



Growing Kids Learning Centers Student Illness & Coronavirus Health Protocol

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Introduction

Growing Kids Learning Centers' first priority is the health and safety of the children and adults at the center. These guidelines address the steps that the center is taking to protect and promote the overall health of the children and adults at the center. While COVID-19 is the most pressing health issue currently, other illnesses and diseases still present a risk as well. All will be covered within this protocol. As best practice recommendations continue to evolve, Growing Kids continues to monitor new developments and will adjust accordingly. Our sources of guidance are

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for Early Childhood Environments.
 - o The most recent is Nov 10, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/child-care-guidance.html#print>
- Indiana Child Care Center Licensing (FSSA Office Of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning "OECOSL").
 - o The most recent complete guidance is Nov 19, 2021, <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/files/OECOSL-ECE-Guidelines-for-COVID-19.pdf>
 - o The most recent partial guidance on isolation and quarantine is January 19, 2022, <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/files/6041-OECOSL-COVID-Guidance.pdf>

Because a licensed child care center setting is different than a K-12 school setting, the guidance from the CDC, Departments of Health, and FSSA are different, which may cause differences in policy and procedure. This includes possible differences in mask & quarantining requirements.

The purpose of this protocol is to

1. Implement policies and procedures that limit the transmission of general illnesses and COVID-19 at the center
2. Implement additional cleaning and sanitizing policies and procedures, as needed, to combat COVID-19
3. Outline the steps that will be taken to identify close contacts, isolate people who are COVID-19 positive or are displaying symptoms
4. Outline the steps that will be taken when there is a positive case of COVID-19 within the center.

Management Team at the Center

Each center has a management team overseeing the implementation of the illness and health protocols. The team consists of the Center Director, the Assistant Director, and the Area Director assigned to that center. Other front desk staff may assist as well. The Growing Kids Chief Operating Officer is available as needed. The majority of student illness is readily handled by the Center Director or the Assistant Director (ex. Contacting parents, determining when a student can safely return to school, etc.). The center's Area Director is available as needed, as well.

- When a staff member believes a child may not be feeling well or is displaying symptoms of illness, the staff member should contact the front office to coordinate the response.
- The center management team is also a resource for all center staff members for any questions or assistance.

Prevention Strategies

To limit the spread of any illness, best practice is to implement a multi-layered prevention strategy. Especially with airborne respiratory illnesses, an approach that includes multiple strategies recognizes that no single measure is 100% effective and multiple strategies increase overall success within the center.

Prevention Strategy 1 – Vaccines

Vaccines are a critical component to addressing COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. Vaccines prevent serious symptoms, hospitalizations, and death. A child's healthcare provider is the best source of information as to which vaccines are appropriate for the individual child. Growing Kids tracks vaccinations and immunizations as part of each student's health record at the center.

COVID-19 Vaccination - Growing Kids does not require COVID-19 vaccination for any student or adult. We highly recommend the vaccine for anyone eligible to get it.

- A staff member can choose whether to reveal their vaccination status.
- For the purposes of this policy, a COVID-19 vaccinated person is someone who has chosen to provide Growing Kids with documentation of complete vaccination, including any recommended booster doses.
- Anyone who cannot or chooses not to provide COVID-19 vaccination documentation is considered unvaccinated.

Prevention Strategy 2 – Consistent and Correct Mask Use

Face masks or face coverings have been shown to be an effective deterrent to the spread of disease spread by respiratory droplet (including COVID-19, RSV, influenza, the common cold, and many others). These masks are defined as cloth or disposable, preferably with two layers of tightly woven material that covers the nose and mouth. It may be secured by straps around the head or loops around the ears.

- Clear plastic shields that extend down from the forehead are not a substitute for face coverings.
- Correct Mask Use means covering the mouth and nose.
- Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Children under the age of two years will NOT wear masks.
- Mask use indoors is always allowed, for anyone over the age of 2 years old.
- Mask Use Requirement by vaccinated and / or unvaccinated individuals over the age of 2 years old will be determined for each Growing Kids center based on local conditions by the Company President.

- The Center Director will communicate the mask use requirements to students, parents / adults, and staff.
- Masks usage by children or adults is only one component of a prevention strategy. Mask usage or requirement will be considered in the context of all the components of the overall prevention strategy.

Prevention Strategy 3 – Physical Distancing, Health Screening, and Cohorting

A critical component of combating COVID-19 is social distancing. Maintaining physical distance is often not feasible in an early childhood setting. Since it is not always feasible to maintain physical distancing, Growing Kids will layer multiple prevention strategies.

- Whenever possible, unvaccinated individuals should practice social distancing of at least 6' of separation between each other when indoors. When outside, a distance of 3' is recommended.
- Growing Kids will promote keeping the same group of children and adults together during the day as a separate group, avoiding any mixing when possible. This practice is called "cohorting" or "pods." Keeping every group completely separate throughout the entire day cannot be assured given the attendance schedule of the children and the number of children enrolled.
- At naptime, cots will be spaced as far apart as possible, with the children facing head to toe to further reduce the potential for viral spread. Masks will not be worn while sleeping.
- Classroom groups of children shall be kept separate on the playground as much as possible. A typical Growing Kids Learning Center has multiple playground areas to support this separation.
- In Main Street and any other commonly used room, one class (cohort) at a time will use the room. Cleaning will be done consistent with FSSA guidelines.
- School-wide or classroom events will resume as long as social distancing guidelines can be followed.
- To reduce the risk of infection, unvaccinated staff members should maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other staff members while at Growing Kids.

Daily Drop off & Pick Up

The following steps are designed to reduce exposure by adults dropping off / picking up their children and by other adults who enter the building.

- Prior to drop off, parents should check that their child does not display any of the signs of illness. See the COVID-19 Screening information from the Indiana Department of Health at the end of this document.
- Children should wash their hands with soap and water when entering the classroom. Adults should assist younger children as needed.
- Parents can drop-off / pick up their child at their classroom, similar to pre-COVID-19 practice, with the following requirements:

- Social Distancing – Parents can enter the classroom for drop-off and pick-up. Parents should observe social distancing guidelines. If unable, parents can wait outside the classroom in the hall until space becomes available.
- Time in the Classroom – Parents will be reminded to limit time spent in the classroom to limit possible exposure.
- Staggered drop off / pick up – Since the Growing Kids school day does not have a specific start and end time, our drop-offs and pick-ups are naturally staggered throughout the day, consistent with FSSA guidance.

Strategy 4 – Ventilation

Improved ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. Bringing fresh outdoor air into a building helps keep virus particles from concentrating inside. Taking children outside through regular outdoor activities allows the room air to settle and increases the exchange of air, reducing the concentration of particles in the air in the room.

- Growing Kids ventilation systems have the fans run continuously to improve air circulation and filtration.
- The Growing Kids ventilation systems have always included a percentage of fresh air be introduced into the building while the fans are running.
- Room air purifiers with HEPA filters may be used in the classrooms for additional air exchange. Filters will be changed as recommended and/or necessary.

Strategy 5 – Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette are important components to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses, including COVID-19. The center will monitor and reinforce the following:

- Staff and children should continue to practice proper handwashing procedures in compliance with state regulation and accreditation standards. Staff and children are required to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water at the following times:
 - Arrival at the center and after breaks
 - When they enter a classroom
 - Before and after preparing food or drinks
 - Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
 - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
 - After diapering
 - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
 - After playing outdoors or in sand
 - After handling garbage
 - Staff members should wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles prepared at home or those prepared in the center.

- Only if handwashing is not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer.
 - o Specifically per OECOSL, hand sanitizer must be stored up, away and out of sight of young children and should only be used with adult supervision for children under the age of 6 years old.
- Wearing gloves is not necessary for protection from COVID-19 in most situations, proper handwashing is generally sufficient. Wearing gloves is recommended when cleaning and disinfecting, or when caring for someone who is sick with COVID-19.

Strategy 6 – Staying Home when Sick, Getting Tested, and Isolating

Children and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as RSV, influenza (flu), or COVID-19, should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. The overlap between COVID-19 symptoms with other common illnesses means that some people with symptoms of COVID-19 could be ill with something else. This is even more likely in young children, who typically have multiple viral illnesses each year. Although COVID-19, colds, and flu illnesses have similar symptoms, they are different diseases.

Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of the center and prevent spread to others.

When to Stay Home and Not Attend School

Children and Adults who have symptoms of infectious illness or symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school. Specific symptoms to pay particular attention to include:

- Any symptoms identified as COVID-19.
- Fever (temperature over 100.4° F).
- Sore throat.
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or stomachache.
- New onset of severe headache.
- New cough that causes difficulty breathing (for a child with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, see if there is a change from their usual cough).

Other reasons a child should not attend school include:

- In the first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment
- If they are not feeling well enough to participate in outdoor activities.

People who Display Symptoms of Illness, Including Coronavirus

While COVID-19 may be the most urgent medical issue, other diseases and illnesses still present a risk. Since Growing Kids staff are not medical professionals, we do not diagnose any person. We use symptoms that we can observe or measure to indicate if a person should not attend the center. We will follow a medical professional's specific orders for a person, provided those orders do not violate any Growing Kids policy.

- Children who are found to be ill while at the center (COVID-19 or other) will be isolated in the front office area until they are picked up. Supervision will be maintained. Staff who are found ill will isolate until they are able to leave the center.
- The isolation area will be cleaned and disinfected according to current guidelines.
- We cannot keep a child inside during outdoor activities without a doctor's note. It is assumed that if a child is well-enough to attend school, he/she can participate in all the planned activities.
- A person who has symptoms of COVID-19 should seek a COVID-19 test and isolate until the results are known.

When an Individual Tests Positive for COVID-19 and COVID-19 Isolation

The current COVID-19 isolation protocol can be found on Attachment #1, at the end of this document. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the Center Management Team handles the center's response, including:

- Immediately Isolating the positive individual from the center to limit potential exposure to others.
- Perform Close Contact Tracing to identify others who may be at risk and must quarantine.

Strategy 7 – Notification, Contact Tracing, and Quarantine

Notification - Growing Kids will continue to report any COVID-19 positive cases to the local department of health and the OECOSL Child Care Licensing. All other communicable diseases will be reported as well.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing and Quarantining

The Center Management Team will conduct Contact Tracing as needed when there is a positive case of COVID-19. This is a process defined by the CDC to determine who is a "Close Contact" of a positive person, and who has to quarantine. The current quarantine protocol can be found on Attachment #1, at the end of this document.

- Close Contact – The CDC defines a close contact as someone who has been closer than 6 feet for longer than a total of 15 minutes per 24-hour period *to a person who has tested positive*, in the 48 hours prior to symptoms or a positive test.
- The only people who are close contacts are the people who meet these conditions. People who are close to a close contact (A close contact of a close contact) do not have to take any additional precautions.

Communication of a Close Contact and Quarantine Requirements

The Center Management Team will communicate with the people affected by the positive case, generally through the LifeCubby app.

- The Center Management Team will have the most accurate and complete information, and will be able to provide a single, coordinated communication channel.
- The Center Management Team will coordinate with state and local health authorities as required.

- Staff members are discouraged from communicating close contact status with any other adult or child, as it can cause confusion and misunderstanding.
- Staff members should provide any relevant information to the Center Management Team.

Strategy 8 – Cleaning and Disinfecting

It is important to note that surface transmission of disease spread by respiratory droplet or COVID-19 is rare. Unless the space was occupied by someone confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 24 hours, cleaning with soap and water of most surfaces outside of food service and medical environments is acceptable.

- If a space contained a COVID-19 positive person within the past 24 hours, the space should be empty for a few hours before cleaning and disinfecting. Persons cleaning the space should mask and glove and open windows if possible while cleaning, followed by disinfecting.
- If it has been more than 24 hours since the COVID positive person was present, soap and water cleaning of surfaces is sufficient.
- If more than three days have elapsed since the COVID positive person was present, no additional cleaning needs to occur. Disinfectants should continue to be used on areas of public high touch areas such as public facing door handles.

Cleaning Toys and Other Classroom Materials

- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should 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 product safe for food contact surfaces and air-dry or clean in a mechanical dishwasher. Be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child's mouth, like play food, dishes and utensils.
- Machine washable cloth toys should be used by one individual at a time or should not be used at all. These toys should be laundered before being used by another child.
- When children are cohorted, toys should not be shared between cohorts unless they are first washed.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Place in a dishpan of soapy water or a container marked "soiled toys." Keep the containers out of the reach of children. For most toys, soapy water is sufficient for cleaning. Small toys can be placed in a mesh lingerie/garment bag and put into a dishwasher or washing machine.
- Children's books and other paper-based materials are not considered a high risk for transmission of germs and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
- Electronic devices should be cleaned with an alcohol-based wipe between uses.
- If there is a high incidence of community illness, difficult to clean items should not be shared for 24–72 hours. If items need to be reused in under 24 hours items should be disinfected.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Clothing, Bedding, and other Cloth Articles.

- Transmission of germs from cloth/clothing is rare. Cloth articles cannot be disinfected and washing with soap and water is effective in reducing the number of germs on clothing.

- Infants, toddlers, and their teachers should have multiple changes of clothing on hand at the center.
 - o Clothing should be changed if there are visible secretions on clothing. Consider having multiple smocks or oversize shirts available for staff who work in infant and toddler rooms.
- Contaminated clothing should be placed in a plastic bag, labeled with how it is contaminated and sent home to be washed or washed in a washing machine at the child care.
- Use bedding (e.g., sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed. Keep each child's bedding separate and consider storing in individually labeled bins, cubbies or bags. Bedding that touches a child's skin should be cleaned weekly or before use by another child.
- Cots and mats should be labeled for each child. Clean and sanitize weekly or before use by another child.

Additional Considerations and Measures

Confidentiality

Medical information is confidential. Staff members may become aware of an adult's or student's medical information through the course of business at the center. Regardless, that information cannot be shared with others outside of the Center Management Team. For COVID-19 in particular, Growing Kids and its staff members cannot disclose if a person has tested positive or negative, vaccination status or other medical information.

To limit the disclosure of information, when referring to a positive case within the center, the preferred language is that an "individual tested positive", rather than stating the positive person was an adult or child. If a person chooses to disclose their own medical information to others, that person has that right.

Tours and Visitors to the Center

- All tours and visitors need to comply with current policies, including face coverings and health screenings.
- Tours and visitors are not allowed to enter classrooms currently occupied by children, instead remaining in the hall, unoccupied classrooms, or other public areas.
- Virtual tours are available through applications like FaceTime, etc.

Transporting Children

Growing Kids has a separate transportation protocol designed to work with this policy.

Medication Administration

For those students who are able to attend and require medication while at the center, Growing Kids is able to administer some medication throughout the day. There is a separate Medication Administration policy to address this.

Nebulizer Use Not Supported / Alternatives

Children who require medication using a nebulizer are encouraged to discuss with their doctors switching to single dose inhalers or other alternatives. Nebulizer use at Growing Kids is no longer supported due to COVID-19 requirements. If a child does require a nebulizer treatment during the day, the parent will have to develop an alternate plan of care with the child's doctor and the center director to meet the child's needs.

Additional Information

Additional information can be found at www.GrowingKids.com

Staff Member Training Acknowledgement



Growing Kids Learning Centers Student Illness & Coronavirus Health Protocol

My signature below indicates that I have read and understood this policy and have received a copy of it. My signature further acknowledges and agrees that I will continue to read and familiarize myself with its contents and follow the policies and rules indicated.

Staff Member Name: _____

Staff Member Signature & Date: _____

Attachment 1 Growing Kids Isolation and Quarantine Summary Rules.

These rules are based on the most recent guidance from the CDC, Indiana Department of Health and the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (State Child Care Licensing) specifically for early childhood environments.

- The rules for elementary schools and the general public may be different.

Key points:

- Mask Wearing is an essential part of the shortened isolation and quarantine times.
 - o Mask wearing does not exempt an individual from quarantining.
 - o Correct Mask Use means covering the mouth and nose.
- Children who cannot or will not consistently wear a mask will need to isolate or quarantine at home the full time.
 - o Wearing a mask applies to indoor settings.
 - o Children under 24 mo. are not allowed to wear a mask.
 - o Masks will not be worn during meals/snacks or while a child is sleeping.
- Quarantine assumes that the person remains symptom-free during that time. If symptoms present, then the person should get tested for COVID.
- The full 10-day quarantine is available to any student.
- Doctor's Notes – We are unable to accept Doctor's notes that reduce the times / steps necessary for isolation and quarantine.
- Fully Vaccinated - Individuals who have received the required initial doses of the vaccine including any recommended booster doses. Definition by the CDC.

COVID Tests – Based on specific guidance by the OECOSL Nurse:

- Testing to determine a POSITIVE result – If person suspects s/he as COVID,
 - o A professionally administered test is acceptable, or
 - o A “home” test is acceptable, as well, or
 - o A note from a health care provider.
- Testing to determine a NEGATIVE result – Only a professionally administered test (ex. by a doctor, pharmacy, etc) will be accepted, including the person's name and the date.

Quarantine Extension at Home for a Student when a Family Member is positive:

When a student is a close contact of a positive person who lives in the same household,

- If the positive person cannot isolate and does NOT wear a mask consistently, then the student's quarantine starts on Day 10 of the positive person's isolation.
- If the positive person cannot isolate and can wear a mask consistently, the student's quarantine starts on Day 6 of the positive person's isolation.

Growing Kids Learning Center COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Summary Chart

Eff. 1/27/2022

Age Group	Isolation (Tested Positive)	Quarantine (Close Contact)
Infants (Not allowed to wear a mask)	10 days if no fever for 24 hours and symptoms improving ^{1,3}	Stay home for 10 days ^{1,3} .
Toddlers (Not allowed to wear a mask)	10 days if no fever for 24 hours and symptoms improving ^{1,3}	Stay home for 10 days ^{1,3} .
Young Preschool (Assumed these students are unable to consistently wear a mask.)	10 days if no fever for 24 hours and symptoms improving ^{1,3}	Stay home for 10 days ^{1,3} . Other options are not available as it is assumed children this age are unable to consistently wear a mask at school.
Preschool Students	a) Return on day 6 if no fever for 24 hours and symptoms improving, must wear a mask through day 10 ^{1,3} . Or b) Isolate for 10 days ³ .	<u>COVID+ within 90 days:</u> wear a mask for 10 days ¹ . <u>Not fully Vacc:</u> Can return on Day 6 w/ <u>mask through Day 10</u> ¹ . Test on Day 5 “encouraged ³ .” OR Can return after Day 10 if cannot/won’t mask.
School Age Students (5-12 yrs)	a) Return on day 6 if no fever for 24 hours and symptoms improving, must wear a mask through day 10 ^{1,3} . Or b) Isolate for 10 days ³ .	<u>COVID+ within 90 days or Fully Vaccinated:</u> wear a mask for 10 days ¹ . <u>Not fully Vacc:</u> Can return on Day 6 w/ <u>mask through Day 10</u> ¹ . Test on Day 5 “encouraged ³ .” OR Can return after Day 10 if cannot/won’t mask.
Adults	a) Return on day 6 if no fever for 24 hours and symptoms improving, must wear a mask through day 10 ^{1,3} . Or b) Isolate for 10 days ³ .	<u>COVID+ within 90 days or Fully Vaccinated:</u> wear a mask for 10 days ¹ . <u>Not fully Vacc:</u> Can return on Day 6 w/ <u>mask through Day 10</u> ¹ . Test on Day 5 “encouraged ³ .” OR Can return after Day 10 if cannot/won’t mask.

Return Date subject to staff availability.

For Quarantine, a Negative Test on Day 5 is now “encouraged,” no longer required³.

Adults who “can’t quarantine must wear a mask for 10 days.”²

Sources:

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#closecontact> (1/20/22)

² <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html> (12/27/2021)

³ <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/files/6041-OECOSL-COVID-Guidance.pdf> (1/19/2022)

⁴ <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/files/OECOSL-ECE-Guidelines-for-COVID-19.pdf> (11/19/2021)

⁵ <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/K-12-Guidance-1.6.22.pdf> (1/6/2022)

COVID-19 Screening for Parents

Every morning before you send your child to school please check for signs of illness:



FEVER 100.4* OR CHILLS

*or school board policy if threshold is lower



SORE THROAT



COUGH* OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH

*especially new onset, uncontrolled cough



DIARRHEA, NAUSEA OR VOMITING, ABDOMINAL PAIN



HEADACHE*

*particularly new onset of severe headache, especially with fever



NEW LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL

**May present with more than one symptom. This list does not include all possible symptoms.*

- 1 Does your child have any sign of illness above?
 - 2 Were you in close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) with anyone confirmed with COVID-19?
 - 3 If the answer is **YES** to any of the questions, **DO NOT** send your student to school. Instead, begin isolation of your child and contact your healthcare provider. Have you been tested for COVID-19? Only a positive test or provider diagnosis can confirm if someone has a current infection.
 - 4 Please keep your student home until they meet the criteria.
- ➔ If you have trouble breathing, chest pain, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake or bluish lips or face **CALL 911!**



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