Updated COVID-19 Protocol

December 21, 2021

Building Blocks Child Center is licensed by the Department of Children & Families Office of Licensing. We are required to adhere to all their requirements. This protocol is in compliance with the Office of Licensing and the Covid-19 Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs related to Health and Safety Requirements.

Building Blocks uses multiple strategies to protect the children and adults in our Center. We recommend vaccinations for children over the age of 5. We clean and disinfect all surfaces, toys, bathrooms and mutually shared spaces. Our staff teaches proper hand washing, we maintain cohorts throughout most of the day and encourage social distance as much as possible given the age of the children under our care.

Our staff is fully vaccinated and fall under the same screening procedures and COVID-19 disclosure information. Building Blocks has secured vaccination records of every staff member.

1. Parents are required to sign a Covid-19 disclosure form upon enrollment.
2. Until further notice, parents, or assigned individuals, will be allowed into the building for a brief drop off and or pick up. Parents are not allowed in the bathrooms, classrooms or gym.
3. Parents will screen their child at home. We are looking for COVID-19 symptoms and any other symptom or excludable communicable diseases found in this handbook.
4. Children and/or staff will not be admitted into the Center who are exhibiting a fever of 100.4 or above, or other signs of COVID-19 illness. Children will also be excluded who are exhibiting any other illness or disease.
5. Parents will inform the school of any symptoms so that we may fill out our illness log required under NJAC 3A:52-7.9
6. Parents must notify director by her cell phone as soon as possible if their child or a family member has a positive Covid-19 test result.
7. Cohorts or pods will remain in their classroom and conform to the pre-existing student/staff ratios. We will co-mingle groups for the first or last hour of operation or when groups have substantially decreased.
8. Building Blocks, to the greatest extent possible, will minimize the rotation of staff between groups. However, since the Department of Children and Families allows fully vaccinated staff to move between groups as necessary to accommodate breaks, fluctuations in center attendance, substitutions, and other operational needs of the center, we will allow the rotation.
9. Visitors will be allowed for the following situations:
10. Any emergency visitor (i.e., repair that cannot wait such as heating or air conditioning service person). Such person will be screened, wear a mask and not come into contact to the greatest extent possible.
11. A tour for prospective clients will be held for 10 minutes only. Only 2 people allowed at a time. They will not be allowed into classrooms or bathrooms.
12. Children will wash hands before entering classrooms.
13. Building Blocks will ensure that the HVAC system will continue to be maintained and operational. To the extent practical, windows will be opened frequently to allow fresh air flow. Additionally, every classroom has individual air purifiers.

**Mask Option Rule**:

Due to the mask mandate end as of March 7, 2022, after weighing the pros and cons Building Blocks decided to extend a mask optional policy for children and staff.

This decision is subject to change in the event that public health data changes. As a preschool serving young children that are not vaccinated and unable to maintain social distance, we believe in the efficacy of mask wearing in the prevention of not only SARS-Cov-2, but many other childhood diseases.

Please note that we may ask for short-term mask wearing during the following circumstances or in affected classroom when:

* There are of elevated community transmission.
* During an active outbreak (3 or more) in our Center.
* Children returning during days 6-10 of quarantine.

**Covid-19 Illness Exclusion**:

* Children and staff who test positive for Covid-19 or who have Covid-19 compatible symptoms will be sent home.
* Close contacts in the classroom or household member exposure.

If your child is sent home, and an alternative diagnosis. (i.e. strep throat, influenza, preexisting condition) is diagnosed by a healthcare provider and **supported by clinical evaluation and/or laboratory testing, and** if there are no known exposure to a Covid-19 case in the last 5 days, please follow our Policy on Communicable Diseases list listed in our handbook. This will help you determine when your child may return to school.

**Covid-19 exclusion/Quarantine Criteria:**

* The above excluded individuals must quarantine for the **5 full days** after the onset of symptoms.
* Date of exposure is day 0. Date of testing is day 0. Date of symptoms is day 0.
* Individuals whose symptoms resolve after 5 days and or have been fever free (without medication) for 48-hours, may return after or on days 6-10;
	+ Wear a mask when around others for an additional 5 day or completion of 10 days.
	+ Children under 2 years of age must continue to isolate/quarantine at home for a full 10 days because they do not wear a mask.

**Close contacts**:

* Test **5** days after exposure. (Tests prior to 5 days will not be accepted)
* Children under 2 years of age must continue to quarantine for a full 10 days or may return to childcare on day 8 with a negative test result collected at day 5-7 if they remain asymptomatic.

**Who does not need to quarantine**:

* Covid-19 vaccinated individuals
* Had Covid-19 within the last 90 days; (We must have a record of the positive Covid-19 result).

**Testing**:

* Must be conducted by a health care provider, if your child is sent home for Covid symptoms.
* Home tests are not accepted.
* Rapid tests are accepted.
* After travel.

**Reporting:**

Building Blocks is instructed to report individual COVID illness and or outbreaks to our local health department. We must identify the person(s), and the date the person was last in the building as well as any close contacts.

**Travel**

[COVID-19 Information Hub | Search (nj.gov)](https://covid19.nj.gov/search.html?query=travel+restrictions&referrerPageUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fcovid19.nj.gov%2F)

**This is subject to change depending on Office of Licensing Mandates and Regulations.**