



## **Opening Plan 2021/2022 School Year**

### **A Child's Place @ Unity House of Troy, Inc.**

**Site #1:** A Child's Place @ 435 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Troy NY 12180

**Site#2** A Child's Place @ 50 Philip Street, Albany NY 12207

#### **Collaboration Classroom locations:**

**Site#3:** A Child's Place@ Troy City School #12-- 475 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Troy 12180

**Site#4:** A Child's Place@ Little Scholars Viaport— 93 W. Campbell Road, Schenectady NY 12306

**Site #5:** A Child's Place@ St. Jude the Apostle School- 42 Dana Ave, Wynantskill, NY 12198

#### **Introduction**

In developing an opening plan that focuses on safety for children, staff and families, we follow guidance from CDC, local DOH, OCFS and health professionals with expertise in pediatrics. Links are placed throughout the opening plan to serve as a method of accessing the most current information during this time. A Child's Place @ Unity House operates programs including child care, Universal Pre-Kindergarten and special education. Opportunities for staff and families to be included in on-going discussions related to policies and procedures will continue.

#### **Communication/Family and Community Engagement**

Communication regarding safety practices occur with families, staff and visitors through trainings, printed material and documents sent via email. Additionally, signage is posted where all families, staff and visitors can see the information prior to entering the building. Continued communication and updates will occur

through email and printed documents. Our program web site, [achildsplace.unityhouseny.org](http://achildsplace.unityhouseny.org) will be maintained and updated with current information. Staff will also communicate with families by phone and by Zoom as two mechanisms to engage parents and guardians in a dialogue and to receive feedback.

On-site trainings will occur for all staff and students. Trainings will include safety protocols that are recommended to prevent spread of Covid-19. A Parent Advisory Committee is established during the first month of September. This committee will meet remotely and include topics generated by administrators, the Registered Nurse and families. All family members are encouraged to participate and meeting times will be established based on the optimal time for family member participants.

### **A Child's Place @ Unity House of Troy, Inc.**

#### **Parent Advisory Committee**

**2021-2022**

This is an invitation to join our Parent Advisory Committee. The committee will help plan school and parent events. In addition, we will serve as an advisory group playing an important role in many aspects of our Centers. All adult members of families are invited to join us! This group often includes grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and guardians.

The Committee will meet quarterly, at a time to be determined by the group. ***Our first introductory meeting will take place on, September 24 at 10:00- Via Zoom.*** You can join using information below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4773572998?pwd=QzBkOxakdkZzJ6d2R6TUlWT0cvQT09>

Meeting ID: 477 357 2998

Passcode: ACP21-22

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates: **9/24/21, 12/3/21, 2/4/22, and 5/6/22.**

All families are invited to attend meetings. Committee meetings are a good way to share ideas on a variety of topics as we partner to continue serving our families. Together we can accomplish much and look forward to working together on behalf of our children at A Child's Place at Unity House!

Please join us if you are interested in serving on the Parent Advisory Committee. Hope to see you on zoom!

We are looking forward to working with you,

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## Health and Safety

The health and safety of children, families and staff are our highest priority. In order to have in-person programs, policies and procedures are followed to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Daily health screenings are conducted when each child arrives on site. Department of Health will guide procedures and prompt updates to these procedures. Staff receive trainings to inform their knowledge base with regard to recognizing signs and symptoms related to Covid-19. Staff and all children over 2 years of age will wear masks. Parents/guardians of children who have specific documented concerns related to mask wearing will work with the School R.N. to resolve the concern. Social distancing will be guided through the use of markers indicating travel patterns in hallways and 3-6 FT distancing where needed. Maximum group sizes are indicated for all building classrooms, offices and common areas to meet social distancing protocols. A health office is maintained for the daily functions of this department. A separate isolation room is allocated for children who present with signs or symptoms of illness which occur once they arrive in program. Children will remain in the isolation room until they are picked-up. Children are expected to be picked up no longer than one hour from the time of parent notification.

**Isolation of a child who becomes ill while on site at program:** If a child becomes ill while at program, staff will take the following precautions:

- Isolate the child in the place designated as isolation room
- The staff member who is assigned to monitor the child will don appropriate attire: mask, eye protection, smock and gloves
- If the child requires medication it will be given in the isolation room
- The child's temperature will be checked
- Infants will be given an antipyretic (Acetaminophen)  
If they have a written PRN order from the Health Care Provider

- For children older than 18 months, who have a fever >than 101 the parent will be asked if they want their child to be given an appropriate dose of Acetaminophen. A verbal order will be taken.  
We will reach out to parents to obtain a written antipyretic prn order for all children < than 18 months old
- The child will be made as comfortable as possible
- The usual management strategies for fever will be employed
- Signs of distress, worsening condition, shortness of breath: 911 is called
- Staff will consult with the school nurse for any concerns about the child or procedures regarding isolation
- Parents will pickup in a **timely** manner
- After the parent picks the child up the assigned staff will:
  1. Clean and disinfect the area: cot, tables, toys etc.
  2. Take off smock turn it inside out, remove gloves, **WASH HANDS** remove eye protection put aside. Remove mask and place with worn smock in designated area. Rewash hands, put on a clean mask and smock. Put on gloves prior to cleaning the eyewear.
  3. Instructions for donning and doffing of PPE is posted in designated isolation areas. Eye protection as well as fresh smocks and gloves are also located there.

Cleaning and disinfecting procedures meet and exceed CDC and DOH guidance. Classroom areas are cleaned prior to and after use by children. Children use learning materials that are specifically for their own personal use. Any shared items are disinfected between uses.

Staff will ensure the following procedures are followed:

1. Cleaning solutions are used in a well-ventilated area.
2. Cleaning of toys/materials/equipment will be accomplished in the designated area for cleaning of toys/materials/equipment.
3. For the foreseeable future we will not be brushing teeth at school.
4. Family style dining is suspended. All utensils, plates, cups are one time use only—all are disposable.

5. All surfaces will be cleansed at minimum every 2 hours.

**Procedure for Communicating with the Health Department:**

In the event that we will need to interact with the local Health Departments, the following procedures will be complied with:

Designated staff will interact with the Health Department representatives. All communication goes directly to the School R.N. All supervisors are required to relay information to the School R.N in real time, or in the event she is not available, to the Director of the program.

It is the responsibility of the School R.N. to work directly with the local Health Departments as the initial point of contact. Communication may be generated by the Health Department or by A Child's Place at Unity House of Troy, Inc.

Examples may be that the program is notifying the health department of a student, staff, visitor or family member who is under investigation for Covid-19 or who has reported a positive test to us.

Alternatively, the Health Department may reach out to the program to inform us of a situation that involves contact tracing or notification of staff or families regarding a positive case in our community.

**It is the responsibility of the designated staff to gather the appropriate information for contact tracing.**

**This includes, but is not limited to, the staff and classmates the child involved had contact with while in program. Information that is necessary to collect include the names addresses and contact numbers for each of the person that has had contact with the child.**

**This information will be documented and available at the program and to the person named as the contact with the Health Department personnel. All collected information is strictly confidential and will only be shared with necessary personnel.**

**In the event of a positive case, the Health Department will inform the program of the appropriate steps to take.**

**Facilities**

Students will be enrolled with a maximum of fifteen per classroom (cohort) allowed. Children use bathrooms and portable sinks to increase hand washing throughout the day. Wall signs/decals and direction indicating signs are placed on

walls to visually mark social distancing requirements and traffic patterns. Windows are opened in classrooms to allow for increased ventilation. Emergency drills continue with modifications that meet requirements and maintain cohort groups without gathering. Our classrooms located at other programs and schools will follow their opening plans. Our classroom located at Little Scholars will follow similar protocols listed in this document. Our classroom located at School #12 at Troy City School District will follow their opening plan guidance, which can be found on their website: [www.troycsd.org/](http://www.troycsd.org/) Our classrooms located at St. Jude the Apostle School will follow their opening plan guidance, which can be found, on their website: <https://www.stjudetheapostleschool.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

## **Nutrition**

At A Child's Place, meals are nutritional and offer a variety of foods. Children grow more accustomed to new foods over time and with frequent exposure. Our food and nutrition department offers meals that children enjoy and are nutritionally recommended. Our menus and meal patterns are approved by CACFP. Our managers and R.N coordinate to ensure that all children with food allergies are protected. Children with known food allergies will receive their meal indicated with their name on it. We understand that mealtime can be an important time for nutritional food as well as engaging with staff and peers. It is a time to support children in gaining social skills and practicing using them. Changes from CACFP, our oversight agency for our Child Nutrition Program, were made at the time of school closures in March 2020. Family-style dining remains suspended since that time. Children are served all meals individually and with disposable utensils and other serving items. No sharing of food items or utensils will be permitted. Children eat in groups daily that are consistent cohort groups for meals to reduce opportunities for spread. During meals, children do not wear masks. Individual, tabletop barriers are used to prevent spread during this time. Children and staff wash hands thoroughly prior to and after meals times. Staff will wear additional PPE during meal times as they sit near children to assist them

with the meal including face shields and gloves. Socialization continues to be an important aspect of meal time for children. Staff model and facilitate opportunities to further social skill development.

### **Transportation**

Bussing for children with special needs is provided by the county of residence. Students arriving by bus are screened on-site at the time of arrival. Any child presenting symptoms will be cared for in the isolation room. Children presenting with any symptoms are not permitted to be on the bus. Parents will need to arrange for the child to be picked up right away. Our health professional will inform parents with regard to return to school requirements for the following day. Parents/guardians need to do an at-home health screen each day to prevent children with signs of illness from arriving at the program location.

Parents and caregivers will follow specific procedures for drop-off and pick-up on site.

Parents/guardians are required to ensure their child is not experiencing any signs of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to boarding their method of transportation to program.

### **Parent/Guardian Drop-off Protocol:**

Prior to coming to the building parents will call ahead to notify front office of their arrival.

At that time, they will be asked a series of screening questions.

### **COVID-19 Daily Health Screening Questions**

#### **1. Have you or your child had contact with any**

**Persons under Investigation (PUIs) for Covid-19 within the last 14 days, OR with any one with known COVID-19?**

#### **2. Do you or your child have any symptoms of COVID-19? Symptoms as indicated by the CDC which include the following:**

- Cough
- Headache

- Fever of 100.00 degrees or more
- Chills
- Congestion or runny nose
- Muscle and body aches
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Fatigue
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting

### **3. Have you or your child traveled within the last 14 days?**

If parent/guardian answers **yes** to these questions the child will **NOT** be permitted to attend on this day.

**We require parents and children over 2 years of age to wear masks at drop-off and pick-up.**

When the parent/guardian brings the child to the door the child is visually screened for any signs of illness.

Parents/guardians will be required to use hand sanitizer for hand hygiene.

Plan additional time for drop-off and pick-up.

Parent/guardian will sign their child in and also sign that they are **AFFIRMING** their answers to the screening questions.

A designated staff person will take the child to their classroom.

**The child's hands are washed with soap and water for 20 seconds immediately on arrival to their classroom.**

This action will be the **same** for **all** handwashing done by the children.

Staff will conduct a health check and document observations.



Children who have a temperature of 100.0 or greater will **NOT** be accepted back into program until they are **fever free** without the aid of medication.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it is not recommended that NSAIDS (i.e. Ibuprophen) be used at this time.

If a child is **Asthmatic** or has a diagnosis of **Reactive Airway Disease** NSAIDS are not recommended at this time.

**When a child has a fever, the parent should contact the child's program by phone.**

**It is best to avoid the emergency room unless directed to go there by your child's health provider.**

**Proof of communication with your child's health provider is required for return to program.**

The health provider can fax us @518-274-8883 or a confirmation e-mail that you receive from the provider as documentation that the child is approved to return to program is acceptable.

### **Social/Emotional:**

Staff are able to recognize children who need specific support strategies and provide on-going interventions. School psychologists, social workers, health professionals and administrators are available to support classroom staff in the area of social-emotional development and functioning. Literacy experiences will be designed to inform and support children in their healthy understanding of COVID-19 and how they can protect themselves. Additionally, on-going trainings are in place to support children and families with coping and resilience skills. Trauma-informed response and practices are the foundation for initiatives and strategies to support children and families as they manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Families will play a key role in the on-going support children receive while in program and at home. Guidance and support strategies are provided to the family. Staff plan for supporting children in ways that support the individual child's specific needs. All children adjust to new circumstances and routines differently and at their own pace. All programs will give children the

support and time they require. Communication between home and teachers/therapists are critical to the adjustment process for children. Families are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher/therapist for guidance and to share ideas to support the child in both settings.

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teaching-through-coronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

### **School Schedule/ In-person and Remote Learning Models**

Using group size limits of 15 to start with, cohort grouping, social distancing and the use of barriers, in-person learning is offered to children enrolled in all programs at A Child's Place at Unity House. All programs will follow their typical days and scheduled times. Parents will receive communication with a start date. Should a child need remote instruction/therapy services the administrator of that program will work with the family to establish a remote learning option that meets the needs of the child. We recognize that children and family needs must be taken into consideration when developing learning and therapy service options. Every effort will be made to facilitate a platform and setting that works best for each child and their family. Communication and discussion are important to ensuring a successful model of learning/therapy for each child and their family's situation.

As the effects of COVID-19 are fluid, programs must be able to respond to the changing guidance from CDC, local DOH, SED and OCFS. Our programs are prepared to implement alternative learning options throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Should it become necessary for partial or full closure of in-person learning/therapy all programs are prepared to provide remote instruction/therapy for enrolled children.

Staff schedules will be arranged to reduce the number of staff on-site at a time or using common spaces. Social distancing guidelines will dictate alternative schedules. Staff are prepared to move from in-person learning/therapy to remote

model should that become necessary for health and safety considerations. Children will continue to receive instruction/therapy remotely for the time period necessary to ensure the health and safety of our children, family and staff.

<https://en.freedownloadmanager.org/tutorials/how-to-use-zoom-for-free-video-conferencing.html>

### **Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism**

It is understood that in order for children to make progress and meet developmental milestones engagement in learning and therapy services remains critical. Whether in-person or remote, a child responds to regularly scheduled engagement and learning opportunities that enhance concept and skill development. Through the home-school connection, relationships are established and cultivated. This critical relationship between providers and families can work to minimize attendance issues and chronic absenteeism. It is even more critical during the pandemic that teachers/therapists establish communication that is regular and through a means that is effective for the family. Families will provide contact information that is used to establish a strong pattern of communication. Through this communication and on-going relationship, providers work to mitigate the challenges that lead to attendance related issues. Working with the family to support needs and challenges they face can lead to enhanced attendance and engagement with the learning/therapy opportunities. Resources are available to families who have basic needs insecurity and providers ensure that information is available to families.

Attendance reporting is maintained and all policy and procedures are followed by staff. These requirements remain in place for in-person and remote learning/therapy services for enrolled children.

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-involvement/connecting-home-and-school.html>

### **Technology and Connectivity**

In-person and remote models require some level of technology use and availability. As a program, A Child's Place works with families to determine what level of connectivity and device options exist for them. We work with individual families to recommend internet services that are available. When it has been determined that a device is needed in the home in order for remote learning/therapy to be successful, a device will be loaned to the family. Staff work with parents/caregivers to ensure that use of the technology in the home is successful. The role of the parent/caregiver in remote learning model is important to the effectiveness of the learning/therapy outcomes.

Staff have developed skills in this area and continue to become increasingly more skilled through experience and training. Each staff group has a designated "tech-savvy" staff person to assist with the more challenging technology and connectivity related situations. Additional designated individuals will assist with remote engagement ideas for learning/technology to enhance the success of this model for young children.

<https://www.engadget.com/2020-03-16-spectrum-free-internet-students-coronavirus.html>

## **Teaching and Learning**

In-person and remote models provide continuity of learning based on curriculum and learning standards as well as therapy services based on a child's IFSP/IEP. Progress monitoring continues, for all models, and includes the family in establishing and developing goal focused activities and practices that facilitate progress. Young children learn best while engaged in hands-on learning opportunities. Children learning through an in-person model will learn using individual materials, individual learning bins, learning areas sanitized after each use, and in small groups with clear barriers. Early learning activities for young learners continue, but in accordance with required health and safety practices. All materials are sanitized to prevent spread in accordance with current health and safety guidelines. Activities are designed to minimize child to child contact. Children will be organized into cohort groupings (preassigned groups of children)

that remain consistent. These cohort groupings will be used for teaching and learning while preventing spread and promoting containment of COVID-19

### **Special Education**

Children with an IFSP or IEP are provided services through in-person, or remote models of education. Special education teachers/therapists establish in classroom learning/therapy for students with identified special needs and in accordance with their approved service plan. A Child's Place staff work closely with CPSE personnel to ensure implementation of approved services. An environment where all children, regardless of abilities, are celebrated remains in place for all models of learning. Communication with parents/guardians along with regular reporting continues for all models of service delivery. Students enrolled at A Child's Place learn in the setting approved by the CPSE. They access curriculum through accommodations and modifications that ensure equity and access to the general education curriculum. Each student's unique disability-related needs determine accommodations and modifications. Effective hand-washing and use of PPE is used to prevent spread. For related services that are provided in the Home and Community setting, therapists are following all recommendations to prevent spread of COVID-19. Through the use of PPE, disinfecting between visits, using only items for individual children in the home/community setting, providers follow recommendations to maintain health and safety during visits.

[www.nysed.gov/edtech/continuity-learning](http://www.nysed.gov/edtech/continuity-learning)

### **Staffing**

Employees working with children across programs meet the licensing and credentialing requirements for their position in accordance with OCFS, SED, BEI and local school districts. All staff maintain their licensing or credentialing through on-going professional development. In addition to this yearly training, staff are now trained in CDC and DOH health and safety protocols. They will continue to receive training both in-person and on-line to ensure they remain current during the Covid-19 pandemic. Information is changing rapidly, our program's R.N., ensures that current health and safety protocol training is

maintained. Additionally, supervisors oversee the day to day compliance with established protocols.

Currently, we are experiencing some of the same employment shortages other industries are facing due to the pandemic. We have vacancies in some of our positions. We ask that parents are supportive of the staff who work with their children. We appreciate their dedication to our program and the children and families they serve each day.

**Student Teaching:**

A Child's Place will evaluate to determine how best to engage with requests on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with currently established health and safety practices. Our program typically engages local colleges and universities in collaborating to support internship and student teaching programs.

We remain well prepared to provide an excellent early childhood learning experience for our children. We have developed effective strategies to ensure that our children are learning and progressing while in a safe environment.