

# CHILDREN AT PLAY EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER SAFETY PLAN UPDATE

JUNE 9, 2021

## **\*Addendum: Children At Play Safety Plan July, 2021**

Per guidance from the NYC Department of Health, the Bureau of Daycare, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Children At Play is not currently conducting daily temperature checks and requiring COVID-19 health surveys.

**Agency Name:** Children At Play Early Intervention Center

**BEDS Code:** 353100880040

**Administrative Address:** 40 Merrill Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10314

**Program Site Address:** 40 Merrill Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10314

### **Programs provided at this site:**

4410 (Pre-school Special Education  
Special Class)  
Multi-Disciplinary Evaluations

**Contact Person:** Karen Bryant, Executive Director  
Joan Levinson, Ed.M, SAS, Educational Director

**Contact Phone Number:** 718-370-7529

**Contact Email Address:** 40 Merrill Avenue, Staten Island, New York, 10314

### **Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted:**

[www.childrenatplayeic.org](http://www.childrenatplayeic.org)

## **INTRODUCTION**

This plan was originally developed to conform to the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in their July 2020, document entitled: *Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York's Schools – Reopening Guidance*. This plan is revised and updated in order to adapt to the changing public health conditions caused by the COVID-19 virus and all the new requirements and regulations which have emerged over time. We solicited input and involvement from the families we serve and our staff during the original drafting of our re-opening plan. We have relied on continued input from all stakeholders, while moving forward, implementing this revised plan.

Our program has been and will continue to be as flexible and as responsive as possible to the needs of our students, families, staff members. We will continue to closely monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of our plan based on the current conditions of our community as the COVID 19 pandemic persists. Nothing has changed our sincere commitment to our students, and our determination to provide the highest possible quality of educational programming and related services even during these transitional times.

The goal of the plan is to guide the delivery of high-quality educational services as safely as possible whether that service delivery is in-person, through a remote learning platform or a blended combination of remote and in-person services. Our focus and concerns extend to the social and emotional needs of our students, families, and staff members. By diligently working together and remaining focused on the outcomes we desire, we can find solutions to the many challenges ahead.

Our plan includes all the required elements identified by NYSED and follows the structure of the guidance by addressing the following areas as they apply to our students with disabilities and their families:

1. Communication/Family and Community Engagement
2. Health and Safety
3. Facilities
4. Nutrition
5. Transportation
6. Social Emotional Well-Being
7. School Schedules
8. Budget and Fiscal
9. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
10. Technology and Connectivity
11. Teaching and Learning
12. Career and Technical Education
13. Athletics and Extra Curricular Activities
14. Special Education
15. Staffing
16. Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
17. Student Teaching

Any suggestions, concerns and/or questions about our plan should be directed to the contact person identified at the beginning of this document.

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## **A. COMMUNICATION/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

It is paramount to understand the needs of the Children At Play community in order to design an effective re-opening plan. Children At Play's responsible parties (Linda Salmon Executive Director, Joan Levinson Educational Director, Meryl Salmon Assistant Executive Director) have worked closely with administrative support team,

special education teaching staff and related therapy providers, and families in order to understand their collective concerns, priorities, preferences in the drafting of the original document. It is through staff and family surveys and individual conversations with families and staff, that Children At Play was able to craft the original re-opening document. These parties have also been involved in this revision and will be with future revisions.

Children At Play has set up an elaborate system of communications with staff and families to make sure that there is a consistent, reliable, communication platform with redundancy to ensure that everyone can share information and receive communications in a manner that is equitable and sensitive to personal preference. Systems have been set up through email, text, telephone, the Remind App, Zoom, Children At Play Website notifications, surveys, and through face to face dialogue. In addition, every student returning to school for in-person instruction and related therapy services has a communication book that goes back and forth from school to home to convey information to families and for staff to receive feedback from families.

At the beginning of every school year Children At Play issues a welcome packet to all families that highlights the instructional philosophy of Children At Play, explains policies, procedures and practices, and offers guidance to families regarding family and agency expectations and responsibilities to each other. Additionally, Children At Play holds family orientation meetings prior to the first day of school. Going forward, the Family Manual will now contain additional content on COVID-19 Healthy Hygiene practices. Orientation meetings will reinforce the content of the Family Manual Healthy Hygiene practices and the importance of staff, student, and family adherence to healthy hygiene practices. Appropriate signage is visible at the building entrances that will communicate to essential visitors, students and Children At Play personnel the policy requirement of donning a face mask in order to gain entry to building, the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene. Signs have been posted throughout the program building to provide instruction on the critical COVID-19 transmission prevention and containment activities.

## **B. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*NOTE: Students and staff returned to in-person instruction when governmental authorities permitted in-person education. The return to in-person instruction was in accordance with required guidelines pertaining to wearing of masks, social distancing, availability of necessary PPE, and safe student transportation*

**The health and safety** of all the students enrolled at Children At Play is our top priority. It influences every decision that is made every day and comes up in every planning conversation that is held; even more so now, during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sharing and exchanging of information is vital for the entire Children At Play community. Everyone needs to participate, and everyone needs to stay engaged. The multiplicity of avenues for the exchange of ideas and information will ensure Children At Play's success conveying to students and families, and staff on the safe return to in-person instruction.

**Healthy Hygiene practices** are emphasized during the daily routine of students. Practices are taught and re-taught regularly with students engaged in in-person instruction and with students engaged in remote instruction. Remote platforms, notices to families via the Remind App, information sent via email, text, telephone and Zoom are avenues for information sharing employed by Children At Play whether students are participating in a distance learning program only or in the in-person instructional model. Children At Play uses guidance from the CDC for the presentation of Healthy Hygiene practices such as proper hand and respiratory hygiene, the correct use of face coverings, and the importance of adhering to social distancing requirements. Health and safety home instruction including how to screen students at home for signs of illness are contained in the Family Manual. Each family is given a copy of the Family Manual prior to the start of school.

- **Hand Hygiene Practices:** Children At Play maintains an ample supply of hand soap and towels at every sink in the school building and hand sanitizers in each room and in common areas of the school. The students are instructed and shown how to use hand hygiene techniques through song, signage, and hand over hand instruction. Students are supervised when engaged in hand washing tasks which occur at regularly scheduled times such as upon arrival to school, before and after meals, after recess, after using shared toys, after sneezing, etc. and as needed unexpectedly.
- **Proper Face Covering Use:** Children At Play maintains an ample supply of facemasks for employees in the school building following the recommended “Initial Quantities Guide for Disposable Facemasks” guidance. Face masks are available to any student in the event the student forgets his mask. According to the CDC, “Younger children (e.g., preschool or early elementary aged) may be unable to tolerate wearing a cloth face covering over an extended period of time. Therefore, wearing of cloth face coverings may need to be prioritized to times when it is difficult to maintain a distance of 3 feet from others during all activities other than snack and mealtime when 6 feet distance is still maintained. The developmental appropriateness, feasibility, and ability to don and doff face coverings is considered. All students are encouraged to wear face coverings whenever they are within 3 feet of someone, in hallways, restrooms and in other congregate settings including the busses. 6 feet distance is still maintained when eating. Communication, the use of visual and auditory cues and reminders, and instruction on the importance of face coverings along with daily practice on proper wear encourages compliance.

In accordance with new CDC guidance and NYDHMH effective May 24, 2021, fully vaccinated staff are encouraged to wear masks indoors for the purpose of modeling mask wearing for students although they are not required to wear masks at other times indoors or outdoors when on school property. Unvaccinated staff are required to wear masks at all times.

- **Social distancing:** With new guidance allowing 3 feet social distancing during all indoor activities with the exception of snack and meals, Children at Play has now increased the number of students served in an indoor space to comply with the revised CDC guidance on social/physical distancing. Sneeze boards and polycarbonate barriers are still in place as appropriate in interior areas that tend to have more foot traffic. Capacity and arrangement of furniture and/or instructional equipment in rooms, workspaces, snack, and seating areas are planned out to allow for social distancing and to limit density. If a student's specific instructional needs require the student to staff distance to be less than three feet, the staff person must don appropriate PPE to accommodate the situation.
- **Respiratory Hygiene:** The medical literature indicates that the COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezing. Therefore, it is important that students and staff cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to dispose of the tissue appropriately. Students are given visual cues, reminders throughout the school day. Additionally, healthy hygiene instruction in class and during remote learning is part of the daily activities and has become part of the students' daily routine. Students are taught to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing. If no tissue is available, students are taught to use the inside of the elbow to cover their mouth/nose. Children At Play maintains an ample supply of facemasks, tissues and no touch/floor trash cans in the school building. Part of Children At Play's respiratory hygiene practices involve supporting students to wash hands with soap/water and/or hand sanitizer following an episode of sneezing, coughing and handling dirty tissues or soiled material.

**Staff Training:** All staff at Children At Play have a role to play in maintaining the health and safety of the students and their co-workers. Children At Play staff are well versed on best practices for COVID-19 management in school, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, containment practices. Staff members were required to participate in a mandatory training intensive by a health care professional which included instruction on how to identify symptoms, exposure/possible exposure, reporting, and containment procedures. Employee participation in the training is documented and maintained in the training binder with other staff trainings.

**Health and Wellness, and Temperature Screenings:** All Children At Play employees, students and essential visitors must undergo a **Pre-Entry/Pre-Participation Health and Wellness, and Temperature Screening** prior to entry into the preschool building and/or participation in services/service delivery per infection control standards. The pre-entry/pre-participation screening must include temperature check and completion of the health survey questionnaire pertaining to exposure and COVID-19 Symptoms, per NYS DOH, NYCDOE and NYSED guidance documents. Daily documentation of screening of all essential visitors, students and Children At Play employees is maintained in a binder at the front desk. Pre-entry temperature screenings are conducted by a designated

trained employee who stands behind a protective partition to shield the employee's face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced if the child/employee/visitor sneezes, coughs or talks. The temperature taker (employee) will perform hand hygiene using sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and will wear disposable gloves. The no-contact thermometer is cleaned after each use. The classroom teachers are assigned to supervise the students who are waiting their turn. Social distancing guidelines are maintained at all times.

Children At Play has a protocol for daily temperature screenings of all students, staff, and visitors before they enter the building, along with a daily screening questionnaire for administrators, staff, students (completed by family/caregiver each morning), and visitors that includes the following questions-

1- Do you have any of the following?

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

2- Has your child (staff member) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19?

yes  no

3 - Has your child (staff member) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

yes  no

4- Has your child (staff member) experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days?

yes  no

5- Has your child (staff member) traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days?

yes  no

Children At Play does not have a nurse or other healthcare professional on staff. Therefore, Children At Play's protocol for safe management requires all students or staff with a temperature, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the questionnaire be sent directly to a dedicated isolation area where students are supervised, prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.

Children At Play advises any parent/guardian of a student or Children At Play employee sent home due to symptoms to contact their health care provider. The Administrator on site immediately notifies the local public health agency whenever a clear diagnosis of COVID-19 has been made by a medical health professional in a manner that is compliant with FERPA. Children At Play cooperates with contact tracing efforts including notification of potential contacts. Children At Play personnel are not permitted to come to work while they or a member of their household is being quarantined or isolated. Children At Play maintains medical documentation from students and Children At Play staff members allowing that individual or staff member who was COVID-19 positive to return to work. Return to work/school can only occur in adherence to NYCDOE, NYSED and NYSDOH guidance regarding quarantine periods and fever free durations.

Children At Play provides health and safety accommodations for students and staff who are at high risk or live with a person at high risk for increased complications from COVID-19. High risk persons include individuals who are age 65 or older, pregnant, and those who have underlying health conditions including but not limited to COPD, severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease, sickle cell anemia and children who are medically complex. Planning and coordination of educational services for children who are medically fragile is a team approach that includes the family, the child's healthcare providers, school personnel and the child's teacher. Accommodations may require additional PPE for staff caring for such students, the assignment of only one staff member to care for the student, decreased students in the class, modified scheduling, individualized related therapy services. Accommodations for staff may require the high-risk staff person to work remotely from home, modify work schedule or use additional PPE while at school.

If there are any confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school, Children At Play follows Education Law § 906, which provides [w]henver...a student in the public schools shows symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of others in the school, he or she

shall be excluded from the school and sent home immediately, in a safe and proper conveyance. An administrator at Children At Play shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law 7. The director of school health services, or other health professionals acting upon direction or referral of such administrator, may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees, school buildings and premises as, in their discretion, they may deem necessary to protect the health of the students and staff.

The parent or guardian is instructed to call their health care provider, or if they do not have a health care provider, to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center. Symptomatic students and staff members are advised to follow CDC's Stay Home When You Are Sick guidance unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider or the local department of health. If the student or staff member has emergency warning signs such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to arouse, bluish lips or face, the staff will call 911 and notify the operator that the person may have COVID-19. School staff are trained to be aware of the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19 which is a serious condition associated with COVID-19 in children and youth. If a child shows any of fever, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, neck pain, rash, bloodshot eyes and/or feeling extra tired it is recommended that the child have an immediate follow up with a healthcare provider. Children At Play is required to call for emergency transport (911) following district policies, for any student showing any of these emergency warning signs of MIS-C or other concerning signs: trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest that does not go away, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face, or severe abdominal pain. If a student or staff member reports having tested positive for COVID-19, Children At Play's administrator or his/her designee notifies the local health department to determine what steps are needed for the school community. When there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school, Children At Play immediately closes the effective areas within our school and the facility is professionally cleaned and sanitized. Children At Play pivots to 100% remote learning until children and staff can safely return to school.

Children At Play follows CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed with COVID-19 following a PCR test, they can return to school once there is no fever for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines, and there are no symptoms. If they have been diagnosed with another condition, a healthcare provider written note stating the student/staff member is clear to return to school must be presented in order to return to school/work. If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a PCR test or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they are not permitted to be at school and should stay at home until: It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms; It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); It has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.



Children At Play follows the CDC recommendations for discontinuing isolation in persons known to be infected with COVID-19 and could, in some circumstances, appear to conflict with recommendations on when to discontinue quarantine for persons known to have been exposed to COVID-19. CDC recommends 10 days of quarantine after exposure based on the time it may take to develop illness if infected. Thus, it is possible that a person known to be infected could leave isolation earlier than a person who is quarantined because of the possibility they are infected.

**Protocol to clean and disinfect the school:** The interior of the Children At Play Preschool building has been looked at thoroughly to determine what types of surfaces and materials are contained within the different spaces and classroom areas. Consideration has been given to what surfaces and objects need normal routine cleaning and which ones need to be disinfected after being cleaned to further reduce the risk of germs on surfaces and objects. Consideration has been given to which items should be removed completely to reduce frequency or handling/contact from multiple children and adults because of the increased challenges with cleaning and disinfecting them, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Children At Play follows the recommendations by the CDC protocol on how to clean and disinfect our school. Daily, there is normal routine cleaning with soap and water to decrease the risk of virus on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure. Children At Play hired a professional cleaning service that disinfects using US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 or alternative disinfectants (e.g., 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water or 70% alcohol solutions) on a consistent and regular basis. Children At Play cleans throughout the day those high touch surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets and restrooms, faucets and sinks.

As per CDC recommendations, outdoor areas, like playgrounds in schools and parks, generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection. They advise not to spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds- it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public. High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings are cleaned routinely but cleaning and disinfecting of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand), sidewalks and roads should not be disinfected.

- The following chart is used for routine scheduling for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting-

Areas	Before each use	After each use	Daily (at the end of the day)	Weekly	Monthly	Comments

Food preparation surfaces	Clean, Sanitize	Clean, Sanitize				Use a sanitizer safe for food contact
Eating utensils and dishes		Clean, Sanitize				If washing the dishes and utensils by hand, use a sanitizer safe for food contact as the final step in the process
Tables	Clean, Sanitize	Clean, Sanitize				
Countertops		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			Use a sanitizer safe for food contact
Food preparation appliances		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			
Refrigerator					Clean	
Doors and cabinets			Clean, Disinfect			
Play activity centers				Clean		
Computer keyboards		Clean, Sanitize				Use sanitizing wipes, do not use spray
Phone receivers			Clean			
Changing tables		Clean, Disinfect				Clean with detergent, rinse, disinfect
Potty chairs		Clean, Disinfect				
Handwashing sinks and faucets			Clean, Disinfect			
Countertops			Clean, Disinfect			
Toilets			Clean, Disinfect			
Diaper pails			Clean, Disinfect			
Floors			Clean, Disinfect			

Education Law § 807 requires that schools conduct 8 evacuation and 4 lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, consideration is given to how to modify Children At Play’s drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency. Alternate steps to

ensure the health and safety of the students are in place to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. As such, Children At Play plans to conduct drills in the 2020-21 school year using protocols that are different than pre-COVID-19. Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the crucial concern is to get to safety; maintaining social distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible. Modifications to evacuation drill protocols during this period of COVID-19 may include but are not limited to: Conducting lockdown drills in the classroom setting while maintaining social distancing and using masks; Conducting lockdown drills on a “staggered” schedule with smaller numbers of students present to maintain social distancing; Conducting lockdown drills in classroom without “hiding”/ “sheltering” but provide an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom.

Linda Salmon, Executive Director ([linda@childrenatplayeic.org](mailto:linda@childrenatplayeic.org)), Meryl Salmon, Assistant Executive ([meryl@childrenatplayeic.org](mailto:meryl@childrenatplayeic.org)) and Joan Levinson, Educational Director ([joan@childrenatplayeic.org](mailto:joan@childrenatplayeic.org)) are the COVID-19 safety coordinators at Children At Play and are responsible for continuous compliance with all aspects of the school’s reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or “new normal” levels.

Ashley Perry, Director of Operations ([ashley@childrenatplayeic.org](mailto:ashley@childrenatplayeic.org)) is Children At Play’s COVID-19 resource person and she will assist our site and the community.

Only essential visitors are granted entry into the Children At Play school building. Essential visitors must follow the same rules and regulations and undergo the same health and wellness check and temperature check protocols as the staff and students when entering the school building. Essential visitors must wear face coverings at all times. Children At Play will allow volunteers in the program who are fully vaccinated..

All visitors must have prior permission by an administrator to enter the building. All family members are always requested to wait outside when dropping their children off at school or picking them up at the end of the school day. A staff member will escort each student out of the school building and hand them off to their family member or guardian outside the building, being mindful of appropriate social distancing. Students who take the bus to and from school will be similarly escorted to the bus, being mindful of appropriate social distancing.

### **C. FACILITIES**

Children At Play reconfiguring the layout of the interior space of the classrooms to allow for social distancing between students by limiting capacity and, separating desks to maintain three-foot physical distance between them, removing shared instructional

materials. Children At Play will not be making any structural alterations to any of its preexisting space.

Families who have participated in 100% remote services throughout the school year, have the opportunity to continue to do so through the summer session July 6-August 13, 2021.

Children At Play administrators manage time and schedules to limit students from congregating at the front of the building when children arrive and leave the building. Sneeze guards and polycarbonate dividers are used to shield staff and students where social distance or mask requirements cannot be complied with or easily regulated. Alcohol-based Hand Rub Dispensers are available throughout the building in accordance with FCNYS 2020 Section 5705. Children At Play uses TruSens Air Purifier, 360 HEPA Filtration with Dupont Filter in the reception area, classrooms, treatment rooms, evaluation rooms and staff offices. This UV Light Sterilization kills bacteria, germs, odor, and allergen. The filtration captures pollutants such as allergens, VOC gases and microscopic particles with 4 levels of purification. UltraViolet sterilization destroys germs and viruses that can build up on the filter, preventing re-circulation of live germs.

#### **D. NUTRITION**

Children At Play is a nut-free facility. Food labels are read thoroughly before serving food products to students. Children At Play has always provided snacks for the students. The students bring their own lunches to school. Snacks and lunches have always been served to student in their classrooms at Children At Play. This practice will continue with additional care to make sure all children social distance and stay at their individual desks while eating. Sharing of snacks and food is never permitted. Hand hygiene before and after snack time and lunch time is a requirement of all students and is supported by the teacher and teacher assistants. Sneeze guards and polycarbonate barriers will be used as appropriate.

#### **E. TRANSPORTATION**

*NOTE: Transportation for students with disabilities enrolled in 4410 are provided by the school district. School programs, however, are involved in the embarking and disembarking of students.*

All parents/guardians are required to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to them boarding their method of transportation to school. Students must social distance (3 feet separation) on the bus. Students are encouraged to wear masks on the bus but those who do not have a mask can NOT be denied transportation. When students embark and disembark the bus, they must follow social distancing protocols. Children are escorted on and off the bus one at a time. This increases the time required to load and unload buses at school in the morning and afternoon.. Children At Play will dispense hand sanitizer to all children and adults when entering the building.

## **F. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

Children At Play's staff and families are facing unprecedented challenges as we respond to the compounded difficulties of a global pandemic, an economic recession, and civic unrest in response to structural racism. We are all trying to adapt to an environment that results in substantially reduced time spent interacting in-person, ensuring intentional and meaningful inclusion of social emotional learning (SEL) across all aspects of operating strategies. It is critical to supporting the well-being and success of students, staff, and families. Since physical health and well-being is essential to social emotional well-being – Children At Play has created an environment in which mental, social, and emotional needs are met in order to support academic learning.

Children At Play has a clinical psychologist on staff to help families during this trying time. In light of COVID-19, this qualified professional reviews and discusses with teachers and therapists the daily challenges to make sure they meet current student needs. Our Psychologist runs social-emotional learning groups in the classroom based on the PATHS curriculum to facilitate and promote emotional and social competencies, helping students to recognize comfortable and uncomfortable feelings, assist in the reduction of aggression and behavior problems in preschool. Working within the classroom and community, the clinical psychologist collaborates with the teachers, therapists and families planning for students who may need specialized strategies to augment the classroom.

Children At Play's clinical psychologist is available to provide referrals for mental health, behavioral and emotional support programs, resources and services.

## **G. SCHOOL SCHEDULES**

COVID-19 pandemic required schools to make critical adjustments to their instructional model and to devise new re-opening plans for the 2020-21 school year that would balance the priority of protecting the safety and health of staff and students, and at the same time recognize the benefits of in-person instruction necessary for development of the whole child. Consideration was given to the needs of students, families, and staff as well as the realities of available space and student enrollment. Children At Play had a restructured program that adhered to flexible scheduling models including in-person, remote, and hybrid learning options that provided synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction. Since April 2021 in accordance with updated CDC guidance, other than the few families choosing to continue with 100% remote instruction, all preschool children are now receiving in-person learning 5 days a week with a reduced instructional day to accommodate the strict cleaning and sanitizing requirements.

In the event that New York State determines the health and safety of the students, therapists and families is in jeopardy with in-person instruction, or if a member of the Children At Play community tests positive for COVID-19, Children At Play will

immediately revert to a remote learning format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and cleared.

Children At Play's class schedule and hours will be returned to the full 5 hours of instruction five days a week effective July 6, 2021 with the exception of those few students who have chosen to continue with remote instruction during the summer session.

#### **H. BUDGET AND FISCAL**

Given the complexities and uncertainties of the upcoming year, management, with the support of the Board of Directors decided to approach preparation of the budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year in parts. The first step was to develop a two-month budget for the months of July and August 2020, considering available information at the time. Management then created a budget that covered the remainder of the year that was fluid and evolved as information regarding reopening became available.

Children At Play maintained frequent communication with CPSE administrators and perspective families in effort to increase enrollment. The Children At Play Website is one avenue of community outreach to introduce interested families to the range of services offered at Children At Play. The website also offers families a virtual tour of the school, classrooms, therapy rooms, sensory-motor gym and expansive outdoor playground. Children At Play has historically participated in Health and Wellness, Special Education Resource Fairs and Rotary Events on Staten Island. Children At Play will continue to participate in these community events, COVID-19 permitting.

#### **I. ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

Children At Play discovered that many students showed tremendous growth through distance learning and the individualized educational opportunities afforded them through this instructional modality, and the enhanced involvement of the students' families in the education. Children At Play also discovered that remote learning was often complicated by conflicts in scheduling, multiple opposing family's responsibilities/interests that parents were trying to balance. A few families were unable to participate fully in remote learning due to family issues or the inability for their child to adapt to the onscreen modality. There are often academic consequences because of lost instructional time and excessive absences that result in students falling behind in their learning. Going forward, all students will be receiving in-person instruction 5 days a week, 5 hours a day.

#### **J. TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY**

The Board of Regents' vision for teaching and learning, as articulated in the USNY Statewide Learning Technology Plan (2010), NYSED is committed to working with schools and partners to help ensure students have "all the time, everywhere" access to devices and high-speed internet, both at school and at their places of residence.

In pursuit of equity in education, Children At Play seeks to understand the level of access available to all its students to adequate computer devices and/or high-speed internet access in their homes so that they can participate in remote learning. Children At Play works diligently to remain informed of the status of each student for the benefit of the students and families we serve in an effort to help students and their families seek other community resources as needed. This year during the COVID-19 pandemic, Children At Play assisted families in acquiring technology and devices when needed.

Children At Play's IT technology support personnel on staff provided and will continue to provide information technology (IT) support to families and staff members who are experiencing IT issues and challenges.

## **K. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

New York students are entitled to a free appropriate public education, even as we face the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. All students must have the opportunity to feel safe, engaged, and excited about their learning, whether in-person, remote, or combination of the two.

Children At Play provides 180 days of instruction each school year to their students. Instructional days shall be counted for programs that are delivered in-person, or remotely.

Children At Play's instruction aligns with State standards and includes routine scheduled times for students/families/guardians to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers.

Staff at Children At Play communicates back and forth with families through emails, texts, the Remind app and phone calls. This allows for a clear communication plan, enabling families/caregivers to contact their child's service providers with questions about their instruction and/or technology.

Children At Play follows all guidelines set forth by the New York State Department of Health which includes the following health and safety guidelines-

1. Family style eating is not practiced due to social distancing requirements and for health and safety requirements.
2. An adult accompanies each child to and from the bathroom outside the classroom and ensures that proper handwashing protocols are followed.
3. Students are provided with individual sets of materials to avoid sharing of common items.

Children At Play believes remote learning can be an active and meaningful instructional method. Children At Play believes that authentic learning experiences should be at the heart of every classroom and distance learning session. The activities need to match the real-world tasks of the student, so they hold meaning and inspire curiosity. The teachers and therapists bring the real world (the child's home) into the remote learning

session giving the students an opportunity to directly apply their knowledge or skills to real-world situations.

Children At Play established fixed groups of students, known as cohorts that were self-contained and were pre-assigned to limit the potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Measures were taken to schedule the school day to prevent the intermixing of cohort groups in the sensory-motor gym, outdoor playground, classroom, bathroom etc.

Best practices for facilitating high quality remote instruction is combining both individual instruction to support IEP goal and work collaboratively with parent/family with small group opportunities for socialization and enhanced communication skills.

Students were assigned to a learning model based upon a survey sent to each family in conjunction with a more detailed personal conversation with the preschool director to explain the three options and to answer questions so that each family can make an informed decision. Each family was given a choice to remain with the chosen model or to move to a different model at designated intervals of two to three months at their discretion.

Children At Play had two families whose primary language is not English, although an English-speaking family member or staff member who speaks the native language has been available during remote instruction. The children in each case were English dominant and in-person education has not been compromised.

In-person class size education (blended hybrid) was increased to full capacity in April 2021 following changes in the regulatory guidelines resulting in a 12:1:2 and 8:1:2 class mandate with related services. The Literacy and the Social/Emotional curricula continue to be part of the instructional program for each class. The length of the class session will be 5 hours including instructional lunch. Time has been allotted for adequate cleaning and individualizing the workspace for each child.

One hundred percent remote instruction will be provided for children with medical conditions that restrict participation in in-person instruction unless directed otherwise by the regulatory agencies. These students will be offered between 1-2 hours of individual instruction five days each week to include individual and small group learning experiences. All mandated related services will also be provided remotely.

**CHILDREN AT PLAY IN-PERSON, REMOTE PERSON AND  
HYBRID EDUCATION PLANS:**

**CHILDREN AT PLAY – SEPTEMBER 2021 - CLASSES**

TIME	PLACE	Teacher	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
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8:30am - 1:30pm	Classroom 1	Teacher A	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours
8:30am - 1:30pm	Classroom 2	Teacher B	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours	5 hours
1:30pm – 4:15pm	Classroom 3	Teacher C	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours
1:30pm – 4:15pm	Classroom 4	Teacher D	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours

Classroom 1 - 12:1:2 class full day class	Classroom 3 – 12:1:2 half day class
Classroom 2 - 8:1:2 class full day class	Classroom 4 – 12:1:2 half day class

## L. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Children will receive their FAPE regardless of the service delivery model by being in small class sizes taught by certified special education teachers who are following an appropriately designed curriculum addressing each child’s IEP. Related services will also be provided in accordance with the child’s IEP mandate, unless otherwise specified by the parent.

Children At Play uses the resources available in-house to engage parents in a meaningful way in their preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of mandated services to their child. Presently, all students at Children At Play speak English as their primary language although one household is a known to be bilingual.

Children At Play staff has always worked closely and collaboratively with CPSE and has continued to do so throughout the pandemic since March 2020. We engage each other via telephone conversations, meetings and ongoing emails pertaining to individual students, IEP meetings, case reviews, progress reports, and discussions about new students assigned to our program for September 2021. The relationship is professional and respectful.

Children At Play’s reopening plan takes into account the need for student access to necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services and technology (including assistive technology) and follows standard protocol for requesting such assistance, (most often assistive communication technology devices) when the need arises to meet the unique disability related requirements of the students.

Documentation is a significant part of our program and is achieved in a variety of ways. Every family has indicated that English is their preferred language for documentation and program/ staff communication is continuous and comprehensive. Daily Remind texts, emails, and phone calls occur as well as now using Zoom for face-to-face discussion with families. A daily session note is documented for each family in addition to quarterly progress notes.

Children At Play is in close communication with CPSE at all times, and especially at this time of recovery from COVID-19, for the benefit of the students. Children At Play has

shared our remote education plan option with CPSE so they have a full understanding of how Children At Play is able to quickly pivot to a remote education plan in case an emergency arises due to pandemic, quarantine, snow, etc. CPSE has deferred to the expertise of our educational and related service staff throughout the pandemic as we developed and implemented a comprehensive and effective learning plans for each student which has been in effect since April 2021. Children At Play has been in communication with CPSE each step of the way, we began the transition to full in-person instruction. Children At Play continues to rely on our relationship with CPSE to keep them informed and consult with them as needed.

Beginning September 2021, Children At Play's re-opening plans prioritize in-person services for all of our students. We are maintaining the maximum hours of daily instruction, while assuring proper safety for staff and children by cleaning educational materials, classrooms, and treatment rooms. Class sizes have been normalized with increased personalized instruction. All IEP related service mandates will be met in person.

Student progress continues to be monitored with the same rigor and consistency. That important aspect of instruction/documentation has never been compromised since the inception of Children At Play and will not be altered going forward. Daily session notes, progress reports and daily communication with families will continue as they always have.

Children At Play is very small school. Presently, there is only two full day classes in session with a total capacity for 4 classes. Therapists will be assigned to students based on a class by class basis. Children At Play has assigned support staff to continuously clean/sanitize throughout the day.

## **M. STAFFING**

All of Children At Play's teachers, therapists, and clinical psychologist hold current and valid certification/license appropriate to their service assignment. All teacher, therapist, and clinical psychologist certifications and licenses have been verified by Children At Play using the internet-based tools made available by NYSED prior to employment. Children At Play tracks certification and license expiration dates to ensure that the status of the licenses and certifications are always valid, current, and active.

Children At Play is appropriately staffed to meet the instructional and operational demands as we emerge from the COVID emergency period. Substitute teachers have an important role to play upon reopening, especially if there are extensive or protracted staff absences. When necessary, Children At Play will undertake robust recruitment efforts to identify and process qualified substitutes. Children At Play will follow the NYSED guidance for the 2020/2021 school year, which permits individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent, even those not working toward certification to be engaged for up to ninety (90) days and then beyond the first ninety (90) day period through the

end of June 2021 if a qualified substitute teacher cannot be engaged. This scenario can only be pursued once the Pre-school Director has documented and attests that recruitment efforts did not identify a fully qualified substitute teacher. The Pre-school Director must attest to the shortage of qualified recruited an inability to engage a qualified substitute teacher at the onset and then again at the end of the first ninety (90) day period. Recruitment efforts will be extensively documented.

Staff members who are requesting an accommodation from reporting for in-person work due to concerns about their own health must notify the Executive Director at Children At Play in writing and comply with submitting requested information. Once Children At Play has the required information, the agency can determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made based on applicable law, regulation and the agency's needs and resources.