

“Returning to School: September 2021 Plan of Action”

Dear Parents,

While the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be loosening its grip on our lives, childcare is still subject to many regulations we did not face in the past. We have attempted to address these issues by adopting a plan of action and establishing guidelines and procedures to help move us forward. All changes are aimed at minimizing exposure from close contact and/or illness as well as planning for program continuity, ease of transition and a positive school experience. As a licensed childcare center in the State of New Jersey, we are required to follow all licensing guidelines with regard to Covid-19

Our “**Returning to School Plan of Action**” is divided into categories to help you organize and prepare for our return.

- Part I Agreement
- Part II Communication
- Part III Adjusted Hours of Operation
- Part IV Arrival and Departure
- Part V Personal belongings
- Part VI Illness

Part I Agreement

Included with this letter is an acknowledgement form identifying the requirements that parents and staff members will agree to and abide by to help us through the Covid-19 pandemic. As a staff, we have walked ourselves through every scenario we could think of and tried to address each one in depth. We know you will appreciate the tremendous responsibility we feel to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

This acknowledgement form must be signed and submitted before anyone will be permitted into OTR. Included are all staff members, both parents and anyone responsible for dropping off or picking up your child.

Part II Communication

As Early Childhood educators, we have always valued the personal, hands-on ways of communicating. Since last March, we have relied on emails, phone calls and zoom meetings. We introduced the Brightwheel (app) program last September to help provide a more direct communication between teachers and parents. We have found this app exceeds our expectations and gives us new ways of sharing information and classroom news. As always, you may call at any time to talk with us. Please allow time for us to respond.

Part III Adjusted Hours of Operation

Beginning September 1, 2021 our hours of operation will be from 7:30am to 6:30pm.

In order to limit large groups arriving at the same time, we have been staggering arrival and pick-up times. We will begin the school year without these designated times. If we find that this plan does not work, we will go back to assigned times. Please do not plan to arrive before 7:30am or at 6:30pm. Allow enough time to be able to leave the building by 6:30pm.

Please be patient while we go through this process. We will revise as necessary.

Part IV Arrival and Departure

ARRIVAL: Assuming all current Office of Licensing protocols are still in place when we re-open, the procedures on arrival will be as follows.

1. All adults who are dropping off will wear a face mask. Children two and under will not wear masks. Children over two are encouraged to wear a mask.
2. Parent and child will stay within the marked sections leading up to the front door (designated-taped areas 6 feet apart). No one will be allowed to congregate in the OTR parking lot or on the lawn or near the building. The line to enter will form on the sidewalk and extend to the front of the building (not on the black top). Parent and child will proceed up the ramp to the front door where they will be greeted.
3. Parents have their child's temperature taken with a contactless scanner, give the staff member their child's personal belongings (see section V), and say good-bye to their child at the door. Children will be welcomed by a staff member who will escort them to their classroom where they will wash hands before beginning their day.
4. Parents will sign their child in on the Brightwheel app and answer all health screening questions.
5. No one will be admitted into the building other than enrolled children. No parents or siblings will be allowed in the building. Parents will exit down the stairs and to their car.
6. Please Note: Any child with a fever of 100.4 degrees will be excluded.

DEPARTURE:

1. All adults who are picking up will wear a face mask. Parents will wait on line for the next pick-up opening following the same procedures as the morning drop-off.
2. Please call when you are in the parking lot.
3. Children will be brought to the door with anything that must go home.
4. Parents and children will exit down the stairs to their cars.

Part V Personal Belongings

Each child will need -

A small bag to hold change of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) - LABELED!

A lunch box (no larger than 8x10) - LABELED!

A nap bag - 2-gallon Ziploc bag to hold 1 crib size sheet and 1 crib size cover only. LABELED!
(except in the Baby Room)

A water bottle or sippy cup - LABELED! And washed and dated daily.

Please help us keep our school sanitized and germ free. DO NOT send any personal toys or items from home other than those listed above. Do not send back packs or large bags of any kind. No car seats can be left at school.

Part VI Illness

All children will be screened at the door before entering.

We recognize that children may become ill at school for any number of reasons. If this should occur:

1. Your child will come to the office until picked up. You will be called to come for your child. Children must be picked up within 30 minutes. It is extremely important that we have a working phone number (in service and able to receive calls or messages).
2. If we are unable to reach either parent after 10 minutes of trying, we will go to your emergency contacts. You must have 2 local contacts on file with working numbers. Emergency contacts must be aware of our altered procedures during this transition period.

3. Children sent home with a fever of 100.4 or greater or those who are wheezing, coughing or have shortness of breath must stay home for 24 hours after symptoms have subsided WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medications.
4. If we are unable to reach anyone and your child remains ill at school, your child will not be allowed back for a minimum of 72 hours.
5. If someone in our school is diagnosed with Covid-19, we will follow state licensing instructions for how to proceed. We will attempt to notify everyone as soon as possible.

Caring for Our Space

OTR is more than just a building. It is our home away from home. Hundreds of children, parents and staff have passed through these doors. OTR has cared for us and sheltered us and stood strong through every harsh winter, blistering summer, hurricane season and through it all we have been given a place we call home. We are still in a pandemic, and we are taking precautions to care for our building and all those who enter.

Our staff has been united in our effort to provide our same loving, nurturing and creative program while still meeting the demands of this challenging time. We have spent more than a year focused on trainings related to how to work in an early childhood setting with issues such as pandemics, children and trauma, mental and physical health, social and emotional health, building resilience, and trauma informed practices.

We thank you for understanding the need for these precautions and continue to appreciate your cooperation and support as we hopefully “near the end” of this pandemic.

Lorraine and The OTR Staff