

**2020-2021**

**Family Handbook  
Addendum:  
COVID-19 Guidelines  
for Families**



**HEAD START**

MSU Extension Head Start-Early Head Start Programs



Table of  
**CONTENTS**

Introduction	4
Current Hours of Operation	4
Social Distancing & Classroom Management	4
Visitor Policy	5
Staying Safe in the Classroom	5
Drop-off & Pick-Up	6
Health & Symptom Check	6
Exclusion Criteria	7
Communication	8
Parent Meetings	8



# Table of **CONTENTS**

Ratios 8

Personal Belongings 8

Daily Activities 9

Class Schedules 9

Toothbrushing 9

Mealtimes 9

Outdoor Activities 10

Rest Time 10



# Introduction

We are excited to be able to welcome each child back to our centers this fall! We have been working hard to make each center as safe as possible to ensure the health and safety of each staff member and child. Due to COVID-19, we have updated many policies and protocols that will be in effect during our nation's pandemic status. Along with the family handbook, we ask that you carefully review the current policies and procedures that must be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the health and safety of all staff, children, and families that we serve. It is our goal to continue to promote the health, safety, and well-being of each staff member, child, and family. We welcome you to contact us with any questions or concerns.



## Updated Hours of Operation

We will be open to families from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM Monday through Friday. We will be closing early each day in order to properly sanitize and disinfect the center, including classrooms, kitchen, and learning materials. Once transportation is available, all buses will be sanitized and disinfected after morning and afternoon bus routes.

We are currently following recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Office of Head Start (OHS), and the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) and these policies and protocols may change frequently. We are dedicated to staying up-to-date with these protocols and will update each family as any changes are made.



## Social Distancing & Classroom Management

Classrooms will have the same students and teachers each day to limit the spread of germs. Each class will also have a separate outdoor time each day. Bathrooms will not be shared between groups and will be sanitized after each individual use.

Floater will be available to assist children to the bathroom and may also temporarily relieve teachers in their assigned classrooms. Classrooms, gross motor rooms, and bathrooms will not be shared amongst groups unless in the case of an emergency (i.e. bathroom). If classrooms need to be shared, they will be separated by dividers that allow for 6 feet of distance between groups. If bathrooms or gross motor rooms must be shared, they will be sanitized (including all toys) between each group's use.

Staff will also practice social distancing with families to limit the spread of germs.

# Visitor Policy

To protect the health and safety of staff and children at the center, no visitors will be allowed into any of our centers and our administrative office at this time. Only staff, currently enrolled children, and safety personnel will be allowed entrance into our centers. Please note we will still receive deliveries (i.e. food, learning materials, etc.) and will practice social distancing and handwashing and are required to wear a mask. A temperature check will be given to any personnel before admitted entry to the building. All learning materials delivered will be sanitized after they are received.

## Staying Safe in the Classroom

Each child will be given a disposable mask each day and are not allowed to bring masks from home. Children do not have to wear a mask:

- During gross motor play
- During nap time
- During mealtimes
- If the child has a respiratory condition noted by his/her doctor.

If a child faints or becomes unconscious while wearing a mask, the mask will be removed immediately while emergency services are contacted. If children struggle with keeping a mask on, it will be removed. Children will still practice wearing masks and staff will model proper mask-wearing.

All staff will wear disposable masks while in the center, and staff can wear MSU masks on Maroon Fridays. Disposable gowns will also be provided for staff to wear to protect clothing from direct contact with children.

Staff will wear gloves when:

- Cleaning or sanitizing
- Toileting
- Preparing food
- Doing laundry
- During children's health screenings
- When coming into contact with bodily fluid

Hands will be washed before and immediately after removing gloves.

We will be sanitizing throughout the day!

- High-touch surfaces (tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches) will be sanitized frequently
- Bathrooms will be sanitized after each individual use
- Surfaces and learning materials in learning centers will be cleaned after each individual use
- Soiled items will be immediately removed to be washed at the end of the day
- Learning materials will be sanitized by a machine that kills 99.9% of germs
- ALL cleaning supplies will be kept out of the reach of children

At each entrance there are:

- Sanitizing mats for shoes
- Portable sinks
- Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol



# Drop-off & Pick-up

To promote the health and safety of staff, children, and families, our drop-off and pick-up protocol will be altered during the COVID-19 pandemic. When possible, we ask that the same person is available for drop-off and pick-up each day. We also recommend this person is not at high-risk for COVID-19. This individual should also not be experiencing any illness, especially if it is COVID-19 related symptoms that are listed on the next page.

To encourage social distancing, we will use a staggered drop-off and pick-up schedule that's listed below:

Group	Drop-off time	Pick-up time
1, 2, 3	7:45 – 8:00 AM	12:30 – 1:00 PM
4, 5, 6	8:00 – 8:15 AM	12:30 – 1:00 PM
7, 8	8:15 – 8:30 AM	12:30 – 1:00 PM

Once you sign your child in, a staff member will take your child to his/her classroom. Child will wash his/her hands once they get to their classroom, and staff will wash hands after assisting children.

As always, please contact us if your child will not be attending the center that day. If we do not hear from you within 30 minutes at the start of the day, a Family Advocate will contact you to ensure the well-being of your child.

To stay safe during drop off and pick-up:

- the same person picks-up and drops-off the child when possible
- Wear a mask!
- Observe social distancing

Authorization decals will be provided to families to assist with the traffic flow during pick-up time. Please note that children will only be released to authorized individuals.

# Health & Symptom Check

Please keep your child home if they are sick with any illness, or if you suspect s/he has come in contact with someone who has COVID-19. It will not count against your child's attendance record if they are excused due to illness.

Each day during drop-off and pick-up, a designated staff member will check the temperature of each child using a touchless thermometer and will be recorded on the daily log. Please note that each staff member's temperature will be recorded daily during arrival and departure. Temperature must be below 100.0F to be able to attend.

If your child becomes ill during the day or shows signs of illness, s/he will be taken to a designated exclusion space. This space is quarantined from other areas of the center. The child will be supervised at all times by a staff member. Staff will wear personal protective equipment (i.e. gloves, mask, gown, etc.). **An authorized person will be required to pick up the sick child within one hour.** If we are unable to reach you, we will begin to contact individuals listed on the emergency contact list to pick up your child. If a child begins to display any life-threatening symptoms, 911 will be called immediately.



# Exclusion Criteria

Each morning during drop-off, a Health and Safety Checklist will be completed. Children who are ill should not come to school. Parents and guardians are expected to notify the center if their child(ren) becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms, tests positive for COVID-19, or has been exposed to someone with suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. In addition to the exclusion criteria provided in the family handbook, children who exhibit symptoms listed on this page will be excluded from attending.

Children who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days should remain home in a 14-day self-quarantine and parents should continue to monitor their child's symptoms. Specific guidance for readmittance after being sent home due to illness is based on local licensing standards.

## Other symptoms of exclusion include:

- visual discharge from ears or eyes
- diarrhea
- abnormal breathing
- body rash or flushed cheeks
- cough with fever
- behavior changes (e.g. lethargic, irritable)
- symptoms of measles, chicken pox, mumps, scabies, or common cold

## Symptoms of exclusion for COVID-19:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

**In addition to COVID-19 symptoms, please be aware of the exclusion symptoms of Multi Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)**

## Exclusion Symptoms of MIS-C

- Fever
- abdominal pain
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- neck pain
- rash (not due to eczema)
- bloodshot eyes
- lethargic

## Emergency Symptoms of MIS-C

- pain or pressure in chest that does not go away
- new confusion
- inability to stay awake
- bluish lips or face
- severe abdominal pain
- trouble breathing



# Communication

Since only staff and children are permitted in the building, this will limit the time that families are able to interact with their child's teachers. Regular communication is important now more than ever. Your Teacher and Family Advocate will reach out to you regularly via phone, email, Remind, ClassDojo, and newsletters, so make sure all contact information stays up-to-date. Also, feel free to contact your child's Teachers with any questions or concerns that you may have!

Remember that we will update all families regarding policy changes, potential exposure, center closings, and for other safety reasons.

## Parent Meetings



Any in-person meetings/gatherings will not be held at this time. We plan to offer our Parent Meetings virtually, and we will provide more information as these meetings are scheduled.



## Ratios



There will be up to 10 children per classroom with two teachers.

When possible, classes will include the same group each day, and the same staff will remain with the same group each day. Floaters will be available to temporarily relieve Teachers and Assistant Teachers to maintain ratios.



## Personal Belongings



**Any personal belongings from home will not be allowed at this time, with the exception of a change of clothes.** This includes blankets or stuffed animals for nap time, items for show-and-tell, etc. Children should still have a change of clothes at the center, including underwear. Children will need to bring a long sleeve shirt for nap time. Please contact your Family Advocate if you are not able to provide any of these items.



# Daily Activities

While some activities may be limited, children will still participate in outdoor activities (weather permitting; see family handbook), circle time, small group, free play, meals, and nap time. Please note that regular schedules may change due to vigilant cleaning. For example, shorter time for outdoor play will be necessary to sanitize/disinfect outdoor play equipment between groups.

To ensure the health and safety of all children, families, and staff, centers will not participate in field trips, invite special guests for enrichment activities, nor participate in group water play (i.e. sand and water table) during this time. Feel free to contact your child's Teacher, the Center Operations Coordinator, or Education Leader if you have any questions or concerns about permitted activities.

Frequent handwashing will be practiced throughout the day. The Family Handbook provides information on when children's will be practicing handwashing. Also, staff will model and encourage children not to touch their face to limit the spread of germs.

## Class Schedules

Each classroom will have their own daily schedule of activities. This schedule will be posted in the classroom for children and will be sent home to parents.

## Toothbrushing

For health and safety measures, toothbrushing will not be a part of our daily routine until further notice. Families are encouraged to brush their child's teeth prior to arriving at school. We will be providing an oral hygiene kit for each child.

## Mealtimes

Like always, tables and chairs will be sanitized before and after each meal and snack. Children and staff will continue to wash hands before and after mealtimes. Teachers will serve meals wearing gloves, and disposable plates, cups, and eating utensils will be used.

Outdoor activities will continue with some limitations. Children will remain with their class during outdoor time. Outdoor play equipment will be sanitized before/after each group leaves. Due to this, outdoor play time will be limited.

## Outdoor Activities

Each day, cots will be sanitized after nap time. Children will be allowed to bring a long-sleeve shirt from home to use during nap time, and this will be kept in your child's cubby and sent home at the end of the week.

## Rest Time

