

## COVID/INFECTIOUS DISEASE PROTOCOL

### Updated January 2023

At Early Learning Essentials we take a variety of actions every day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases including COVID. The guidance we follow comes from our state and local Health Departments as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The following strategies for safe every day operations are in place.

- Staying Up To Date on Vaccinations:
  - Staying up to date on routine vaccines is essential and encouraged to prevent illness from many different infections. School and Early Childhood requirements can be found in the following link.
    - [School & Early Childhood Program Requirements - Immunize Utah](#)
  - COVID 19 vaccines have been shown to help prevent severe disease. Guidance regarding COVID vaccines and the schedule for such can be found in the following link.
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>
  
- Staying Home When Sick:
  - Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19. People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home. We will contact the parent/guardian of children who develop symptoms of illness while at school as such children may need to leave school due to symptoms that develop.
  - Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin.
    - As per CDC recommendations, those who test positive for COVID are encouraged to isolate for 5 days from the onset of symptoms. Upon returning to work/school, if the return is prior to day 10, individuals are encouraged to wear a well fitting mask.
    - People with severe symptoms or who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with their healthcare provider.

- Social distancing, contact tracing and notification of exposure are no longer strategies used at this point.
- Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette:
  - Handwashing prevents the spread of infectious diseases. At Early Learning Essentials we teach and reinforce proper handwashing with soap and warm running water at key times during the school day such as before and after eating, after restroom use and after coming in from outside time.
  - Covering coughs and sneezes is taught and reinforced at Early Learning Essentials as we know this helps reduce the spread of infectious diseases.
- Cleaning:
  - At Early Learning Essentials, we clean surfaces multiple times a day to reduce the risk of spreading germs by touching surfaces. This is done at key times during the day such as after a table activity, and before and after meals.
  - We regularly disinfect surfaces and toys to reduce the risk of spreading disease. Toys are disinfected at least weekly and more often if needed.
- Ventilation:
  - At Early Learning Essentials we encourage the use of extra ventilation when there is an increase in community spread. This includes increasing outside time when possible and appropriate according to the weather, and opening windows to increase air flow.
- Working with medical professionals:
  - At Early Learning Essentials we strongly encourage individuals with concerns regarding their own health or the health of their children to reach out to their medical home or medical provider. Having a strong relationship with a health care provider you trust is a key point for wellness.
  - We work in conjunction with our local Head Start Health Services Advisory Committee, the Utah County Health Department and we follow CDC guidance in relation to protocols involving all infectious diseases and will continue to update our procedures as needed.