

# *SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five*

*COVID-19 Response Parent Handout*

2020-2021

## **Purpose:**

This information has been organized to provide information about the actions SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five is taking to protect staff, children, and families from the potential outbreak of COVID-19. Policies outlined in this handout override the previous policies and procedures and will stay in effect until the pandemic is over or other guidance is released from the ND Department of Health, local public health office, or the CDC.

The information in this handout is to provide up to date information to families who have children enrolling in the 2020-2021 academic year with the SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five program. These policies and procedures have been developed using guidance released by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes are inevitable and SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will communicate in a timely manner regarding any changes to policies and procedures.

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five staff have a detailed COVID-19 Response Plan that they will be following in efforts to keep children & families safe.

## COVID Health Procedures for Families:

Children may not attend SENDCAA Head Start if they have:

- Fever of 100.4°

Or 2 or more of the following:

- Persistent Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Muscle aches
- Loss of taste and/or smell

Children must be symptom free for 72 hours (without medication) before returning to the classroom.

If your child's symptoms are from a pre-existing condition such as asthma, allergies, etc., they may come to school if they have a doctor's note stating the symptoms are not related to COVID-19.

Below is a quick COVID-19 assessment you can use to determine if your child should come to school.

Have you, your child or any member of your family had any known close contact with someone who is exhibiting symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days? (close contact is within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more).	Yes	No
Have you, your child or any member of your family have any symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever of 100.4°</li><li>• Persistent cough</li><li>• Shortness of breath</li><li>• Diarrhea</li><li>• Vomiting</li><li>• Muscle aches</li><li>• Loss of taste and/or smell</li></ul>	Yes	No
Have you, your child, or any family member been tested for or diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	Yes	No

If you answer yes to any of the above questions, your child will not be allowed to attend school until:

- Tested negative for COVID-19

- Diagnosed by a health care provider with another illness that does not require a 72-hour exclusion
- Fever-free/symptom free for 72 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

If a child gets sick during the day, the child will go to a space in the classroom away from all of the children and a staff person will remain near the child until they are picked up. Parents will need to pick up their child immediately.

***We ask that families ALWAYS follow our illness policy which can be found in the parent handbook.***

## Getting Tested for COVID-19:

If your child gets tested, SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five requires that your child must stay home until they receive a negative test result or guidance from the North Dakota Department of Health. Parents must provide documentation of the child's negative test results before the child can return to SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, families must follow guidance from the North Dakota Department of Health. Once the child has been quarantined the recommended amount of days by the North Dakota Department of Health, been fever free for 72 hours, and has turned in the appropriate documentation from the North Dakota Department of Health, they will be able to return to Head Start.

## Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 at SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five:

If there is a confirmed case in a classroom, SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will contact the North Dakota Department of Health for further guidance on how to move forward with classroom and site closures. Families will be kept informed if exposure has occurred.

## Masks

Staff and children are not required at this time to wear masks in the classroom. This may change with certain sites depending on the public schools, or what is recommended from the North Dakota Department of Health. If parents would like their child to wear a mask, they will be responsible for providing them. If an outside staff member enters a classroom, they will wear a mask.

## **Drop Off /Pick-up Procedures:**

Each site has a unique plan for drop off/pick up that was created by site staff based on knowledge of what will work best for their site specifically. Site staff will communicate the plan for drop off and pick-up to families.

## **Program Options:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will work with families so they can remain enrolled and receive services. If your child has been enrolled for center based care and you determine you no longer want your child entering the facility, your child may participate through distance learning and return to the center when you feel comfortable.

If you have any questions you can contact your Family Support Staff (Name of staff: \_\_\_\_\_) at: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Class Size (Head Start):**

Head Start class sizes will be smaller this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow teachers to split children in to smaller groups and have more time available to clean the classroom.

## **Nutrition:**

Family style meals are suspended until further notice. Food will be served to the children.

## **Parent Involvement/Donations:**

At this time parents will not be allowed to volunteer in classrooms. We highly encourage parents to donate their time in other ways like filling out the Weekly In-kind Form and sending it in their child's backpack each week.

SENDCAA Head Start will not be taking any donations from individuals or agencies until further notice.

## **Communication:**

During this health crisis communication will be more important than ever. Our program will be utilizing Seesaw to communicate regularly with families. Staff are able to assist families with the setup of Seesaw, if needed.

As new or updated guidance is given you will be informed either through memos from the director, phone calls from your teacher or family support staff/advocate, or via Seesaw.

## **Toys from Home:**

Toys from home cannot be brought to school.

## **Field Trips:**

Field trips have been suspended until further notice.

## **Extra Clothing:**

An extra set of clothing needs to be kept in the classroom.

## **Rest Time:**

For classrooms that have rest time (full day classrooms & Early Head Start), the classroom is taking extra precaution.

We will be sending blankets home each week and ask families to wash them and return to the classroom the next week.

If your child is in a room with cots/nap mats, those cots will be spread out to try get them as much distance from other children as possible. If it is not possible, children will sleep with head/feet alternating.

Cots/cribs will be wiped down and disinfected weekly.

## **Toothbrushing:**

Toothbrushing will not happen during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the risk of germs exposure & cross contamination.

While in the COVID-19 pandemic, parents will be encouraged to support their child in regular toothbrushing at home and resources to support toothbrushing will be sent home.

## Outdoor Play:

Outdoor play is important for children. We are encouraging teachers to take children on walks and spend time outdoors throughout the day, when able.

When a classroom is done with play outside, one teacher will spray the equipment/toys with disinfectant while the other teacher conducts a transition activity with the children. The next classroom will allow time for that to dry before venturing outdoors.

## Attendance:

The SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five program knows an important factor in school success is establishing a regular routine of attendance. This means attending each scheduled school day with on-time arrival and pick-up. However due to the COVID-19 our concern for family and staff health will be our first priority. Attendance will be strongly encouraged for healthy children. Any absences due to illness must follow the updated Illness policy.

Parent/Guardian must still contact their child's teacher or family advocate if their child is going to be absent or running late. If our program does not receive a call from the parent/guardian regarding a student's absence, the program will call the parent/guardian or the student's emergency contacts.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting:

Our program will follow all cleaning and disinfecting guidelines from the Center of Disease Control (CDC) and Caring for our Children (CFOC). The CFOC provides national standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection of educational facilities for children. Throughout this time, we will implement the **National Health and Safety Performance Standards** for routine scheduled cleaning at the site.

### Staff will:

- Clean AND disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#) daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, they will be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Follow the Building & Classroom Daily Checklists, as usual.

There are gallon jugs with a hand sprayer to clean playground/outdoor equipment off after a classroom uses it. We will allow a few minutes of drying time before the next classroom utilizes the recently cleaned equipment. The same precautions will be taken in the Gross Motor Room,

items will be cleaned after each classroom uses space.

### **Additional Notes:**

- Staff will continue to teach and remind children to cough or sneeze into their elbow. Please do this at home also.
- Remind your child to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. Staff will also remind children of this at school.
- To keep yourself, your child, staff and their families safe—PLEASE abide by all guidelines relating to the illness policy and possible exposure.
- If a delivery is made, we are requesting those individuals to wear masks upon entry.
- If your child receives special services, we are still allowing those services to take place at our sites. We are asking service providers who enter the building to abide by policies and procedures to keep your child safe while receiving services.