

Staff will have access to anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, cloth masks, plastic face shields, disinfectant wipes and other PPE, and they will use them as appropriate. Staff will not share their phone, devices, food or utensils with one another or with children.

### **COVID-19 Notification**

If a child, or anyone in the child's home, or anyone who has been in close, direct contact with the child for more than 10 minutes total, at any time in the last 14 days, has a positive COVID-19 test result, then the child's family must inform The Caring Center via phone and/or email within 24 hours. The child will be required to stay home in quarantine for a minimum of 14 days since the last contact with the infected individual. The same policies and procedures apply for all Caring Center employees.

The names of anyone affected by COVID-19 - either with symptoms themselves or who may be asked to self-quarantine due to exposure - will only be shared with individuals who need to know this information in order to perform their job. For example, the Health Department must



be notified if someone has COVID-19 at The Caring Center, and they will request to know who has been potentially exposed to the infected individual, for contact tracing purposes.

If a child, staff member, or family member thereof contracts COVID-19, our community will respond with care and compassion, and appropriate actions will be taken (including prompt notification) to protect others. It is pointless to cast blame or ill will toward anyone for how they may have contracted or unwittingly spread infection. Actions or words demonstrating bias, prejudice, or blame against any person(s) or group(s) will not be tolerated.

### **Quarantine Policy**

If a child or Caring Center employee, or anyone in the child or employee's home, or anyone who has been in close, direct contact with the child or employee for more than 10 minutes at any time in the last 14 days, has a positive COVID-19 test result, the employee or child's family must inform The Caring Center via phone and/or email within 24 hours. The child or employee and their family will be required to stay home for a minimum of 14 days.

If your child is in a classroom cohort with someone (child or adult) who is discovered to be infected with COVID-19, and the infected individual was in class, or otherwise in close contact with your child for any amount of time within the 48 hours *before* symptoms appeared (or since), you will be notified, and the entire class (including your child) must remain home in quarantine for 14 days. Please be prepared with an alternate plan for childcare in the event that quarantine becomes necessary for your child.

### **Travel / Quarantine**

In accordance with the state of PA's updated guidance RE: travel / quarantine restrictions, The Caring Center no longer requires families or staff members to quarantine following travel out-of-state. The CDC recommends that everyone continue to avoid unnecessary travel and continue to follow all established protocols (e.g., masking-wearing, distancing, handwashing, etc.). We ask everyone to operate with caution if they must travel. We also request that anyone who travels out of state get tested upon their return. You must notify us immediately of any positive COVID test results. This policy is the same for all Caring Center children and employees.

### **Closing of the Center**

If a child or employee in attendance at the center is discovered to have both a cough AND a fever (i.e., COVID-like illness), then we must close the facility for 24-hours for deep cleaning and sanitizing, in accordance with public health regulations.

If a parent, family member or another person living in the household of a child or employee of The Caring Center has been informed that they may have COVID-19, then the child or employee living with that person will be immediately excluded from the center, and any classrooms where people have had close contact with that particular child or employee may need to be immediately shut down for at least 24 hours (or longer), for deep cleaning and sanitization. If the test is negative, the center will re-open as soon as possible, after thorough cleaning and sanitizing. If the test result is positive, however, any impacted classrooms (i.e., rooms where a





confirmed infected person spent 10 or more minutes since their exposure to COVID-19) will be closed for 14 days. Any / all children and staff who have been in the affected classroom will be required to quarantine at-home for 14 days before they can return to school.

### **Billing for Tuition / Family Co-Pays**

As long as The Caring Center is open and your child is enrolled, tuition, fees and/or family co-pays will be due in-full, as usual. This is true, even if you choose to keep your child(ren) at home for any number of day(s), for any reason; even if your child stays home or is sent home due to illness, goes on vacation, or is required to stay home as a result of The Caring Center's quarantine policy; it is true even if the center must be temporarily closed as the result of an emergency or as a result of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case or exposure risk.

In order to retain your child's spot for enrollment, you must continue to timely pay your full, normal tuition or co-pay amount, even if your child is not actually in attendance during the billing period. If you choose, your child may leave the program at any time; however, we cannot guarantee that we will have a spot available if you should request to return at a later date. If the State of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia and/or local health authorities force the closure of center for a period of 15 days or more, billing of tuition / fees will be temporarily suspended until the center is able to re-open.

### **What to bring when your child comes to school**

- A tote bag with handles (*Please put the rest of the items on this list in your tote bag :)*)
- Diapers & Wipes (*if your child uses them*)
- Bottles, including breastmilk or formula (for infants)
- Medications (*if any*) – Please be sure to submit an updated [Medication Authorization Form](#). All medications must be in their original box with the child's name and prescription attached. Medications must not be expired.
- A few child-sized face masks that comfortably fit your child (*ages 2+ only*)
- A clean fitted crib sheet, and a small blanket
- Two (2) full changes of comfortable, seasonally-appropriate clothing for your child
- One (1) pair of slippers or 'inside shoes' to be worn indoors only (children must remove their 'outside' shoes when entering the building)
- Sippy Cup (for young toddlers)
- Water bottle (for Pre-K)
- Pacifier (for infants, if needed)
- Sunscreen
- A hat
- Bathing suit & towel – *only needed during the summer months*

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

*\* Remember to label EVERYTHING clearly with your child's name*

*\*\* Clothing, bedding and personal items will be sent home at the end of each week for cleaning.*





## **Summary of The Caring Center's Pandemic Response Plan**

Our Pandemic Response Plan focuses on five broad strategic priorities for mitigating infection risk: (1) Restrict gatherings, (2) Promote social distancing, (3) Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts, (4) Promote healthy habits, and (5) Implement additional food safety procedures.

Below are examples of new / updated policies and protocols that address each of these strategic priorities.

### **Restrict gatherings:**

- Until further notice, nonessential visitors and/or volunteers are restricted from entering The Caring Center's facilities (to include mail or food delivery persons, sales reps, etc.)
- No in-person program tours will be given, and no visits from any prospective parents or other guests will be allowed until further notice
- Direct contact with parents will be limited as much as possible. We will prioritize communicating with parents and giving them updates on their children electronically (e.g., using Instagram, email, Zoom and/or via phone).
- Children will not play or have close contact with other children outside their own class cohorts
- Children will not participate in any field trips, and there will be no bus trips or use of any public transportation until further notice (i.e., outdoor / walking trips ONLY will be permitted, within the neighborhood immediately surrounding The Caring Center)
- No public / neighborhood playground equipment will be used (i.e., children may ONLY use TCC's playground equipment, after it has been properly sanitized prior to their use)

### **Promote Social Distancing**

- Create consistent class cohorts of children / staff (restrict movement between groups)
- Minimize contact and crowding at pick-up and drop-off, through the use of multiple assigned entrance/exit points.
- Newly-enrolled infant parents (only) may enter the building. Otherwise, building access is restricted to *only* enrolled children and essential personnel
- Children will regularly participate in outdoor / open-air activities
- Some admin. staff will work reduced schedules and/or will be asked to work from home

### **Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts**

- Bathroom facilities and floors will be cleaned and disinfected at least 2X times per day
- Cleaning / sanitizing of high-touch surfaces will be repeated at least 4X per day in all classrooms, lobbies, hallways and public spaces (including items like knobs, latches switches, faucets, handles, railings, countertops, etc.)
- Vacuuming will be done daily, throughout the building, using HEPA-filtered vacuums
- The entire facility will be cleaned and sanitized throughout, every night after closing
- Playground equipment will be wiped down and disinfected after each group's use
- All strollers / wagons will be immediately cleaned and disinfected after each use



- All toys will be washed after use, and toys will be rotated daily – at end of day, toys will be removed from the classroom to be cleaned and sanitized before they are re-used
- Any “mouthed” toys will be immediately removed. Staff will clean and disinfect these toys before they are used again
- Cloth toys or toys that are hard-to-clean will be removed from rotation indefinitely
- All children’s personal items will be sent home at the end of each week for thorough cleaning (this includes nap time items, changes of clothing and any other student personal items)
- All student cubbies, bins and lockers will be cleaned and disinfected each Friday
- HEPA filtration units run continuously in all classrooms, meeting spaces and staff break rooms throughout the facility, to ensure constant filtering of indoor air

### **Promote Healthy Habits**

- Mask Wearing
  - All staff / adults at The Caring Center MUST properly wear an approved mask at all times, except during meals or outdoor break time. If using a disposable mask, a new mask must be used each day. If using a cloth mask, masks must be laundered every day.
  - All children (ages 2+) at The Caring Center MUST wear a mask at all times, except during meals and nap time, or during outdoor recreation – if appropriate social distance (6 feet of space) can be maintained. The Caring Center can provide masks, or children may wear their own from home. Cloth masks must be washed daily.
- Promoting good hand hygiene
  - Staff and children will wash their hands with soap and water, or disinfect with hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the facility, at least hourly throughout the day, and immediately prior to leaving the facility.
  - Staff will wash their hands before preparing food and ensure that children wash their hands prior to and immediately after eating
  - Staff will wear gloves while preparing food/ bottles and feeding children or giving them bottles.
  - Staff will wash their hands and ensure that children wash their hands immediately after toileting.

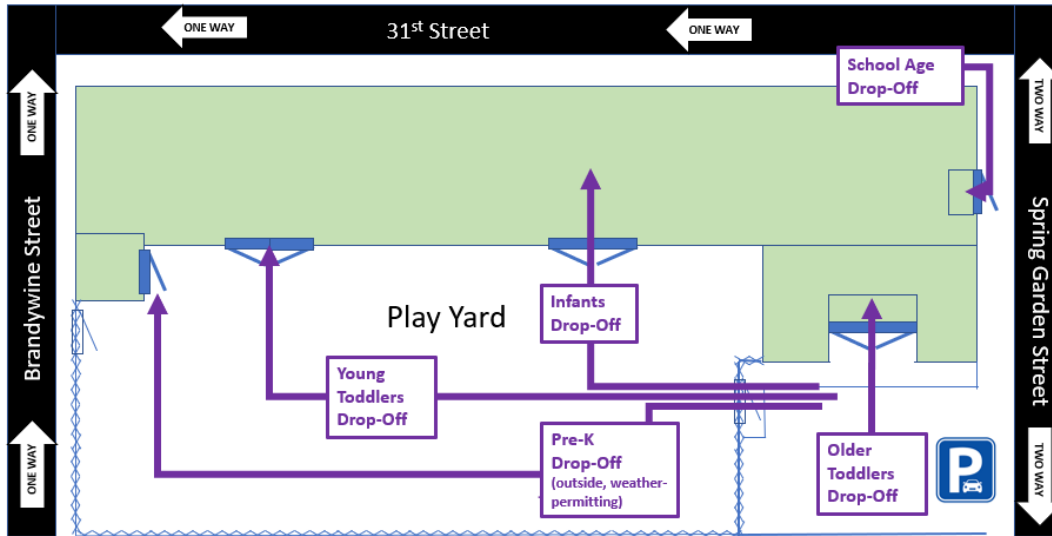
### **Implement additional food safety procedures**

- NO ONE will be allowed to enter the kitchen at any time, except Caring Center staff who are specifically licensed for food prep / service
- “Family-style” meal service is no longer permitted. At meal times, Caring Center staff will prepare and plate a full meal for each child, and then serve it to him/her directly.
- Children will not share or pass utensils, plates or cups between them.



## Main Building Drop-off & Pick-up Locations

Assigned based on child's class. If you have more than 1 child, take all children to the drop-off / pick-up location for the *youngest child's* class first.



\* The School Age class has been moved to the SAR (at the top of the stairs in the main building).

\*\* Children enrolled in PK4 and KT should enter the exterior doors to the Enrichment Academy (as usual) and complete drop-off / pre-screen procedures in the outer vestibule.

