



Parent Handbook

COVID-19 Addendum

SSA Child Development Center
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Birmingham, AL
205-801-2839

SSA BIRMINGHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Parent Handbook
COVID-19 Edition

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Introduction

Dear Parents,

As we continue working our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to make sure we are all on the same page. While I know this can be a fearful time since none of us have ever experienced this before, the teachers and administration at SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center are committed to providing a quality program that is safe, educational, child-friendly, and fun!

While many things will seem different with new procedures in place for safety of all, this will still be an environment that fosters fun and learning. It is our goal to draw out and inspire the best in our students as we provide them with opportunities to create, explore, and learn.

This handbook will lay out the changes as we enter the next phase from this COVID-19 pandemic. This situation is unprecedented and is constantly evolving, so all changes included in this handbook will remain as the “new normal” until further notice. We will make sure that all changes are realistic and feasible for staff and children by following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines as well as those put forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the State of Alabama and local health departments. Please be sure to read through this addendum and please note that this addendum is subject to change as needed.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the policies and procedures that are outlined in this Parent Handbook. They are in place to ensure that SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center is a safe and enjoyable place for your family.

Johnetta Nicholson, Center Director
Judy Simpson, Pres/COO
SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center

A. Enrolling Your Child

Before enrolling any new child for the first time, parents or guardians must schedule an appointment with the Director(s) for a virtual tour, and the child(ren) can accompany the parents in a virtual online interview. We believe this provides both the parent and the Director the opportunity to clearly convey their expectations at SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center and go through our enrollment package one-on-one. Upon the decision to enroll your child, parents or guardians will be provided with an application, tuition and financial agreement, all health and emergency forms, as well as a copy of our handbook. All forms would be filled out electronically and sent through email or mailed in.

SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center will offer full-time and part-time care. Part-time care is typically not an option for infants or young toddlers (6 weeks – 24 months) but will be allowed for older toddlers – 2 year olds and preschoolers. The PreKindergarten program will not provide part time care. Part-time care will be for three days per week.

If not returning to full-time or part-time care at the time of reopening, families have two other enrollment options during COVID:

1. If you would like your child to remain on the current list of enrollees at SSA BIRMINGHAM and to hold your child's spot in the center, parents will be charged a holding fee of up to 50% of the child's monthly tuition. This holding fee will allow for the child's spot to be held so that you may resume your child's enrollment at any time through at least September 1, 2021. A commitment form will be required for this option with the appropriate payment authorization. After September 1, 2021, parents choosing this option are doing so on the condition that the family will move to full-time care, or paying for full-time care, if another family requests a full-time space that would complete the enrollment in a classroom. If the family of the child choosing this option does not wish to do so, they will transition to a priority spot on the waitlist, as described more fully below.
2. If your family is not ready to return your child to SSA BIRMINGHAM on the opening date, and you are not sure when you will be ready to return to the center, children whose parents are choosing this option will be placed on the waiting list with priority status. At the time that you are ready to return your child to the center, you will be asked to contact the Director regarding availability for your child. Should a situation become apparent where a room is about to fill while a SSA BIRMINGHAM child has not returned to the center, the Director will contact you to see if you are interested in enrolling your child in the available spot at that time. If parents decline this spot, your child will remain on the waiting list but without priority status. Please note, there is no guarantee that this option will result in a return to SSA BIRMINGHAM for your child.

B. Nondiscrimination Policy

Admissions to SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, age, or gender.

C. Extra Hygiene Measures and Procedures

1. Handwashing: As soon as students or staff arrive to the classroom, they will wash their hands properly. Hands will also be washed throughout the day and more frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer will be used for our older classes when soap and water is not available. Sanitizing stations are located throughout our facility.
2. Sanitizing/Disinfecting: All hard surfaces will be wiped down throughout the day, before and after use as well as at the end of each day. Any toys that go into a child's mouth will be put into the disinfecting process like usual. All surfaces and toys will be sprayed prior to leaving the room throughout the day. All sensory bins, soft toys, pillows, dress-up clothes will be put away during this phase of opening.
3. Mask wearing: Each enrolled student will arrive at the Center wearing a mask and will bring two clean cloth masks with them daily.

As of August 17, 2020, the Governor updated guidance for face covering in a school setting as follows:

“...children age two and older should wear face coverings **at all times** to help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. [...] DOH is requiring **students wear face coverings at all times while in school**, even when six feet of social distancing can be achieved. There are limited exceptions.

Children over the age of two and staff will wear masks at all times, except when eating or napping. When children are not wearing masks, masks will be stored in an accordion file with their family group and returned to the child as soon as possible after eating or napping. When eating or napping, and not wearing masks, children will be spaced 3 feet apart, or as close to 3 feet apart as possible.

If a mask becomes soiled, it will be placed in a sealed bag with the child's name on it and sent home for laundering.

Masks will be sent home daily for laundering.

Children must wear masks when departing the Center.

There will be some masks available in the Center if a child does not have a clean mask available.

Staff will wear masks at all times, except for eating, while in the center.

Updated recommendations from MD Commonwealth, Office of Administration as of December 16, 2020:

"Masks must be worn indoors irrespective of physical distance, but may be removed when working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in person interaction."

4. Social distancing: Each class is considered a "family." Each "family" will socially distance from other "families" to ensure safety. Classes will not intermix and will be with the same teachers as much as possible. Staff will take their breaks outside of classrooms while keeping socially distant to the best of their abilities.
5. Staff/Operations:
 - a. Staff will not work in close proximity (less than 6 feet apart) to other staff without masks or social distancing.
 - b. Breaks/Floaters
 - i. Will be recorded by the Director on a daily staffing schedule, and any changes will be noted.

D. Inclusion Policy

To the greatest extent possible, children with disabilities will be included in the full range of activities and services normally provided to children at our center by making necessary modifications to meet the child's special needs.

E. Fee and Payment Policy

SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center enforces the following policies and procedures for tuition payments:

1. Part-time and full-time tuition is paid electronically bi-weekly, or monthly, via ACH (automatic debit) or through Tuition Express. Payments must be made by the 25th of the preceding month, or the Friday before if paying bi-weekly. Payroll deductions may also be set up. Checks will only be accepted for initial payments for children returning at the time of re-opening.
2. A \$10.00 per day late fee will be charged when a payment is declined.

3. There will be a \$1.00 per minute charge per child for every minute elapsed after your scheduled pick-up time.
4. All tuition is due regardless of sickness, behavioral/disciplinary removal, vacations, weather-related closings, or holidays (including Thanksgiving, Christmas, snow days, Spring Break and COVID related closings).
5. Tuition responsibilities during pandemic-related closures will be assessed in the following manner:
 - a. In the event of a long-term (11+ business days) emergency-related closing mandated by the state/local government/DHS/CDC, like a pandemic, families will be asked to consider an optional payment of 50% of (bi-weekly OR monthly) tuition to continue providing benefits for staff and as a “holding fee” to retain their spot when the center reopens.
 - i. Note: Parents who choose not to make a 50% payment during such a closure will be considered “disenrolled” and reenrollment procedures will apply for their return, including the payment of the re-enrollment fee. TodayCare cannot guarantee that forfeited spots will be available for your child, but previous enrollees to the center will be placed on the priority waitlist and will have the right of first refusal if a spot becomes available.
 - b. Full-center closures for a short-term period of 1-10 business days: tuition must be paid in full.
 - c. If a classroom within the center, or individual enrolled child/family, is required to self-isolate/quarantine due to a pandemic-related exposure or positive Covid-19 test result: tuition must be paid in full.
6. If you need to terminate your child’s enrollment, a 30 day notice must be given to the Center Director in writing via email or letter; otherwise you will continue to be charged your monthly tuition. No reimbursement of tuition will be granted.
7. To ensure your child’s continued enrollment, parents must pay the annual enrollment fee of \$100 on the anniversary date of their child’s enrollment. If your child was disenrolled during the pandemic, the \$100 fee must be paid to re-enroll your child.

F. Admission/Exclusion due to symptoms of illness

The guidance below is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Alabama Department of Health. Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic, some helpful links can be found here:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

DoH: <https://www.health.al.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

CDC's latest guidance updated was on March 12, 2021.

When Should You Stay Home?

- If you, OR someone in your household, OR a close contact is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath).
- If you, OR someone in your household, OR a close contact tests positive for COVID-19 and has symptoms, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- If you, OR someone in your household, OR a close contact tests positive for COVID-19 and does NOT have symptoms (asymptomatic).
- If you, OR someone in your household, OR a close contact is PENDING a COVID-19 test result.
- If you have tested negative for COVID-19, but are experiencing symptoms (such as fever, cough, shortness of breath), or have developed symptoms since receiving your test results.
- If you have tested negative for COVID-19, and have no symptoms, but it has been less than 7 days since your last known exposure to COVID-19.

Children or staff who are obviously ill with fever, diarrhea, vomiting, green-runny nose, pus/oozing eyes, disease or condition (i.e.- ringworm, head lice, chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, fever over 100 degrees, etc.) will not be admitted to the program. It is a danger to other children and staff members at our facility. **If you have any doubts about your child's health, please call us at 205-801-2839 to be sure they may attend.** If your child appears to be sick or has any of the above while at school, we will notify the parent or guardian immediately, and it is necessary that the child be picked up within one hour of notification.

Metrics for Returning to the Center (regular illness):

- Normal temperature for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- Prescribed medications, such as antibiotics, have been introduced to his/her system for at least 24 hours before returning.
- Children and staff will provide a doctor's note on letterhead to be permitted back to SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center if barred due to illness. The doctor's note must confirm that the child or staff member can return to school because what they have is no longer contagious.

Metrics for Returning to the Center (COVID-19/pandemic illness):

For confirmed positive cases of COVID-19:

- Can return 10 days from symptom onset AND
- 24 hours with no fever, and without the use of fever-reducing medications AND
- Other COVID-19 symptoms are improving

For presumed exposure to cases of COVID-19:

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19, or follow latest CDC guidelines on ending home quarantine.

Some frequently asked questions:

1. I tested positive for COVID-19, but did not experience symptoms...

- Can return after 10 days have passed since your positive test results were received and as long as the above pandemic metrics are met

2. I tested positive for COVID-19, with no symptoms, but then started experiencing symptoms...

- Follow pandemic metrics above for confirmed positive cases

3. I tested negative for COVID-19, can I return to work/school?

- Negative tests only indicate infection was not present at the time of the test, or you may have tested too early.
- Negative tests do not indicate you will not get sick, or will not pass the virus to others
- Follow CDC metrics for ending home isolation (14 days after exposure) AND consult with your medical provider or the local Department of Health

*4. I tested negative for COVID-19, and am not experiencing symptoms...**

- Per CDC guidance, quarantine may be permitted to end for asymptomatic individuals OR persons who receive a negative COVID-19 test as long as:
 - the test was obtained no sooner than 5 days after exposure
 - if you remain symptom free for no less than 7 days after a negative test result
 - if you remain symptom free 10 days from the date of exposure

5. I was in close contact with someone who just tested positive for COVID-19...

- If you were in close contact with a member of your household, or a close contact, within 48 hours of them becoming symptomatic, or receiving a positive test result, you should quarantine at home for 14 days after the date of last exposure to the positive COVID-19 case.
- The CDC recommends waiting at least 5-7 days after the date of last exposure to a positive COVID-19 case to get tested for COVID-19.
- If you become symptomatic within those 14 days, or get a test and receive a positive result, follow the guidelines for positive COVID-19 cases.

6. *I was around a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19...*

- Per CDC guidelines, closely monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19. You do not need to self-quarantine unless you develop symptoms or if the person identified as a “close contact” develops COVID-19.

*These guidelines are based on simple COVID-19 exposure limited to one-on-one infections, not complex ongoing exposures (such as multiple household members who cannot self-isolate from each other). Additional quarantine measures may be necessary and TodayCare will work with the local Department of Health to treat these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Reporting COVID-19 Exposure:

We ask that all parents and staff let us know of any potential exposure immediately.

- A *potential exposure* means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes.
- The *timeframe* for having contact with an individual includes the period of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic, or received a positive COVID-19 test result.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a child or an adult who has been present in the childcare center, we will inform the State of Alabama and the County health departments, and parents with children enrolled at SSA Birmingham.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a household member OR close contact of a child or adult who has been present in the childcare center, we will inform the State of Alabama through our licensing contact according to their requirements as well as parents with children enrolled at SSA BIRMINGHAM Center.

Daily Admission Screenings:

As daily health checks are conducted (temperature and verbal questioning), if any staff and/or student exhibits a temperature and/or has any signs/symptoms of illness or has been around anyone with signs of illness, they will not be allowed to enter the Center.

Parents and staff will be encouraged to report illness within their household, children, and themselves during drop-off symptom screening to help inform decisions related to site closure. Absences among children and staff will be monitored according to CDC guidance.

If a staff member and/or child becomes ill at home, or any family member tests positive for COVID-19, or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case, they should not come to school and must notify school officials.

If staff or child becomes ill at school with symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath at school, they will be isolated and informed to go home or to healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are and follow CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick. Families of children will be notified immediately to pick up their child. They must remain at home until the COVID-19 test results are received.

Closing Procedures for the Center

- The Center may be closed for a minimum of 10 business days if there is a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case or probable case who was present in the child care program building within 48 hours prior to developing COVID-19 symptoms, and had close, prolonged contact, as defined by the CDC, with program staff and/or children.
- In some circumstances, it is possible that individual classrooms or families will be able to quarantine, and the Center can avoid a full closure.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a child or an adult who has been present in the childcare center, we will inform the State of Alabama and the County health departments as per their requirements, and parents with children enrolled at SSA Birmingham.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a household member OR close contact of a child or adult who has not been present in the childcare center, we will inform the State of Alabama and County health departments as per their requirements, and parents with children enrolled at SSA Birmingham.
- The Center will follow the advice and criterion of local Department of Health authorities - consulting as needed - on reopening the center, quarantined classrooms, or on individual returns to the center after a COVID exposure or experience.
- During the closure, the specific classroom/s or parts of the building will be detail cleaned and sanitized before staff and/or children return.
- Children and staff affected by a childcare program closure due to a COVID-19 case or probable case should quarantine at home for a minimum of 14 days per CDC guidelines and monitor their health.
- Center closures during the pandemic may or may not affect tuition responsibilities. See Section E.5 for TodayCare's tuition policies.

Dispensing Medication at the Center: Medications for maintenance will be administered throughout the day as required. The medication must be given to the Director/Front Desk in its original bottle, which contains the physician's directions. We ask that families schedule and administer medication at home when possible so that there is a minimum number of times a child must be administered medication at the center. The medication log must be signed by the parent at this time and will be kept on file. Children will be given their medication according to the prescription specifications only.

G. Personal Belongings

While in this phase of operation, children may not bring in any personal belongings aside from what is approved. No toys or personal items from home will be permitted at this time. Bedding will be sent home on the last day of each week, and it is **mandatory** that bedding be laundered before returning the next week.

H. Arrival and Departure Procedures

Our facility is operational from 7:00am – 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. During the COVID-19 pandemic, drop-off times must be staggered. Please confirm your preferred drop off time with the Center Director. Children can be dropped off from 7:00 am until 8:45 am.

During the pandemic, there will also be staggered pick up times. Please confirm your preferred pick up time with the Center Director. Please only come at your designated drop-off or pick-up time to keep everyone safe. If you see another family being checked in, please be patient during this time and maintain social distancing. Anyone entering the vestibule to pick up their child must wear a face covering/mask.

Drop-Off/ Pick Up Procedures

Infants and Toddlers

If your child is an infant or young toddler, you will bring your child into our vestibule area (just inside the first set of doors). All parents and children over the age of two **MUST** wear face covers. Our check-in staff will do a visual assessment before allowing you into our lobby. Once you enter the lobby, please use the hand sanitizer station. You will be asked a series of yes/no questions regarding symptoms and travel. Your infant/toddler will get their temperature taken and logged. If it is below 100.4F, our runner will take your child to his/her classroom.

Twos and Older

All parents and children must wear a face covering during drop-off. Please bring your child to the front door. A designated check-in staff will take your child's temperature and do a visual check. They will also ask you to sign them in via the QR code and answer the COVID questions on the Parent App. If it is below 100.4 F, the runner will take your child to their classroom. Per CDC guidance on August 17, 2020, children over the age of two must always wear their masks except while eating or napping.

If you have both an infant and older child, follow instructions for infant/toddler drop off.

We ask that the designated drop-off and pick up person not be a “vulnerable” person (older person such as grandparent or person with a serious underlying medical condition).

Pick-Up Procedures

Pick-up times will be staggered to allow for safe social distancing. Please abide by your pick-up time. If you see another family being helped, please be patient until it is your turn and maintain social distancing. Anyone entering the vestibule to pick up their child must wear a face covering/mask.

I. Visitors

Outside programming will be suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic (such as field trips, vision screening, school photos, etc.). Children who receive therapies or outside services may continue if the special teacher/therapist/outside resource passes screening procedures and follows established protocols consistent with the full-time caregivers/staff.

J. Field Trips/Special Events

There will be no field trips or special events/gatherings at this time.

K. Food

- A. Breakfast, lunch, and snack must be provided by families in a lunch bag that will keep food hot or cold following CDC guidelines.
- B. Nursing mothers are permitted to come to the Center to breastfeed. Please notify the Director of your planned time(s) of arrival so that you can be admitted. Nursing mothers must wash hands upon arrival and wear a mask during the entirety of their time in the Center. Their baby will be brought to them for nursing outside of the classroom.

Food Allergy: We are an entirely nut-free facility. If your child has an allergy to any foods, please be sure that it has been indicated in your child's paperwork and put in writing. This should be given to the teacher AND director. All allergies will be posted in the classroom.

TodayCare has a mandatory vaccine policy for our staff unless they require a medical accommodation. Once all staff are vaccinated, they may meet in small groups/perhaps the staff lounge without their masks. As long as all children in a classroom are not vaccinated, staff will continue to wear masks while in the classroom and/or any public area in the center.

SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center

Parent or Guardian COVID-19 Handbook Receipt Form

Parents or Guardians,

Please thoroughly review the Parent Handbook COVID-19 Addendum, which contains the policies and procedures for SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center while in the process of reopening, and operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. After reading the handbook, please complete this form and return it to the school via email as soon as possible. This form will be kept in your child's file for the duration of the school year.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Johnetta Nicholson, Director
Judy Simpson, Pres/COO
TodayCare Children's Centers, LLC
SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center

I, _____ (print your name),

the parent/guardian _____ (print child's name),
hereby acknowledge receipt of SSA BIRMINGHAM Child Development Center's Parent Handbook COVID-19 edition. I have read and agree to adhere to all the policies and regulations set forth in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / _____