

The Apple Tree Learning Centers COVID-19 Plan - Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This plan is intended to be used as a guide for continuing operations for The Apple Tree Learning Centers (ATLC) during the COVID-19 epidemic. This plan is being used in conjunction with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance for administrators of [child care programs and K-12 schools](#). This guidance does not supersede applicable federal, state, and local laws and policies for child care programs.

General Preparedness and Planning

Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

ATLC staff will take [everyday preventive actions](#) to prevent the spread of respiratory illness.

- [Wash hands](#) often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.
- [Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces](#).
- [Cover cough and sneezes](#).

ATLC will require sick children and staff to stay home.

- Communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick.
- Communicate to staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with management if or when they start to feel sick.
- Ensure children and staff who come to the child care center sick or become sick while at the facility are sent home as soon as possible.
- Keep sick children and staff separate from well children and staff until they can be sent home.
- Sick staff members will not return to work until they have met the [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

Plan if someone is or becomes sick.

- ATLC will have an isolation room or area that can be used to isolate a sick child.

- ATLC will follow CDC guidance on how to [disinfect your building or facility](#) if someone is sick.
- If a sick child has been isolated, we will clean and disinfect surfaces in the isolation room or area after the sick child has gone home.
- If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member:
 - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
 - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
 - Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning or disinfecting to allow respiratory droplets to settle.
 - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas.
 - If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Monitor and Plan for Absenteeism Among Staff

- ATLC will use management staff to cover classes in addition to recruiting efforts to hire new staff.

Plans for implementing social distancing strategies

- Social distancing focuses on remaining out of congregate settings, ATLC will avoid mass gatherings, and maintain distance from others when possible.

Assess Group Gatherings and Events

- ATLC plans to limit nonessential visitors and postpone or cancel use of classroom volunteers. ATLC will conduct enrollment tours by appointment only. Staff will check prospect client's temperature and will be asked to use face cover. Prospects will only be shown classroom of program appropriate to their child's age and open areas.

Additional Considerations:

- Implement [social distancing strategies](#)
- Intensify [cleaning and disinfection efforts](#)
- Modify [drop off and pick up procedures](#)
- Implement [screening procedures upon arrival](#)
- Maintain an adequate ratio of staff to children to ensure safety.
 - Plan ahead and recruit those with child care experience to ensure we have caregivers who can fill in if staff members are sick or stay home to care for sick family members.

Social Distancing Strategies

ATLC will work with local health officials to update strategies appropriate for our community's situation. We will continue using preparedness strategies and will consider the following social distancing strategies:

- If possible, child care classes will include the same group each day, and the same child care providers should remain with the same group each day.
- ATLC will cancel or postpone special events such as festivals, holiday events, and special performances.
- ATLC will consider whether to alter or halt daily group activities that may promote transmission.
 - Keep each group of children in a separate classroom.
 - Keep classroom / groups to fewer than 10 people (including teachers)
 - Limit the mixing of children, such as staggering playground times and keeping groups separate for special activities such as music.
 - At nap time, ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, at least 6 feet apart. Place children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
 - Distance children while eating
 - Provide each child individual meals and snacks and stop practicing Family Style meals.

Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- Parents will drop off and pickup children in the lobby ensuring they use hand sanitizer/alcohol wipes before using computer and pens. ATLC staff will take children's temperature upon arrival. Children with a temperature of 100.4 will not be allowed to stay. Children with a cough and running nose or other signs of illness will not be admitted to the facility. ATLC staff will take children to their classrooms and will ensure children wash their hands upon entering classroom. ATLC staff will take children to lobby area at time of pickup and ensure hands are washed before leaving classroom.
- Parents should avoid direct contact between them and staff members and adhere to social distancing recommendations.
- We will provide hand sanitizer next to parent sign-in sheets. Keep hand sanitizer out of children's reach and supervise use.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for [severe illness from COVID-19](#).

Screen Children / Guardians Upon Arrival

- Persons who have a fever of 100.4⁰ (38.0⁰C) or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted to the facility. Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.
- Use of non-contact thermometers, clean them with an alcohol wipe (or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab) between each client. You can reuse the same wipe as long as it remains wet.
- If you use disposable or non-contact (temporal) thermometers and you did not have physical contact with the child, you do not need to change gloves before the next check
- Staff member in charge of receiving/screening children will use face mask and gloves to minimize exposure. In addition, staff will practice social distancing of 6 feet to minimize exposures due to close contact with children or parents who have symptoms during screening.
- Every child will be screened with a non-contact digital thermometer. Signs of illness which include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue, or extreme fussiness will not be allowed to stay.
- ATLC will ask parents/guardians to take their child's temperature and make visual inspection of child for signs of illness before coming to the facility and if child is displaying any symptoms do not bring child to center.

Reliance on Barrier/Partition Controls (Optional)

- Stand behind a physical barrier, such as a glass or plastic window or partition that can serve to protect the staff member's face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced if the child being screened sneezes, coughs, or talks.
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness
- Conduct temperature screening (follow steps below)
 - Perform hand hygiene
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- Check the child's temperature, reaching around the partition or through the window.
- Make sure your face stays behind the barrier at all times during the screening.
- If you use disposable or non-contact (temporal) thermometers and you did not have physical contact with the child, you do not need to change gloves before the next check.
- Use of non-contact thermometers, clean them with an alcohol wipe (or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab) between each client. You can reuse the same wipe as long as it remains wet.

Clean and Disinfect

ATLC will intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts following Health Department Guidance

- ATLC will follow a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting.

- [Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect](#) surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games. This may also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.

Clean and Sanitize Toys

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves.
- Machine washable cloth toys will not be used.
- Children’s books, like other paper-based materials are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

Clean and Disinfect Bedding

- ATLC will use bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets) that can be washed. Each child’s bedding will be separated with child’s name for only their use and will be separated in an individual cubby labeled for each child.

Caring for Infants and Toddlers

Diapering - ATLC will follow safe diaper changing procedures. Procedures are posted in all diaper changing areas.

Washing, Feeding, or Holding a Child

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious infants and toddlers, and they often need to be held. Child care providers will wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child’s secretions.

- Child care providers will change the child’s clothes if secretions are on the child’s clothes.
- Contaminated clothes will be placed in a plastic bag or washed in the washing machine.
- Infants, toddlers, and their providers will have multiple changes of clothes on hand in the center.
- Child care providers will wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles prepared at home or prepared in the facility. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used for bottle-feeding will be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

Healthy Hand Hygiene Behavior

- All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing food or drinks
- Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- Before and after diapering
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.
- Supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
 - After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.

Food Preparation and Meal Service

- Meals will be prepared in the kitchen and brought to each classroom.
- ATLC kitchen staff will only prepare meals and will not engage in other activities.
- Staff will ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Staff will wash their hands before serving food and after helping children eat.

ATLC will follow all other applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to safe preparation of food.

Vulnerable/High Risk Groups

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. To protect those at [higher risk](#), it's important that everyone practices [healthy hygiene behaviors](#).

- ATLC staff members or teachers age 65 or older, or with serious underlying health conditions, will be encouraged to talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should stay home.
Information about [COVID-19 in children](#) is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that many children have mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. If you have children with underlying health conditions, ATLC will talk to parents about their risk.

Employee Screening Practices -

- A. ATLC will implement screening practices to help ensure its safe for employees to enter the workplace.

- a. Employees will check their own temperature before coming to work or upon arrival.
 - b. Management will confirm with employee that their temperature is less than 100.4 and that they are not experiencing coughing or shortness of breath.
 - c. Management will make a visual inspection of employees for signs of illness, which include flushed cheeks or fatigue.
 - d. Screening staff will maintain a distance of six feet.
- B. In late April, the CDC expanded the list of COVID-19 symptoms. The [CDC](#) says people with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19:
- a. Cough
 - b. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - c. Fever
 - d. Chills
 - e. Repeated shaking with chills
 - f. Muscle pain
 - g. Headache
 - h. Sore throat
 - i. New loss of taste or smell

Social Distancing and Other Measures to Protect Employees

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, consider:

1. Maintaining social distancing six feet or more
2. Employees practicing safety and good hygiene
3. Sanitizing the workplace frequently
4. Providing protective equipment, such as face masks and hand sanitizer
5. All ATLC staff members will wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Key times for employees to clean their hands include:
 - a. Before and after work shifts
 - b. Before and after work breaks
 - c. After blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
 - d. After using the restroom
 - e. Before eating or preparing food
 - f. After putting on, touching or removing cloth face coverings
6. Increasing physical space between employees and customers through physical barriers and/or demarcating six-foot intervals;
7. Prohibiting group gatherings in the workplace and limiting access to spaces where groups tend to gather
8. Discouraging hand shaking
9. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, sharing tools and equipment and food and drinks; and Restricting visitors in the workplace.

10. Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth – throw tissues in no touch trash cans and immediately wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available use hand sanitizer.
11. Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, key boards, telephones, countertops, and doorknobs with household cleaning spray or wipes
12. Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow
13. Employees will stay home when feeling sick and follow CDC-recommended steps and will not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers.
14. Employees who have sick family members at home will notify the assistant director immediately.