



COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS PRESCHOOL FALL 2020

The Y has adjusted some of our previous preschool operating procedures to help keep our participants and staff as safe as possible while COVID-19 continues to impact our community. We believe it is important to communicate accurate and timely information about the virus and steps we are taking to prioritize the health and safety of all.

While we know we cannot completely eliminate the possibility of COVID-19 in our programs, we believe there are several steps we can take to mitigate this risk as we work in partnership with families. Our operating procedures have been updated to reflect health and safety recommendations from the following agencies: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and YMCA of the USA (Y-USA). We will continue to review our policies throughout the year and ensure they reflect the most current recommendations of health and government officials.

This document includes the most important guidelines families can expect our team to follow as we open preschool in September. We will inform families if policies and procedures change based on new guidance from NCDHHS. We are so excited to welcome our preschoolers back this fall, and we want to work closely with families as we navigate this unprecedented time together. If you have additional questions about the steps we are taking to keep health and safety at the forefront of our program, please email childcare@ymcacharlotte.org.

Health Screenings

- Health screenings, including an online health questionnaire and temperature check, will be conducted on all staff and participants prior to entering the facility.
- Staff will take the temperature of children using a temporal thermometer, and children will not be permitted to stay if the temperature is at or above 100.4. Parents may not leave until their child is cleared to enter.

Illness

- We will continue to follow our wellness policy available [here](#). It is critical that parents review this information and keep children home when they are sick.
- Children or staff who develop the following symptoms associated with COVID-19 will be sent home immediately: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, new loss of taste or smell.

Sanitation

- All classrooms and other program spaces are cleaned and disinfected daily. Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned more frequently throughout the day (doorknobs, handrails, and furniture).

Restricting Facility Access

- No parents or other nonessential visitors will be allowed in the facility. We realize this may be difficult for our younger children at first, but we are committed to doing all we can to create a positive transition when dropping off your child.
- If external providers, such as therapists, are deemed essential to provide support for children while in preschool, they will be screened and trained before working with children.

Limiting Mixing of Groups

- Teachers will be assigned to work consistently with the same group of children, although we expect that substitute teachers will also work with groups as needed.
- We will limit mixing of children as much as possible by keeping groups separate in designated classrooms, staggering playground times, and adjusting our arrival and dismissal procedures.

Social Distancing

- We will set up the classrooms and plan activities to allow space between children to the maximum extent possible.
- Staff will teach children about social distancing in child-friendly terms and remind them to maintain space as much as possible.
- However, due to factors such as classroom size, furniture, the nature of activities, and simply the desire of young children to be near one another for play and learning, it will not be possible to keep children 6 feet apart at all times during preschool.

Face Coverings

- Based on information provided by NCDHHS, there is growing evidence that wearing face coverings can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially for those who are sick but may not know it. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. Individuals should be reminded frequently not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
 - Children under the age of 2;
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
 - Anyone who cannot tolerate a face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.
- All YMCA staff are required to wear a face covering when indoors and when unable to maintain 6 feet of distance outdoors. There may be limited instances when staff remove their face covering for instructional purposes (showing mouth formation when learning a new sound, for instance). During these times, staff will use clear Plexiglas as an alternate protective barrier.
- Parents will be asked to wear a face covering during drop off and pick up to protect our staff.
- Children who are under age 5 and not yet in kindergarten are not required to wear a face covering. However, a parent may request that their child wear a face covering, and our staff will try to accommodate this request. If the child has difficulty properly wearing the face covering (touches or pulls off frequently), we will need to work with the parent to set realistic expectations and determine if there are certain times when a face covering is most important and times when the child can wear it successfully.

Materials

- Children will be provided with individual materials whenever possible (pencil, crayons, etc.).
- We do expect that some materials, including books and blocks, will be shared. Staff will clean materials at the end of each day.

Personal Belongings

- Only personal items that are necessary should be brought to the program (lunch box, water bottle, jacket, etc.). Please do not send blankets or stuffed animals to the program as these objects are likely to be touched by others.
- We ask that parents try to pack food and drink items that your child will be able to open on their own.
- Unclaimed items left in the facility will be donated or discarded on a bi-weekly basis. Please label everything!

Handwashing

- All staff and children are required to wash their hands upon arrival, before handling food, after restroom use/diaper changing, after blowing noses/coughing/sneezing, and after outdoor play.
- Hand sanitizing products with 60% alcohol will also be used when soap and water are not readily available.

Staff Training

- In addition to our safety and youth development trainings, all preschool staff will receive training on COVID-19 and related workplace procedures prior to the start of the program.

Response to Coronavirus Exposure

- The Y works closely with the public health department to quickly report and communicate in the event of a coronavirus exposure. Please note that we will not automatically notify all preschool families in the event that there is an exposure or potential exposure in our program. Parents can expect to be notified if their child is impacted, but all communication in this event is based on the recommendations of local health officials in order to prevent the spread of misinformation and avoid creating unnecessary fear.
- Below are the NCDHHS guidelines for allowing a child to return to childcare programming:

Situation(s) determined by Daily Health Screening:	Criteria to return to child care:
Person has symptoms of COVID-19 and has not been tested OR Person has symptoms of COVID-19 and has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19	Person can return to the child care facility when they can answer yes to ALL three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath? Once the criteria above are met, it is not necessary to require a negative COVID-19 test in order to return to child care.
Person has not had symptoms of COVID-19 but has been diagnosed with COVID-19 based on a positive test	Person can return to the child care facility once <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days passed since the date of their first positive test However, if the person develops symptoms of COVID-19 after their positive test, they must be able to answer yes to ALL three questions listed above before returning to child care.
Person has been excluded because of COVID-19 symptoms but then tests negative for COVID-19	Person can return to the child care facility once they can answer yes to both questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever without the use of fever reducing medicines? • Has the person felt well for at least the past 24 hours?
Person has been determined to be in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19	Person can return to the child care facility after completing at least 14 days of quarantine at home. The purpose of quarantine is to determine if a person who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will get infected. They must complete the full 14 days of quarantine even if they test negative. However, if the person tests positive or develops COVID-19 symptoms, return to child care must follow criteria above.