

Montpelier Children's House - Handbook Addendum. Effective 6/1/20

Due to the enormous changes and challenges brought by the pandemic, many of our policies and procedures have changed to protect the health and safety of our children, families and teachers. Your understanding and cooperation is critical to minimizing our collective risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Arrival at Children's House:

Parents or caregivers who are self-quarantining due to close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual should NOT do drop-off or pick-up.

We will be staggering arrivals the best we can in order to minimize contact between families upon arrival. The protocol is as follows:

1. **Upon arrival at Children's House**, please send us a message via Brightwheel to let us know you've arrived. We'll let you know that we got your message, and will let you know when it's your turn for your child to be checked in. **Please wait in your vehicle until we are ready for you.** We're hopeful that wait time will be brief, but please bear with us as we perfect this routine.
2. **We will greet you and your child outside** (we'll set up a little table or a tent). We're planning to greet you and your child with our whole face (from afar) and then put on our PPE (gloves, masks, glasses) as your child approaches. **Please wait at a distance while we gear up.** I think this will help children feel more at ease with seeing a fully prepped teacher if they can see the process. **We ask that all adults wear a cloth facial covering when dropping off and picking up.**
3. These are the questions you can expect to be asked during the daily health check. **Please be aware that intentionally omitting information or offering false or misleading information will result in immediate withdrawal from the program.**
 - a. Has your child been in *close contact* with a person who has tested positive with COVID 19?
 - b. Does your child feel unwell with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19? For example, have you had a cough, high temperature, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell?
 - c. Has your child taken any fever reducing medicines (e.g. ibuprofen, acetaminophen, etc.)
 - d. Does the child show any signs of infection, which could include flushed cheeks, fatigue, extreme fussiness, other (this is the teacher's observation).
 - e. We will then take your child's temperature with a touchless thermometer and record his or her temperature. A temperature over 100.4 is considered a fever for these purposes.

Because of the risk of infection from COVID is still very real in our community, **children who are exhibiting any symptoms of illness *may not attend childcare***. This includes normal childhood illnesses such as colds and coughs that had usually been par for the course. The guidelines are very clear that any children who are ill may not attend. If you suspect your child has seasonal allergies, please be in touch with your health care provider to have her/ him make this determination.

If you answer “Yes” to any over the above questions, you child may not attend childcare that day. If a child has a fever, he or she must be fever-free for 72 hours before returning to care.

4. Once your child has been health screened, please accompany him or her to the playground area where we have our new outdoor sink (thank you National Life!). Help your child wash hands according the posted guidelines, and deposit his or her snack box/ lunchbox in the basket
5. **Walk your child to the playground ground and say goodbye!** We will provide some visual schedules to support this drop-off procedure. Because we will be checking families in one at a time, quick drop-offs will be a key element to keep this moving smoothly. Quick drop-offs are also much easier on children. If your child is feeling sad or distressed, rest assured that they will get lots of love and cuddles. Don't hesitate to call or send a message on Brightwheel to see how they're doing.

In the event of very rainy or stormy weather, we will do our health screens in the entryway area and assist your child in handwashing and transitioning into the classroom.

Children in Care:

Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or awaiting test results should self-isolate until:

1. It's been a full 3 days of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication
AND
2. Other symptoms have improved AND
3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

We expect that families whose children will be in attendance will follow the current Governor's Orders around Health and Safety Precautions. You can see these Orders [HERE](#). At the time of this writing, this includes continuing to practice physical distancing with people who are not in your family and self-quarantining for 14 days if you have traveled out-of-state.

What to bring to Children's House each day:

Because of the risk of exposure from items from home, your child will be limited in what he or she can bring with them each day.

1. Clothing for the weather that day, such as a raincoat.
2. Snack and lunch (lunch once we start full-day)

What to keep at school (that **does not go back and forth):**

Please label all items with your child's name

1. Sunblock clearly labeled with your child's name
2. Swim suit and/or swim shirt
3. Towel
4. Light blanket and small stuffed animal for rest-time (once we start full-day).
5. Sun hat
6. Water bottle
7. Several complete changes of clothing

Please note that all nap items and swimsuits will be laundered at school each week and will not go back and forth anymore.

Meals and Food

While we are running a half-day program, we will have a mid-morning snack at about 9:30. Please pack a snack with foods you know your child will enjoy. All food will be refrigerated until snack time.

In order to protect the health and safety of children and teachers, there are strict hand washing and sanitizing practices in place for mealtime. Teachers must wash hands both before *and* after handling children's lunch containers or food items. Meal time is a social time and we want to maximize the time that teachers are able to be with children and facilitate conversation and minimize the time we are up and down washing hands. Because of this, we ask parents to do the following:

1. Send snack in a bento-style lunchbox or **one** easy-to-open plastic container. Ideally, your child will be able to open his or her lunch container independently (clearly this will not be possible for our younger children). You can see an example of these lunchboxes [HERE](#). Please open any wrapping on cheese sticks, pre-packaged snacks and the like unless your child is able to open these independently. **I have ordered a supply of these lunch boxes and am happy to provide you one when they arrive.** In the meantime, please use a small tupperware type container or something similar. The

goal is that it's a container that can be opened and then children can independently access food. **Please bring only a plastic container and no insulated lunchboxes.**

2. Pack all utensils
3. Water bottles will be kept at school and sanitized daily. Please make sure these are clearly labeled and dishwasher safe.

If a child becomes sick at school

While we will be doing daily health screens and temperature checks, it can happen that children become sick while in care. **Because of the heightened health and safety practices at this time, it is absolutely critical that if your child becomes ill you are able to come and pick him or her up in no more than 30-45 minutes.** Make sure that you are reachable at all times, and if you will not be, make sure that we are aware of who we should contact that will be able to collect your child quickly.

Everyone must complete a new Emergency Contact form before their child re-starts the program, which includes two emergency contact numbers other than your own. Emergency contacts can be someone out of State - the idea is that this person would be able to get in touch with someone else locally if we cannot.

Use of Cloth Facial Coverings

In keeping with Health and Safety guidelines, **MCH teachers will wear cloth facial coverings** while providing care. Children *will not* be required to wear facial coverings. If your child would like to do so (and is over the age of two), he or she is more than welcome to do so. It is developmentally appropriate for children to wear cloth facial coverings when children can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering. **We ask that all parents wear a cloth facial covering when dropping off or picking up your child.**

Physical (Social) Distancing in the Childcare setting

Physical distancing is still the best way to slow the spread of the virus; although it is recognized that this is frequently not possible in settings with young children.

We will be implementing strategies that are developmentally appropriate but also recognize that children will be close to one another and that it is not possible or beneficial to maintain physical distance. Teachers will absolutely hug and provide close physical comfort to children when it is needed.

In addition, we will be spending most (if not all) of our time out-of-doors, which is the healthiest place possible at this time. When indoors, windows will be open at all times. I am also happy to share that we have a few fresh-air system in the building (thank you, National Life!).

Parent Communication

To minimize contact, all parent-teacher communication should be done via Brightwheel or over the phone. We want to know pertinent information about your child's sleep or anything notable that may have happened since we last saw him or her. Please communicate this information either through the Brightwheel message app or over the phone, rather than in person.

Teachers will provide a daily summary of the day's activities and will communicate any necessary information through Brightwheel. While we will miss our face-to-face time with parents, it is absolutely crucial that pick-up and drop-off be as swift as possible.

You can also reach Samara via email at mplrchildrenshouse@gmail.com or at 802-279-1609 for urgent matters after hours.

Pick-up Procedure

Unless the weather does not permit, you can expect to find us on the playground at pick-up time. We will also need to stagger pick-ups to limit direct contact. We will plan to have your child ready to go at pick up time (we will all be gathered at the playground exit by 11:45 for the first two weeks and then 3:15 after that). If there is another parent on the playground, please wait at a distance until the parent and child have departed. Please keep in mind that when the day ends children should have *departed* no later than the end of the program day (12:00 and then 3:30).

As with arrivals, pick-up time should be very brief. Please collect your child and depart as quickly as is reasonable.

If you plan to pick-up your child before the scheduled pick-up time, please send us a message via Brightwheel and we will be sure to have him or her ready to go when you arrive.

The only item that should travel to and from school with your child is his or her lunchbox. All other items must remain at school.

Contingency Planning

Due to smaller group sizes and the need to maintain consistent groups, it may occur that we do not have sufficient staffing to open school on a given day should a teacher become ill. We are working to troubleshoot these issues the best we can. We also know that we should expect that navigating the future with COVID-19 may involve some stops, starts and re-adjustments. We will be using guidance from the Governor's Office, the Vermont Department of Health and the Child Development Division to inform any future decisions. We will of course, try to give families as much notice as possible should there be any changes. We do know that we should expect disruptions in the future, and families are encouraged to

create contingency plans for care for their child should care not be available on a given day or should the need for a longer closure arise.

Clear communication will be key for navigating our re-opening. Please don't hesitate to be in contact if you have any questions or concerns. Please be patient with us as we learn how to operate under the new guidelines. I expect that some of our processes, particularly pick-up and drop off may require some troubleshooting before we get it quite right. As always, we are grateful for your support and understanding.

Acknowledgement:

I have read and understand the Addendum to the Montpelier Children's House Handbook (effective 6/1/2020) and agree to comply with the policies and guidelines.

Parent's Name: _____ Date: _____

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