

**COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS OF WEST ALABAMA, INC.  
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START  
COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN**



Created 6/15/2020

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**Introduction**

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The health and safety of children, families and employees are primary concerns for the CSP Head Start/Early Head Start Program. It is also very important that our children are and remain school ready. Although this is a very difficult time, we know that our children and families need us. We are committed to doing all that we can to provide support.

This COVID-19 Response Plan was created to provide guidance and notify families and employees of procedural updates that have been implemented related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Office of Head Start (OHS), and Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) were used to create the Response Plan. As new determinations are made, there is a possibility that the procedures outlined will change. Additional information about COVID-19 can be found on the CDC website.

**Communication and Confidentiality**

Communication with families and employees occur regularly through telephone, text, email, and print. Employee and family contact information must be kept current and up-to-date. If there are changes in your contact information, please contact the center and provide the most current information.

If a child or an employee has symptoms or has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, it must be reported to the Center Manager or Supervisor. Notification of possible exposure will be provided to others, as appropriate, if someone receives a positive test result. The program will continue to maintain privacy and confidentiality of personal information.

**Employee Health Checks**

All employees are required to complete a daily health check using the agency form developed by the Human Resources Department. The daily checks will be completed by the supervisor or another individual designated by the supervisor.

**Employee Professional Development and Training**

All employees have begun and will continue to receive additional training related to COVID-19, i.e. hygiene, hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, transitions, and stress management.

**Meetings, Conferences, Visitors and Volunteers**

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In-person meetings and conferences will be limited. Virtual methods of communication will be used as often as possible. Under normal circumstances we welcome visitors and volunteers; however, the requirement for physical distancing necessitates strict limiting of visitors and volunteers.

**What can be done to reduce the spread?**

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing should be done several times a day especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Be sure to dry your hands completely.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethyl alcohol. Wash all surfaces of your hands and thoroughly dry them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home. If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
  - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.
  - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm's length) from other people.
  - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a mask face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
  - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The mask face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker.

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- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask face cover is **NOT** a substitute for social distancing.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- If you are around others and do not have on your mask/face covering, always remember to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethyl alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes, but is not limited to, tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks, et al.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfectant.
- Follow cleaning with a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.

Monitor your health

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19 such as additional symptoms listed in the Monitor your symptoms section. This is especially important if you are running essential errands, going into enclosed buildings, offices or workplaces, stores, restaurants, etc. and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop. However, don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

**What should be done if you or a household member has symptoms?**

- Consult with a medical provider. Call to schedule an appointment before presenting at physician's office.

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- Continue to follow all preventative measures
  - Wash hands frequently
  - Avoid contact with person exhibiting symptoms
  - Clean and disinfect all surfaces, particularly those frequently used
  - Wear a mask/face covering

Stay home except to get medical care and/or unless recommended otherwise by physician

- Stay home. Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- Take care of yourself. Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better or take prescribed medications as directed.
- Stay in touch with your doctor. Be sure to get care if you have trouble breathing, or have any other emergency warning signs, or if you think it is an emergency.
- Avoid public transportation; bus, trolley, ride-sharing services i.e., Uber, Lyft, etc.

Separate yourself from other people

- As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people and pets in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.

Monitor your symptoms

- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have 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

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- This list is not all inclusive. Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and local health department. Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

**Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing, also commonly known as social distancing, has been proven as one of the most effective strategies used to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Head Start/Early Head Start Children and employees will practice physical distancing as often as possible.

- Markings will be placed 6 feet apart on the ground or floor, in all directions, inside of the facility and outdoor walkways.

**Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting**

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting of the facility will be completed based on recommendations from the CDC.

- Common areas will be completed throughout the day.
- Classrooms will be completed throughout the day.
- Door handles, light switches, table tops, faucets, toys, games, etc. will be completed daily.

**Attire, Change of Clothes, and Hair**

- Employees and children will wear a mask whenever possible. Children under the age of 2 will not wear a mask.
- Employees and children will wear hair pulled back and away from the face whenever possible.
- Employees and children will keep multiple (2-3) changes of clothes at the center.
- EHS employees that work with babies that have to be held and/or picked up will wear smocks.
- Employees are permitted to wear scrubs.

**Before you Arrive**

- **If you or your child feel sick, STAY HOME!**
- Check your temperature and your child's temperature prior to leaving home.
- Be aware that check-in will take longer than normal. You will need to make necessary arrangements that allow proper check-in.

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**Arrival**

As often as possible, we request that the individual picking up and dropping off is the same.

- Families will be greeted by an employee.
- Sign-in by Parent/Guardian will occur in a designated area upon entry into the facility.
  - You will not be allowed to escort your child to his/her classroom.
  - Equipment and/or pens will be sanitized between uses.
- A Daily Health Survey will be conducted with all children. The Health Survey includes a temperature check and a series of questions. The thermometer used is touchless and will be sanitized between uses.
  - No person with a temperature of 100.4 or above in the past 24 hours, is permitted in the center.
  - If temperature is 100.4 or above or has been treated with fever reducing medication, the child or employee MUST leave immediately.
  - No person with exposure to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 is permitted.
  - No person exhibiting symptoms is permitted.
- Children will sanitize hands upon entry into the building and wash hands immediately when entering the classroom.
- Employees will escort children to classrooms. The center will maintain the same escort as often as possible.

**Departure**

As often as possible, we request the individual picking up and dropping off is the same.

- Upon arrival, the Parent/Guardian will notify the employee at the entrance of the child who is being picked up.
- The employee will use a walkie-talkie to communicate with the teacher and employee who will escort the child.
- The child will wash his/her hands before leaving the classroom.
- The employee will escort the child to the designated area for pick-up.
- The Parent/Guardian will complete sign-out.
  - Equipment and/or pens will be sanitized between uses.



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**Classroom Structure, Arrangement and Supplies**

- Classroom ratios will be kept as small as possible while following federal and state regulations.
- The sharing of equipment and supplies will be very limited.
  - Shared items will be cleaned and sanitized before use by another child.
- Children and teachers will wash hands frequently.
- Tables, centers, and play areas will be arranged to adhere to physical distance, to the extent possible.
- The classroom schedule will be adjusted, if necessary, to adhere to physical distancing guidelines when using common areas.

**Meals**

- Family style meals related to children serving themselves will be suspended until further notice.
- All meals will be served in the classroom.
- Children or employee are not to share food, beverages, utensils, etc.

**Naps**

Naps will continue according to the daily schedule. Physical distancing will be practiced to the extent possible while maintaining active supervision.

- Cots will be placed 6 feet apart while children are napping.
- Children will be arranged head to toe.
- All cots are labeled and will not be shared by other children.
- Cots will be disinfected daily.
- Bedding will be washed at least weekly.

**Tooth brushing**

Tooth brushing is a very important practice for maintaining oral health and the overall health of an individual. While tooth brushing is vital, this function will be suspended until further notice in order to reduce the spread of illness. It is important for children to continue practicing dental health at home.

**Field Trips**

All field trips are suspended until further notice.

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**Playground and Outdoor Activities**

Most children love to go outside and be free to run, jump and play. Outdoor activities will be included in the daily schedule as often as possible.

- Only one classroom will be allowed on the playground at a time.
- Playground equipment will be sanitized between uses.
- Trash cans are available in the playground area.
- Teachers will carry an emergency pack that includes essential supplies.

**Transportation (Where Applicable)**

The number of children allowed to ride the bus will be limited due to physical distancing requirements. Transportation employees will use the same cleaning and attire guidance outlined in this response plan.

- Children and employees should wear a mask.
- A parent/guardian must register the child in and out by actual signature. Parents are not allowed on the bus.
- Equipment/pens will be sanitized after each use.
- Railing should be wiped down after entry and exit of each child or employee.
- Only one child or employee allowed per seat.
- Only one child or employee per row. No two individuals should be on the same row.
- The bus will be cleaned and sanitized after each route.

**What happens if a child or employees becomes sick while at the center?**

- The individual will be placed in a designated isolation area immediately.
  - The isolation area will be cleaned once the individual has left the facility.
- The parent will be contacted to pick-up the child or the employee will be required to leave the facility.
- We require that the individuals seek medical attention. A written release to center from physician will be required before returning to HS/EHS facility and/or bus.
- All areas used by the individual will be cleaned and sanitized.

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**What happens if a child or employee has a positive test result?**

- The child or employee must remain away from the facility for at least 14 days.
- The child or employee may only return if they have a written physician release to return to the center.
- Inform parents and employees of exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the classroom and/or center.
  - Classroom will be closed for 14 days.
- The areas used by the individual will be closed off immediately.
  - Windows and doors will be opened to increase air flow.
- Cleaning and disinfecting will occur in the affected area according to CDC guidelines.

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR A CHILD OR EMPLOYEE TO RETURN AFTER A POSITIVE TEST?**

- The child or employee must receive 2 negative COVID-19 test results before being allowed to return to the center.
  - Tests must be taken more than 24 hours apart.
- The child or employee must not be using any fever reducing medication.

We must all be vigilant and persistent in observing children, family members and employees for COVID-19 symptoms. CSP Head Start/Early Head Start is committed to taking all necessary precautions to protect our children, family members and employees from contracting COVID-19. Please do not hesitate to let the Center Manager and/or Agency Management know if you detect an unhealthy situation at the Center(s).