



Begin With Us™
Child Care and Preschool

Health and Safety With Us:
COVID-19 Mitigation Plan



Your children come first.

Trusting others to care for your children during a health crisis is one of the most difficult things a parent can be asked to do. At Begin With Us, we fully understand the responsibility we have been given and want to assure you that we are taking all possible precautions for your children to get the education they need in a safe environment. We are strictly following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in order to put the health and happiness of your children first.



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory disease that affects humans and is believed to be spread through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. It can be transmitted from person to person in interactions taking place less than 6 feet apart from one another.

Symptoms can occur within 2-14 days of exposure and may include fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, chills, repeated shaking with chills, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, muscle pain or body aches, headache, congestion or a runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. It may also be spread through contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, followed by touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth.

The health and science communities are still uncovering new information about the disease. Please check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov for the most current updates.

See what we're doing to help keep your children safe.



Extensive Cleaning and Precautions

Begin With Us has always been a safe, healthy space for children to learn and play. Due to COVID-19, our cleaning measures have been increased even further to help reduce any potential spread of the illness. We regularly sanitize and disinfect high-touch areas such as surfaces, equipment, and toys, and use hand sanitizer that is 60% alcohol to sanitize children's hands at check-in stations as well as in the play yards.

After the children have gone home for the day, our staff perform a daily cleaning routine that includes thoroughly washing and sanitizing face masks, storing masks individually in labeled brown bags, and disinfecting shoes and other items that remain at Begin With Us. Specialized cleaning products are being used to help mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19.



Thorough Training

It's our duty to look out for your children while they're with us. We've created new policies and procedures which include the CDC's latest COVID-19 requirements for child care programs. Our staff is fully trained in examining children and adults for COVID-19 symptoms, the use of personal protective gear, performing new disinfecting techniques, and maintaining proper hygiene.

Our updated policies and procedures also extend to the way we interact with your children, as we continue to provide them the best learning experience possible under the current circumstances. We put emphasis on expressing positive feedback while wearing a mask, teaching children to wash their hands often and correctly, assuring masks are worn to cover both the nose and mouth, practicing social distancing in a respectful manner, and encouraging safe behavior so that your children can feel comfortable.

Begin With Us appointed Compliance Managers to provide guidance and support to our team and to ensure strict adherence to COVID-19 policies and procedures.



Limiting Contact

To help reduce any potential viral spread of the illness, we've established the following rules to limit the contact that Begin With Us has with the wider community.

We are limiting access to our buildings to only staff and children. Parents must remain outside the buildings at all times, and we ask that you designate drop-off and pick-up duties to a single person, ideally the same person, whenever possible. Greeters will screen both children and individuals dropping them off by taking their temperatures and asking a few questions relating to possible exposure and symptoms before allowing children into the building. For everyone's safety, parents and guardians are required to wear a mask at all times while dropping children off and must maintain at least six feet of distance from our greeters. Begin With Us staff will be posted at designated entrances with cellphones to assist with the drop-off and pick-up process. Both staff and children will change into center-only shoes upon arrival, and our staff will wear smocks and gloves whenever appropriate.

All deliveries made to Begin With Us will be stopped at the entrance to further limit contact.

Events such as Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten Orientation, field trips, special parent engagement activities, and Pre-Kindergarten Graduation have been reimagined. More information will be provided prior to any upcoming events.

Staff and families are required to abide by additional recommendations from Governor Wolf including adhering to travel bans, avoiding hot spots, and eliminating international travel.

In the event that Governor Wolf closes schools, Begin With Us will offer virtual and remote options for learning.



Safer Learning, Safer Play

The contagious nature of COVID-19 has caused us to revise the activities and equipment that we use at Begin With Us. We will continue to follow our comprehensive curriculum, covering multiple domains of learning while taking the proper precautions. For example, children will be provided with their own Kinder Box, containing developmentally appropriate materials such as crayons, glue, counting bears, playdough, writing utensils, scissors, art materials, paint, and paintbrushes to minimize the inherent risks that come with sharing supplies. Activities that include hard-to-clean items have been suspended, while those that involve social distancing and outdoor time will be encouraged.

Classes and learning areas have been restructured to allow for six feet of space between children. Lunch and outdoor play have been staggered to reduce the number of children within a space, with meals being served individually rather than family-style. Our staff will ensure that napping follows the appropriate social distancing protocols.

For the children's comfort and safety, masks will not be worn during nap time or vigorous play times, but children will be required to wash their hands before and after these activities. Those under the age of two will not be required to wear masks.

Our classroom teachers and teacher assistants will, at times, wear see-through face masks in order for children to see vital facial cues, clearly hear and better understand their teacher's words, and see their smiles.



Observation and Action

In an effort to prevent outbreaks, staff and children will have their temperatures taken upon arrival and every two hours throughout the day. Temperatures will be taken two to three inches from the forehead and recorded. Anyone with a fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or above, or other signs of illness, will be sent home. Staff will immediately notify their building Director at the first sign of illness.

In the event that a child becomes sick, we will adhere to the following protocols:

- 1 One staff member will take the child to an isolated area.
- 2 The staff member will stay with the child, wearing a mask, face shield, and smock.
- 3 The child will continue to wear his/her mask, if possible.
- 4 We'll contact a parent or guardian, ask him/her to immediately pick up their child, and direct them to contact their healthcare provider.
- 5 All contaminated areas will be closed, cleaned, and disinfected.

If we become aware of a positive case of COVID-19 at Begin With Us, we will contact the local Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Regional Office of Certification. Families and staff will be notified immediately by the Executive Director.

At Begin With Us, it is the responsibility of our staff and families to respect and maintain strict confidentiality if a parent, guardian, staff member, or child becomes ill.



What you can do at home.

The CDC has created recommendations to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19, appropriately explaining how they can avoid catching and spreading the disease. Children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends contracting COVID-19. As parents or guardians, you play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest and accurate, while minimizing anxiety or fear.

- **Remain calm.** Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.
- **Start a conversation.** Let children know they can come to you when they have questions. Understand their perspective and provide them with supportive responses.
- **Reassure safety.** Make it known to your children that it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope.
- **Encourage positivity.** Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
- **Monitor digital access.** Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, and online. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
- **Provide information.** Discuss COVID-19 truthfully and appropriately for the age and developmental level of the child. Talk to children about how some stories about COVID-19 on the internet and social media may be based on inaccurate information. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- **Practice preventive measures.** Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs. Remind children to wash their hands frequently for 20 seconds and to wear masks. Teach them to sing “Happy Birthday” two times or sing the “A,B,C’s” while washing their hands to ensure they are washing thoroughly. Try practicing with children to cough and sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
- **Discuss updated school guidelines.** Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff.



We're available to talk.

If you have questions about the details of our new policies and procedures related to COVID-19 or want to discuss any concerns you might be experiencing, we encourage you to reach out. If a family would like to discuss anything they might need during this time, including resources for food, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or mental health support, please contact our in-house support, Oksana Trimble, Child and Family Advocate, at (814) 515-1044. Oksana is happy to confidentially discuss anything your family needs to help with their wellbeing. We are here for you. It's important to us that you're comfortable with your children spending time at Begin With Us. Together, let's create a safe place for them to learn, develop, and grow.

Policies and procedures have been given, in writing, to all parents. As changes are made at the state and federal levels, our policies and procedures will be updated accordingly.

Our Hours

Monday – Friday
6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Contact Us

enrollment@beginwithus.net
814-941-0606