



# Guide to a Safe Start

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# Introduction

To keep everyone safe, these procedures were developed with the help of guidance from LARA, OHS, the CDC, and the MI Return to School Roadmap. Please keep in mind that these procedures will change as more information becomes available and we will always error on the side of caution. Health and safety of all is our top priority.

These plans will be in effect with three potential scenarios that will work seamlessly together. Due to the pandemic’s changing nature, we will be prepared to execute these plans and flow in and out of the scenarios as needs arise. Also please be aware these procedures may differ slightly if in a school building, we will follow the most stringent policies.

- Typical Opening (MI Safe Start Phase 6) – with typical classroom ratios, transportation in full operation, and home visiting occurring as usual
- Staggered Ratios and/or increased safety protocols (MI Safe Start Phase 4-5) – it may be necessary to reduce the class sizes, hours of service, or make other adjustments to meet local, state, and national recommendations. If this occurs classes may be split with half of the classroom receiving in-person services on two days, and the other half receiving services on two other days, in addition to potential virtual learning on alternate days. Or a similar situation, to match public school schedules as much as possible. During this time, transportation may become limited or eliminated. Home Visiting may be suspended or altered, to allow Home Visitors to visit only one family per day or do visits entirely virtually.
- Virtual Learning (MI Safe Start Phase 1-3) – It may be necessary to close classrooms and transition to exclusively virtual learning for both center-based and home-based learning.

We will alert families immediately to any necessary changes, through the One Call Now system, Email, Text message, and potentially through individual phone calls from Classroom Staff, Home Visitors, and Family Advocates.

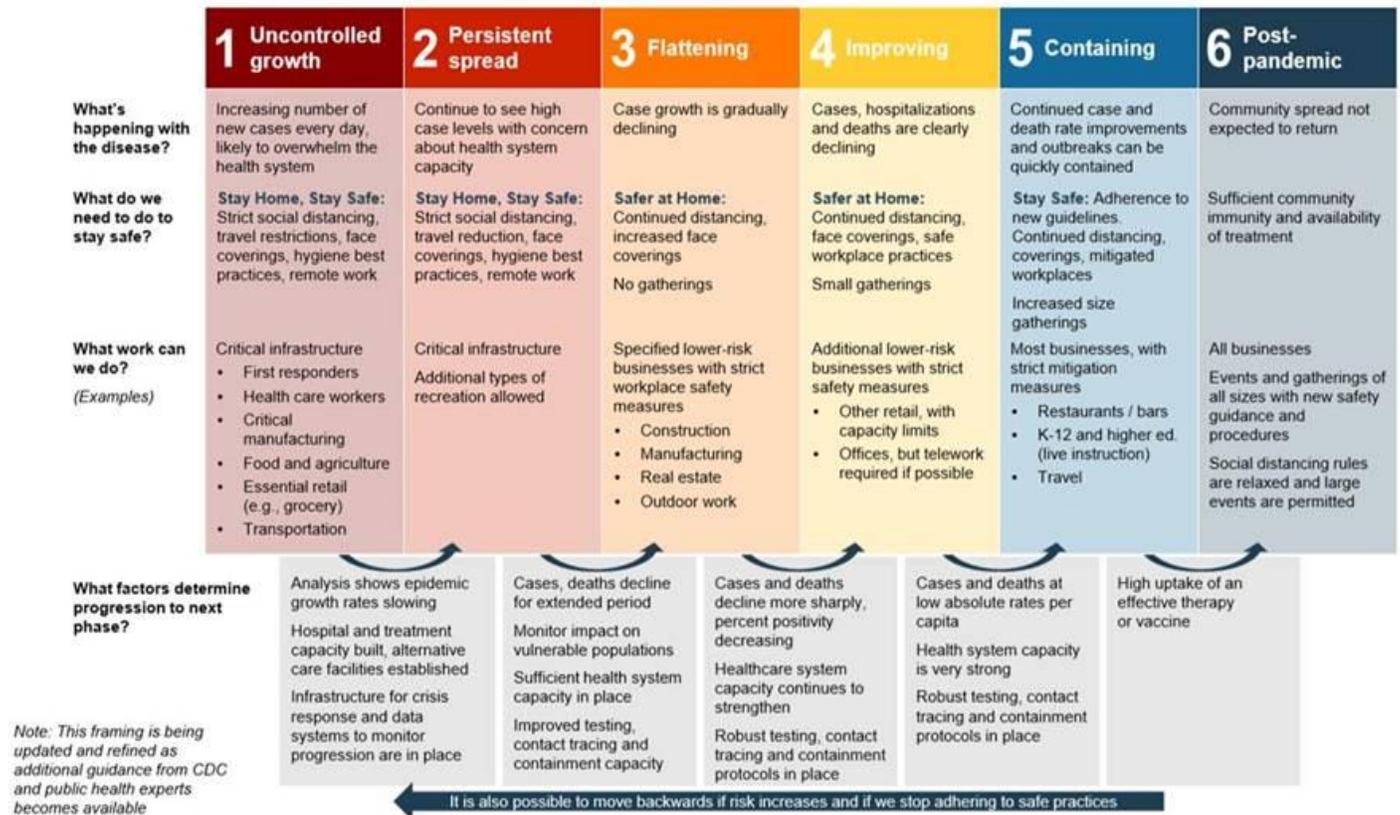


Figure 1: www.michigan.gov MI Safe Start Guide

## Monitoring Protocols

Systems have been developed to screen staff, children, and families for COVID-19 symptoms. Only TCHS Staff and Children will be allowed in the facility. If a staff member or child in our care shows symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, TCHS will notify the local health department and our licensing consultant to determine next steps, which could include a temporary closure.

### TCHS Staff

All staff will complete the TCHS Screening Survey or the MI Symptoms Web App before entry and follow given instructions if any symptoms.

Symptoms monitored include the following, if anyone presents with any of these symptoms, they will not be allowed to enter the facility and will contact our Human Resources department for further instructions:

- Temperature of 100.4 or higher – Thermometers will be at each center and sanitized in between each use. Temperature will be taken upon arrival.
- Persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Changes in taste or smell
- Diarrhea

If a staff member has been in close contact with a person who had COVID-19, they will not be allowed to enter the building and will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days.

If a staff member experiences symptoms throughout the day they will be sent home immediately. Staff who are not feeling well will remain home without penalty.

### Children

Each child will be screened for symptoms before exiting their vehicle or before getting on a bus. A staff member with proper protective gear (mask, gown, gloves) will screen children with help from the family member dropping the child off at the school location or prior to getting on a bus.

- Temperature check will be performed twice per day, before entry into the building or on a bus, and after lunch. If a child has a temperature of over 100.4 they will not be allowed to enter the building and will not be able to return to the building for at least 14 days. Thermometers will be disinfected in between each use.
- The following questions will be asked:
  - If they have felt unwell in the past 3 days
  - Persistent cough
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Cold like symptoms
  - Diarrhea and/or vomiting
  - If any close contact with a person who has COVID-19
- If a child becomes sick during the day, they will be kept in a sectioned off section of the room separate from other children until an approved family member can pick them up.
- If a child has experienced any of the above symptoms, please call the center so the proper precautions can be made.
- If a child is well, they will be able to enter the building or bus and will be signed in.

## Communication with Families and Staff

Proper communication between staff and families will be essential to keeping everyone safe and healthy. Staff have been thoroughly trained in all procedures including proper wear of PPE, and daily cleaning protocols have been developed.

### Before care begins

Before returning or enrolling in the center each family will receive this document and will be asked the following questions:

- When will your child be returning to care? Virtual options will be available if you do not feel comfortable with your child returning.
- What concerns or questions do you have about your child returning to care?
- Are there any health concerns/conditions which may make your child at higher risk for complications if exposed to COVID-19?

Families who wish to receive virtual services will be allowed to select that option during this crisis without risk to their enrollment.

If a staff member is experiencing symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, they will be tested for COVID-19 before returning to work.

### If experiencing symptoms or test positive for COVID-19

If a staff member, a child, or a member of their family is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please contact our agency. We will notify the Health Department and Licensing who will help make a determination on if quarantine is necessary, or classroom/center closure. We will respect the privacy of all families and staff members and not share health information of specific individuals.

If a child or staff member has a fever of over 100.4, they must be fever free and not experiencing any additional symptoms for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medication before returning.

Child and staff who have exhibited multiple symptoms of COVID-19, have possible exposure, or test positive for COVID-19 must stay home until:

- The individual is fever free for 72 hours without the use of medication that reduces fevers AND
- Other symptoms have improved AND
- At least 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared

## Safe Locations

Our locations are prepared to maximize health and safety for all children. We will try to spend more time outside if possible, to maximize learning and limit exposure to the virus.

### Masks

Masks will be provided by TCHS, staff and children are welcome to also wear their own masks. TCHS will follow the most stringent of all Federal, State, and Local recommendations regarding mask usage. Employees will be expected to wear masks as much as possible while in buildings, and outside if they are within 6ft of another person.

Families interacting with staff will be expected to wear a mask, one will be provided if they do not have one to wear. These will need to be worn at Pick up/Drop off at a center or a bus stop, or during any other interaction with staff.

Children in the Head Start program (3-5 yr olds) will be taught how to properly wear a mask and will be in a mask while inside a building as much as possible. This will be used as a skill building opportunity to prepare children to remain safe and healthy inside and outside of our program. TCHS will provide the masks.

Children in Early Head Start (birth-3) will not wear masks, though 3-year-old children may begin learning how to wear a mask if they are preparing to transition into a Head Start classroom. TCHS will provide the masks.

Children of all ages will not wear masks during rest time.

### Classrooms and Socialization Sites

We will follow all local, state, and federal recommendations regarding classrooms and socialization sites. We will adjust classroom ratios as required and recommended to allow for proper space for children in classrooms. These ratios may change during the course of the year. We will inform families of any necessary changes.

- Cribs and sleep mats six feet apart, when possible. Placing bedding in head-to-toe positioning
- Non-essential visitors will be prohibited from entering sites.
- Playground time will be rotated to limit contact with children outside of their classrooms.
- Meals will be plated and served individually, not family style.
- Touchless trash cans are in each classroom to provide a hands-free way to dispose of tissues and contaminants.

### Toileting and Diaper Changes

Because toileting and diaper changes require close contact, staff will wear a disposable gown and gloves and replace in between children. Diaper changing areas and bathrooms will be cleaned in between each use.

### Tooth Brushing

At Head Start, toothbrushing has always been an essential practice, however at this time for safety and sanitation, toothbrushing will be suspended. Because good dental hygiene is still important to overall health, we will be providing students with toothbrushes so they can ensure good dental hygiene at home, in addition to regular reminders from your teachers and home visitors.

### Arrivals and Departures

Arrivals and Departures may vary depending on mode of transportation and location of the classroom. We may have to stagger arrival and drop off times to limit contact. Direct contact with families by staff will be limited to the extent possible. Only one adult can pick up or drop off a child on any given day.

#### At the center

- If dropping off/picking up at the center, one staff member with proper PPE will screen the child, if the child is safe to enter the building another staff member will escort them into the facility.
- Car seats and other items will not be allowed into the buildings.
- Soft materials (such as blankets, coats, or clothing) should be taken home daily and washed
- A procedure will be developed at each center to determine the best way to remain distanced during drop off and pick up

#### At the bus

- If dropping off/picking up at a bus stop, the bus monitor with proper PPE will screen the child, if the child is not experiencing any symptoms, they will board the bus.
- At community stops, a procedure will be developed that is unique to each stop as to distancing during pick up and drop off

### Cleaning, Hygiene, and Sterilization Procedures

Every center will be provided a UV sanitation light and wand. Items that cannot be sanitized with those or in between sanitation will be sanitized using our three-step process.

- Toys, objects, and classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized daily
- Playground sanitized after each use

- Teach proper handwashing
- Continue to cover cough with a tissue or sleeve
- Gloves, and gowns will be worn during any toileting and diaper changes.

## Transportation

TCHS will follow all recommendations from the state and national government, regarding safe transport of children. There may be times when transportation is available for regular service, for a select few students with families without transportation (6-9 students depending on the bus size), or not available at all. Buses will be disinfected before and after all routes with an electrostatic sprayer. Bus monitors will wear protective PPE gear, for screenings that will take place before each child is able to ride the bus. All buses will also have hand sanitizer, for children and staff to use.

## Food procedures

Tri-County Head Start will continue to serve meals and snacks in our classrooms, however meals will not be served family-style. Children will not be allowed to serve themselves but will still be taught self-help skills. The number of children at each table will be limited as much as possible to maximize distancing.

When infants and toddlers who cannot feed themselves are fed, staff will wear gloves and a mask.

## Children becoming ill

Children who become ill during the day will need to be picked up as soon as possible. Since centers do not have an isolation room, there will be a designated spot in each classroom for children who become ill during the day.

## Homebased

Homebased services are still an essential service for TCHS. Services may be the following or a combination of the following, depending on the situation and the family's level of comfort:

- Virtual – through zoom, video chat, phone, or other virtual method
- Outdoor visits – at the family's home or in a designated park
- In person/in home – home visitor and family will wear masks, wash hands often and any supplies will be sanitized after each use.

If a Home Visitor is visiting families in-person, the number of families visited on the same day may be reduced or they may visit only one family per day, depending on the status of the health crisis.

Home Visitors will contact families before visiting them to ensure that everyone in the household is healthy and has not been in contact with anyone with symptoms of COVID-19. If a Home Visitor visits your home, everyone in the home should wear masks. If you or someone in your family is not comfortable wearing a mask, your visit will be virtual.

<h1>Policies and Procedures</h1>		135.1
<b>Title: COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan</b>		
<b>Policy Topic: Human Resources</b>		
<b>Date of Issue:</b> 6/1/2020	<b>Effective Date:</b> 6/1/2020	
<b>Date of PC/Board Approval:</b> 6/1/2020	<b>Review/Revise Date:</b> As changes are necessary	

**Policy:** Tri-County Head Start (“TCHS”) takes the health and safety of our employees seriously. With the spread of COVID-19 and the need for certain employees to continue in-person work, either because they are critical infrastructure workers or they are needed to conduct minimum basic operations for the TCHS, the TCHS is committed to reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at the TCHS’s workplace(s) and to providing a healthy and safe workplace for our employees.

**Purpose:** This Plan is based on information and guidance from the CDC and OSHA at the time of its development, and is subject to change based on further information provided by the CDC, OSHA, and other public officials. The TCHS may also amend this Plan based on operational needs.

**Scope:** All Employees

**Responsibilities:** TCHS Directors

**Procedures:**

The TCHS has identified the following potential sources to spread COVID-19 in the workplace:

- The general public
- Children and Families
- Co-workers
- Vendors/visitors

Our employees fall into the following category:

- Medium exposure risk (the work performed requires frequent and/or close contact with people who may be infected with COVID-19 but who are not known COVID-19 patients, or contact with the general public in areas where there is ongoing community transmission).

**COVID-19 WORKPLACE COORDINATOR**

The TCHS has designated the following individual as its COVID-19 Workplace Coordinators: Mindi Baker, Human Resources Manager and Cindy Thomas, Health Services Director. The Coordinators are responsible for staying

abreast of federal, state and local guidance and incorporating those recommendations into the TCHS's workplace. The Coordinators are also responsible for reviewing Human Resources Policies and Practices to make sure that they are consistent with this Plan and existing federal, state and local requirements.

The Coordinators can be reached at the following:

Phone numbers: Call main line at 269-657-2581 ext 101 and coordinators will be notified of any messages

Email address: [mbaker@tricityhs.org](mailto:mbaker@tricityhs.org); [cthomas@tricityhs.org](mailto:cthomas@tricityhs.org)

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS**

All managers and supervisors must be familiar with this Plan and be ready to answer questions from employees. Managers and supervisors must set a good example by following this Plan at all times. This involves practicing good personal hygiene and jobsite safety practices to prevent the spread of the virus. Managers and supervisors must encourage this same behavior from all employees.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

The TCHS is asking every one of our employees to help with our prevention efforts while at work. In order to minimize the impact of COVID-19 at our worksite(s), everyone must play their part. As set forth below, the TCHS has instituted various housekeeping, social distancing, and other best practices at our workplace(s) to minimize exposure to COVID-19 and prevent its spread in the workplace. All employees must follow these best practices at all times for them to be effective. Beyond these best practices, the TCHS requires employees to report immediately to their managers or supervisors if they are experiencing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, as described below. If employees have a specific question about this Plan or COVID-19, they should ask their manager or supervisor or contact the Human Resources Department.

OSHA and the CDC have provided the following control and preventative guidance for all workers, regardless of exposure risk:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Follow appropriate respiratory etiquette, which includes covering for coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- While there is community spread of COVID-19, maintain appropriate social distance of six feet to the greatest extent possible.

In addition, employees must familiarize themselves with the symptoms and exposure risks of COVID-19. The primary symptoms of COVID-19 include the following:

- Dry cough;
- Fever (either feeling feverish or a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher);
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Individuals with COVID-19 may also have early symptoms such as chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.

If employees develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as an atypical cough or shortness of breath, they must not to report to work, notify their supervisor immediately, and consult their healthcare provider. Likewise, if employees come into close contact with someone showing these symptoms, they must notify their supervisor immediately and consult their healthcare provider. The TCHS will also work to identify any employees who have close contact with individuals with COVID-19 symptoms.

“Close contact” is not brief or incidental contact with a person with COVID-19 symptoms. Instead, the CDC defines “close contact” as either:

- Being within approximately six feet of a COVID-19 infected person or a person with any COVID-19 symptom(s) for a “prolonged period of time;” or
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 infected person or a person with any COVID-19 symptom(s) (e.g., being coughed on).

There is no precise definition of “prolonged period of time.” CDC estimates range from 10 to 30 minutes. To protect employees, the TCHS uses the lower end of this range and considers a prolonged period to be 10 to 15 minutes of exposure.

## **WORKSITE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

### **Minimizing exposure from co-workers.**

The TCHS will take the following steps to minimize exposure from co-workers to COVID-19:

- Educate employees on protective behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 and provide employees with the necessary tools for these protective behaviors, including:
  - Posting CDC information, including recommendations on risk factors at home and in the community
  - Providing tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles to minimize exposure to infectious secretions
  - Inform employees of the importance of good hand hygiene. Regularly washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is one of the most effective ways for employees to minimize exposure to COVID-19. If soap and water are not readily available, employees should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer.
  - Encourage good hand hygiene by ensuring that adequate supplies of soap and hand sanitizer are maintained and placing hand sanitizers in multiple locations.
  - Discourage handshaking and instead encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting
  - Avoid other employees’ phones, desks, offices, other work tools and equipment, and other commonly touched surfaces when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use
  - Avoid sharing food utensils and food with other employees
  - Encourage and require social distancing to the greatest extent possible while in the workplace

- Encourage employees to minimize ride-sharing. While in vehicles, employees must ensure adequate ventilation
- Masks will be provided and worn in all buildings and outside when in close contact with others
- PPE will be provided based on specific situation
  - Face Mask
  - Gloves
  - Face Shield
  - Such as taking temperatures
- Develop protocol for social distancing practices
  - Evaluate areas where employees work within 6 feet of each other and determine options to increase distance apart.
  - Limit in-person meetings
  - Restrict the number of workers present on-site to no more than necessary
  - Staggered shifts, break times, etc.
  - Promote remote work as much as possible
- Restrict employees from the workplace if they display symptoms of COVID-19
  - Consider implementing health assessments and/or questionnaires prior to entry into the workplace
  - Immediately separate any employee with symptoms from other individuals and send him/her home
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home
  - Apply available paid time off options and flexible attendance requirements
  - Follow state and federal guidance for return to work
  - Implement protocol for return to work after symptoms of COVID-19
- Actively encourage employees to stay home if they have been in close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19
  - Apply available paid time off options and flexible attendance requirements
  - Follow state and federal guidance for return to work
  - Implement protocol for return to work after potential exposure to COVID-19
- Develop protocol to follow if an employee has a confirmed case of COVID-19
  - Communication plan with co-workers
  - Work with local health department
  - Evaluate OSHA reporting/recordkeeping requirements
  - Implement protocol for return to work, including workplace contact tracing and CDC-recommended cleaning and disinfecting in all affected areas
- Perform increased routine environmental cleaning and disinfection
  - Instruct employees to sanitize the work areas upon arrival, throughout the workday, and immediately before departure
  - Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.

- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- Maintain Safety Data Sheets of all disinfectants used on site
- Travel to sites will be restricted to limit employees' exposure to employee who traveled until the TCHS can confirm traveling employee does not have COVID-19 symptoms
- Evaluate options for employees at a higher risk for serious illness due to COVID-19
- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism
  - Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism
  - Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent
- Remind employees about the TCHS's employee assistance program (EAP) resources and community resources as needed.
- Talk with companies that provide contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.

#### **Minimizing exposure from families and community members**

- Evaluate what business practices are needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Develop protocol for social distancing practices
  - No families, guests or vendors will be allowed into the building
  - The number of staff members in each building will be limited to ensure social distancing occurs
- Post information on reducing the spread of COVID-19
- Evaluate options for assessing symptoms of COVID-19 and removing individuals from the workplace with symptoms
- Consider making gloves and masks available to customers/clients

#### **Minimizing exposure from the visitors/vendors**

- Talk with business partners about the TCHS's Plan
- If needed, identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.

- If possible limit, the number of visitors to the worksite, including the trailer or office.
- Develop protocol for health screening/questionnaire for visitors/vendors

#### **Minimizing exposure from the general public**

- Be prepared to change business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Review employee contact with the general public and consider options to minimize.