

# Early Childhood Programs

KOOTASCA Head Start  
201 NW 4<sup>th</sup> St; Suite 130 • Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
218.999.0814 • Fax 999-0842  
  
2232 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave • International Falls, MN 56649  
218.283.9491 • Fax 283-9855  
www.kootasca.org

Invest Early Project  
820 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave • Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
218.327.5850 • Fax 327-5851 •  
investearly@isd6070.org  
www.investearly.org

School Readiness  
ISD 316 • Greenway Schools 218.247.7306  
ISD 317 • Deer River Schools 218.246.8860  
ISD 318 • Grand Rapids Schools 218.327.5850  
ISD 319 • Nashwauk-Keewatin School 218.885.1280  
ISD 363 • Northome 218.897.5275

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## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

### • Frequent Handwashing

- All children, staff, and volunteers will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:
  - Arrival to the facility and after breaks
  - 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
  - Before and after diapering
  - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
  - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
  - After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
  - After playing outdoors or in sand
  - After handling garbage
- 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.
- Staff will assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
  - After assisting children with handwashing, staff will also wash their hands.

### • Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Staff will follow MDH & CDC cleaning & disinfecting guidance to ensure proper techniques/recommendations are used.
- High touched surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, stair rails, counters, tables and chairs, shared toys, program equipment and other items are regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Staff will minimize the use of shared supplies (e.g. arts and crafts, office supplies) that cannot be sanitized and consider using designated bins for clean and used items.
- Procedures for disinfecting when someone has become ill at the center are described under “Plans for Sick Children, Staff and Volunteers” section.

Please refer to Sections 12 and 14 of the COVID-19 Resource Guide for more information.

### • Arrival and Departure

#### Child Screening Process:

- A temperature check – temperature should be below 100.4°. Infra-red non-contact thermometers will be used.
- A visual assessment of the child for signs of illness which could include:
  - Flushed cheeks;
  - Rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity);
  - Fatigue; and/or
  - Extreme Fussiness, confirm child is not experiencing shortness of breath or coughing

- If the temperature is below 100.4° AND the assessment shows no signs of illness, the child can enter the program space. The child must proceed to wash their hands before having any contact with other children or staff. Younger children may need additional support from staff to use good handwashing techniques. If soap, water and sink are not available in the immediate location, hand sanitizer may be used then followed by immediate handwashing. Hand sanitizer must never be within reach of any children.
- An interview asking the following questions:
  - In the past 10 days, has the child been ill or anyone who has been ill?
  - Any new onset or worsening cough?
  - Any shortness of breath?
  - Any of the following? Chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell?
- If the assessment shows signs of illness OR the temperature is above 100.4°, the child WILL NOT BE ALLOWED to enter the program space.
- Children will have their temperature taken at the end of day.
  - If child has a temperature over 100.4°, they will not be allowed to attend for the next period of time per the “Decision Tree.”

### **Adult Screening Process:**

- A temperature check – temperature should be below 100.4°. Infrared non-contact thermometers will be used.
  - An interview asking the following questions:
    - In the past 10 days, have you been ill or anyone who has been ill?
    - Any new onset or worsening cough?
    - Any shortness of breath?
    - Any of the following? Chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
- If the temperature is below 100.4° AND the answer to all questions is “No”, the staff/visitor can enter the program space. The staff/visitor must proceed to wash their hands before having any contact with children or other staff.
- If the answer to any of the questions are “Yes” OR the temperature is above 100.4°, the staff/visitor WILL NOT BE ALLOWED to enter the program space and will be asked to return home.

If any symptoms are noted during the screening, the staff, child or visitor is excluded in accordance with the MDH COVID-19 guidelines for 10 days from symptom onset or 3 days with no fever and improvement of other symptoms, whichever is longer.

Staff will be screened one time per day prior to entering.

Please refer to Sections 3 & 16 of the COVID-19 Resource Guide for further information.

### **Plans for Sick Children, Staff, and Volunteers**

- Staff will conduct daily health checks. This includes screening for children, staff, volunteers, and household members for family child care programs to ensure those who exhibit any symptoms of illness are not present.
- We will follow the exclusion guidance and ensure children, staff, and volunteers stay home when sick: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf>
- If someone becomes sick with COVID-like symptoms while in our care, the following steps will be taken:
  - Staff will wear medical grade mask
  - An isolation room/area will be provided
  - All areas used by the person will be closed off

- Outside doors & windows will be opened to allow for increased air circulation (whenever possible).
- Isolation area will be cleaned & disinfected after the sick person has gone home.
- Contact with MDH & CDC will be made & center will follow their recommendations.
- If center has a case in the facility, we will make a plan based on the recommendations from MDH and Public Health at that time.

Please refer to Sections 1-2 and 4-6 of the COVID-19 Resource Guide for further information.

### • Social Distancing Throughout the Day

- Social Distancing is proving to be an effective strategy in limiting the exposure of COVID.
  - Staff will stay 6ft apart from other staff and if they need to be closer, they will ensure that is for no longer than 15 minutes and preferably wearing a mask or face shield when doing so.
  - Classrooms will be limited to no more than 10 people (staff/children) and will stay consistent with children, staff or volunteers.
  - Staff will promote social distancing throughout the day in the center, classroom & outside.
  - At nap time, children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible. Children will be placed in a head to toe position in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

### • Source Control and Cloth Face Coverings

- We will follow the face covering requirements outlined under the Executive Order 20-81.
  - a. Staff members will wear face coverings in all communal areas where groups may intermix.
  - b. Face coverings will be worn at all times by staff who intermix between classrooms.
  - c. Masks are not mandated to wear coverings or shields that are confined to one group or cohort of children. We strongly encourage our staff to wear covering or shields in these setting to the extent possible, especially when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless wearing a covering or shield would interfere with the early childhood development process.
  - d. Staff may remove coverings for eating, drinking & physical activities.
  - e. Exemptions include: staff with a medical condition, mental health condition or disability that makes it unreasonable for them to wear a face covering.
  - f. Children 5 years of age and under are not required to wear a face covering or shield in a child care setting.

Please refer to Section 8 of the COVID-19 Resource Guide for more information.

### • Workplace ventilation

- Due to some of our centers not having open window access, we are unable to support proper outside air ventilation. The centers that are able to open windows will open them as long as it does not jeopardize the safety of the children in care.
- Staff will not use any fans in the center, unless it is used to circulate outside air in.
- Staff will allow time for children to be outside as weather permits.

### • Playground Use

- Outdoor play will be offered in staggered shifts to allow for proper social distancing guidelines.
  - Only 1 classroom group use the playground at one time.
- Proper handwashing will be conducted before & after outside playtime.
- Disinfecting of center's playground equipment will be completed by a staff member per CDC guidelines.

Please refer to Section 13 of the COVID-19 Resource Guide for further information. Please see Center's Section 17 for site specific accommodations.

- **Meals and Snacks**

We will not be implementing family style dining. Staff will pre-plate each component of the meal using gloved hands. Children will not be able to touch serving utensils. If possible, children should be spaced further apart from each other at tables and all sit on the same side of the tables. Staff will still model positive eating habits.

Disposable dishes will be used when possible. Exceptions: Infants and Toddlers.

Food preparation will not be done by the same staff members that diapers children.

Children should sit with the same group and same adult daily. Place names on children's chairs.

Please refer to Section 11 of the COVID-19 Resource Guide for further information.

- **Field Trips and Events**

During COVID-19, no field trips or events will be taken.

- **Communications and Training**

The COVID-19 Plan is communicated to all staff through the resource guide and preparedness plan that has been developed using information from the Center of Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health. Our plan will continue to be updated as we receive updates from CDC/MDH.

Training for all staff will continue to be provided through in person training, the resource guide which was provided to all staff electronically and a hard copy onsite, and memos regarding processes and procedures. Additional communication and training will be ongoing as the need arises. The training is provided by the District Nurses, Head Start Health and Safety Manager, and administrative staff. They will also monitor implementation and provide further guidance and training as necessary.

**Parent Communication:**

The following items will be shared with enrolled families

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

COVID-19 Resource Guide (posted on Invest Early & Head Start websites for family & staff access)

Contact information for Head Start Health and Safety Manager, District Nurses, and administrative staff.