

BUILDING BLOCKS DEVELOPMENTAL PRESCHOOL

Guide for A Safe School Opening

SCHOOL YEAR 21-22 (as of 9/1/2021)

Agency Name: Building Blocks Developmental Preschool

BEDS Code: 580410880236

Administrative Address: 29 Pinewood Drive, Commack, New York 11725 **Program Site**

Address: 29 Pinewood Drive, Commack, New York 11725 **4410 Programs provided at this site:**

- Special Class
- Special Class in an Integrated Setting
- Multidisciplinary Evaluations
- Related Services Only

Other Services Provided at this site:

- Universal Pre-K
- Nursery School

Contact Person: Donna Charbonneau, M.A., P.D., Executive Director **Contact Phone Number:** (631) 499-1237 **Contact**

Email Address: dcharbonneau@bbdps.com

Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted: www.bbdps.com

Building Blocks Developmental Preschool is an accredited special education preschool dedicated to enhancing the development of all children, birth through age five for over 37 years. Building Blocks is approved by the New York State Department of Health to perform evaluations and provide early intervention services for children, birth to 3 years of age. At the preschool level, Building Blocks derives its approval as a special education facility and evaluation site for children ages 3-5 years from the New York State Education Department. Federal, state and county governments fund our special education programs and evaluation services. Building Blocks also possesses and maintains current, its day care license in accordance with regulations set forth by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Through this

licensure and Commack school district contract Building Blocks maintains Commack UPK and community nursery & preschool classes.

On March 18, 2020 New York schools were closed as a result of the COVID-19 national and state emergency. Building Blocks Developmental Preschool continued to provide distance learning and teletherapy through the summer of 2020 and returned to in-person learning as of September 2020 providing a variety of options for our families. On June 24, 2021 the New York State of Emergency was lifted. During the summer of 2021 the Governor and the NYS Department of Health announced that they would not be issuing any new guidance for school reopening.

In the middle of August 2021, the NYS Education Department issued a Health & Safety Guide relying heavily on the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics for guidelines in planning for the new school year. This NYS DOE Health & Safety Guide provided the basis for Building Blocks' plan for the 2021-22 school year. Echoing the NY Education Department's intentions, Building Blocks Developmental Preschool's goal is to maximize in-person learning while providing a healthy and safe school environment (*Health & Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year*, New York State Education Department August 2021). As noted, this NYSDOE guide is based on the *CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools* and the *American Academy of Pediatrics' COVID-19 Guidance for Safe School*. Additionally, Building Blocks will seek guidance from Suffolk County Department of Health to keep apprised of any local issues that might influence our plan.

Policies and Procedures to Reopen Building Blocks Developmental Preschool for the School Year 2021-2022

Building Blocks Developmental Preschool is committed to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year while being dedicated to creating the safest, most appropriate environment that will meet the educational and social emotional needs of our young population. We are keenly aware that our school serves general education children and special needs children and, as such, we are charged with creating a unique educational community with very specific challenges. This is only possible because of the expertise and caring of a very dedicated staff and a very supportive family network. We do believe that, together, this can be accomplished.

Aside from personnel employed to maintain the general operations of the school (i.e. general education teachers, gym teacher, clerical staff, etc.) and implement mandated IEPs (i.e. special education teachers, therapists, etc.), Building Blocks Developmental Preschool employs the following professionals that will be available for staff training and to address specific needs of our children, families and staff, and enhance social & emotional programs:

School Psychologists

Social Worker

Safety Personnel

Security Personnel

Registered School Nurses

Nurse Practitioner

As recommended by the CDC, Building Blocks will use a layered approach to the strategies implemented to maintain a safe and healthy environment. Strategies will include wearing masks, COVID-19 screening and testing, maintaining cohorts, improving ventilation, social distancing when appropriate, handwashing and proper hygiene, staying home when sick policies, and cleaning & disinfecting to help reduce transmission risk. These strategies will be utilized and modified depending on levels of community transmissions and updated guidance.



COVID-19 VACCINATION

The CDC has said that “vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic”. While Building Blocks Developmental Preschool encourages all its staff to be vaccinated, vaccines are not required as of the writing of this guide. Additionally, the students we serve are under the age required to be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, therefore it is prudent that we implement layered prevention strategies.

Verification of Vaccinations

. Building Blocks requests voluntary submission of documentation of COVID19 vaccination status. This information will be maintained by our school nurses according to relevant statutory & regulatory requirements.

. Vaccination status will be used when determining the need to quarantine based on the latest CDC & DOH guidance.

MONITORING COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

Building Blocks will consult with Suffolk County Department of Health to keep abreast of changes in community transmissions, levels of infections and vaccination rates to help in modifying the levels of prevention strategies used to provide a safe environment for students and staff.



WEARING MASKS

All personnel, visitors, and anyone entering the building (i.e., repair personnel, parents, district personnel, etc.) must wear acceptable face coverings (except when in private offices where proper social distancing can be maintained, or when behind barriers), regardless of vaccination status. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and disposable masks that cover both the nose and the mouth. A staff member in any location must be able to put on a face covering at any moment when a situation arises that social distancing cannot be maintained. Staff and visitors are encouraged to wear their own face coverings. If there are circumstances where this is not possible, a face covering will be provided. A summary of the use of face masks at Building Blocks Developmental Preschool follows:

1. While face masks are encouraged, children will not be required to wear face coverings while at Building Blocks Developmental School. Building Blocks Developmental Preschool is an accredited preschool program taking guidance from NYS DOE, NYS OCFS, and NYS DOH. The following guidelines apply:

Pursuant to the NYS OCFS & DOH Joint Statement on Revised Mask Guidance for Child Care Programs (as of the writing of this document):
"We thank the providers who have worked so hard since the start of the pandemic to remain open to serve the families of those who could not stay home and we recognize their valiant efforts in serving working families who need quality, reliable and safe child care. Both agencies understand how difficult it is to require the youngest children to wear masks, and have jointly agreed to revise guidance allowing child care providers to continue the practices and protocols that have been in place since the start of the pandemic by encouraging, not requiring, children aged 2-5 to wear masks, effective immediately."

“The safety of the children in child care programs is of paramount importance. As more families are returning to work, New York State is investing federal funds in stabilizing the industry and expanding child care programs throughout the state, especially in underserved areas. We strongly encourage any remaining child care staff who have not been vaccinated to do so as soon as possible to prevent the spread of COVID.”

2. Staff members must wear face masks at all times except when in private offices or behind barriers.
3. Staff and children are not required to wear face masks in any outdoor area or during outdoor activity (i.e., outdoor classroom, playgrounds, athletic fields, nature walks, etc.)
4. All visitors, including parents and guardians must wear face masks to enter the school.
5. While Building Blocks encourages staff and children to wear their own face masks, the school will have an ample supply of disposable masks should the need arise.
6. Bus transportation is contracted by Suffolk County DOH. Therefore, please contact the bus company directly for their policy on face masks.

Staff will support any parent's decision to have their child wear a face covering when in school.

Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and surgical masks that cover both the nose and the mouth. Face coverings that are transparent at the mouth may also be worn during instruction that might require the visualization of the mouth, lips and teeth. Face shields worn alone are not sufficient coverings for adequate protection. As per OSHA guidelines, the nurses and anyone else requiring a higher degree of protection will be required to wear respirator N-95 masks or other PPE considered adequate under current industry guidelines.



PHYSICAL DISTANCING and COHORTS

All individuals must maintain at least six feet between each other whenever this parameter does not interfere with the safety or instruction of the children. For example, follow floor markers distanced at six feet when completing morning arrival routines and

signing in for the day. In the classrooms, whenever possible, teachers should assign aides activity locations that maintain social distance. Unused rooms, as well as the staff lounge, may be used for staff lunch but number of occupants will be limited to allow for required social distancing. Since it is recommended that social distances of 12 ft or more be observed during singing activities, music class, which combines groups, will be suspended until further notice.

Social distancing must be maintained during all adult activities. When performing clerical duties within small areas limit staff to one when space is not adequate for distancing of 6 ft.



Social distancing in the classroom is difficult with young children. The CDC states that cohorts can be used to limit the number of students, teachers, and staff who come in contact

with each other, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing, such as among young children. Building Blocks Developmental Preschool has implemented a strategy of using cohorts to the greatest extent possible in an effort to limit exposures and the spread of COVID19 between groups.

A variety of physical barriers are available for use in the classrooms and offices.

Only three staff members will be allowed at one time in the computer room to allow the staff to sit at socially distanced spacing. Each staff member must disinfect touch surfaces before and after use and use hand sanitizer stations or wash hands before and after use. Approved disinfectant supplies will be available.

Staff is encouraged to use laptops and computers in their own rooms whenever possible.



Traffic in hallways will move in a “bear right” direction unless specifically marked by social distancing decals (high volume hallways). Therapists and teachers may hold children’s hands to ensure safety and when there is a risk of elopement. Staff supervising children at greater risk of elopement should use hand sanitizers, wash hands frequently and wear masks and face shields, if necessary, to limit face touching. Gloves may be used following all OSHA guidelines for use and disposal.

Adult bathrooms will be single entry only. It is expected that all staff will practice appropriate hygiene. Staff is advised to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water upon entry and exiting of the restrooms. No outside visitors (grandparents, babysitters, bus drivers) will be allowed to use the bathrooms. As is our policy, an adult will escort young children to the bathroom. No more

than two children can be taken at a time to allow for distancing in the hallways and between toileting and washing of hands.

Building Blocks Developmental Preschool has staggered times of arrival and dismissal. Please follow the directions of Building Blocks Staff and the Security Team.

The Staff lounge is available for use during lunchtimes. Please maintain appropriate social distances during use. When weather permits, the outdoor tables and benches are available for lunches. Staff is expected to maintain proper social distance when using these outdoor options.

File rooms and supply closets will have limited access by specified personnel. Desk partitions are maintained in offices that are considered high traffic spaces or where social distancing is not possible. Number of personnel will be limited when in file rooms. Private office bathrooms are off limits to the general staff. Staff Conference days and staff development and training will be in person when social distancing is available. Videoing or teleconferencing may be used as an alternative when necessary. Parent/teacher conferences will be held through virtual or telephonic meetings with parents; or in person depending on the community COVID rates. Meetings may be held in the gymnasium or outdoor spaces with proper spacing (consistent with social distance guidelines). Masks will also be required in these public spaces.

Small groups such as team meetings necessary for the implementation of IEPs may occur in empty classrooms or private offices as long as no more than 6 persons are present, proper social distancing is maintained, those present are staff members only (i.e. no outside providers, parents, etc.) AND participants are part of the same cohort (teacher, teacher aide, speech therapist, team psychologist, administrative personnel).

Departmental meetings such as speech meetings, teacher meetings, and staff meetings will be held in person whenever appropriate social distancing permits. To limit persons entering the building, all parent meetings will be virtual or telephonic.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Building Blocks Developmental Preschool supports enhancement to the curriculum through arts in education programs. Building Blocks will closely monitor community infection rates to determine when outside programs (i.e., Otto the Auto

Dental Hygiene Puppet Show, etc.) can return to the school. Outdoor classroom & playgrounds are open and will be used according to class schedules. The custodial staff will clean and disinfect the playground daily and high touch surfaces will be disinfected in between each class use.

Physical Education class is by individual cohort and will occur in each classroom or, weather permitting, in the outdoor athletic fields.

Temperature and Questionnaire Screenings



Temperature and questionnaire screenings are incorporated into our layers of prevention strategies. Upon entry into the school building all staff and students will have their temperature taken.

Anyone having a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be allowed to remain in school.



By signing in each day, the staff is attesting a negative response to the following screening questionnaire:

1. Have you or anyone in your household tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
2. Have you or anyone in your household experienced symptoms of COVID19 in the past 14 days? (symptoms include but are not limited to cough, fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, diarrhea)
3. Have you or anyone in your household been told by a healthcare provider or by the DOH to remain home due to COVID-19 exposure?
4. Have you been in close contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
5. Are you required to quarantine based on NYS COVID-19 Travel Advisory?

Families of all students receive a COVID-19 Questionnaire Screening in their initial school packet. By way of signature, they are attesting to a negative response and the commitment to notify the school nurses should their negative response to any of the questions change. Parents or guardians of children who are transported by County bus will be required to agree to conduct daily health

screenings before their child boards the county bus. If the answer to any of the health check questions is yes or if the child has a temperature of >100 degrees F, the child must stay home from school and the parent should contact the school nurse for further instructions.

GOOD HANDWASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE STAYING HOME WHEN SICK



As we look towards recovery from the pandemic, and relying on guidance from the CDC and our school nurses the following procedures will be followed:

- Students and school personnel should stay home if they are showing signs and symptoms of infectious illness, including COVID-19, and get tested. A negative test result and mitigation of any COVID-19 symptoms, as well as a note from a healthcare-care professional will be required to return to school following a positive COVID-19 test result;
- Parents/guardians must screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to their child attending school each day;
- Persons within our greater school community (parents, babysitters) should seek testing when symptoms are compatible with COVID-19, as this will help with rapid contact tracing and prevent the spread of COVID-19 at school. If a member of a student's household or a person that a student is in contact with is showing signs of COVID-19 or is awaiting COVID-19 test results, the child's parent or guardian should carefully monitor their child to avoid exposure to the child's class.

In an effort to further mitigate the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, Building Blocks will follow Education Law § 906, which provides that *“whenever a student shows symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of others in the school, he or she shall be excluded from the school and sent home immediately, in a safe and proper conveyance. The director of school health services shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law. ... The director of school health services, or other health professionals acting upon direction or referral of such director, may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees, school buildings and premises as, in their*

discretion, they may deem necessary to protect the health of the students and staff". Therefore, if a child develops symptoms as assessed by the school nurse while at school, the student will be removed from class released as soon as possible to a parent or guardian.



Building Blocks Developmental Preschool has registered nurses on staff at all times. Administration will defer to these licensed professionals when determining if a child is sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

There is a room dedicated Health Care Office. Additionally, a separate room has been identified within the school to be used when an individual has exhibited COVID-19 symptoms.

PPE requirements for school nurses or persons supervising possible transmission-based patients include medical gowns, gloves, N-95 respirator, if available or face mask and shield.

Any area used by a patient identified as exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be closed and properly cleaned and disinfected prior to being used again.

CONTACT TRACING, IN COMBINATION WITH ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

The Executive Director of Building Blocks Developmental Preschool will be the designated coordinator and main contact for information upon the identification of a positive COVID-19 case. All subsequent communication will be through this designee including answering questions from staff, faculty, parents or legal guardians regarding a COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the school. The designee will also work closely with the local Department of Health and school district stakeholders. The Executive Director at Building Blocks Developmental Preschool is Donna Charbonneau. She can be reached at dcharbonneau@bbdps.com or by phone at (631) 4991237.

Anyone, staff or student, who presents with any symptoms related to COVID19 or has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 as determined through the health screening will be sent home immediately and instructed to contact their health care provider for further assessment.

Staff members will be instructed to notify the school nurses if they develop any symptoms related to COVID-19 during the workday.



Children/students who develop symptoms during the school day will be assessed by the school nurse and situated in a separate area until the child can be picked up. Since the person picking up the child may have had close proximal contact with the child, he/she will not be allowed into the building but rather

the child will be brought to the person outside the school building. Information regarding healthcare and testing sites will be provided.

If any incident results in a positive test result, the nurse or school administrator will notify Suffolk or Nassau County Department of Health.

Anyone sent home for a positive COVID-19 screening may not return to school or work without documentation from a healthcare provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing and symptom resolution, or if COVID positive, a release from isolation. Current isolation protocol is 10 days from symptom onset. If a member of the school community tests positive, the school director, in consultation with the administrative staff, the school nurse, Suffolk County DOH and OCFS will determine the actions necessary to contain possible further exposure. Actions can include partial closing of affected areas or full school closure for disinfection and cleaning.

The contact person for all positive COVID-19 cases is Donna Charbonneau – dcharbonneau@bbdps.com; (631) 499-1237.



While visitors will be kept to a minimum, occasionally it is necessary for non-personnel, such as repairmen, school district personnel, etc. to enter the building. A daily log is completed for anyone visiting the building. The log includes specific information regarding whom the visitor is here to see. In addition to the required COVID prevention questions and temperature check, all visitors will be given contact information for the educational coordinator and will be instructed to call the educational coordinator if they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 in the subsequent 2 weeks. Conversely, if a person the visitor was in to see tests positive or shows symptoms of COVID-19 within two weeks of the visit, the educational coordinator will contact the visitor. The current Educational Coordinator is Christi Crispino and she can be reached at ccrispino@bbdps.com or by calling (631) 499-1237.

Building Blocks Developmental Preschool will support the local health department in tracing and tracking efforts pursuant to the [New York State Contact Tracing | Department of Health](#), as well as isolation and quarantine procedures. In this effort, be assured that Building Blocks Development

Preschool will always maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the families we serve in accordance with federal and state law.



In cases where a group of children or staff members has been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case, having had close contact*, the procedure for delivery of educational and therapeutic services will be:

1. The class having been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case will be directed to quarantine at home for 10 days;
2. Staff members who are vaccinated do not have to quarantine and will report to work as a regular work day; (According to the CDC, people who are fully vaccinated do **NOT** need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have symptoms, and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.)
3. Non-vaccinated staff members must remain quarantined in their home for 10 days;
4. The class experiencing the exposure will turn to distance learning including remote whole group, small group and individual lessons as well as specific activities posted through each class's Google classroom.
5. Related services as mandated will be provided via teletherapy according to a pre-arranged schedule.
6. Children who must quarantine due to exposure on county transportation (school buses) will participate in activities posted through their class's google classroom. Therapists will make every effort to make-up therapy sessions missed due to these child absences.

Distance learning will not be available when individual quarantine (due to outside exposure) is necessary. Every effort will be made to make-up therapy services when the absent child returns to school.

*The CDC guidance document defines a close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*)

FACILITIES

Building Blocks Developmental Preschool leases its facility from the Commack School District and, as such, they employ the custodial staff. Per our contract with Commack School District, Building Blocks Developmental Preschool has two full time custodial staff members. Building Blocks Developmental Preschool will expand the current duties of the Safety Officer to include increased monitoring of disinfecting and cleaning of the school's facility. An additional staff member will be assigned if needed to help in this task.



The cleaning & disinfecting of the school building is the responsibility of the custodial staff (cleaning protocols are described below). However, the general staff has access to disinfectant wipes, soap & paper towels, cleaning disinfectant spray, hand sanitizing stations, soap & water and touch-free water bottle refilling stations. The staff is encouraged to use disinfectant wipes on all high touch surfaces within their classrooms, such as doorknobs & keyboards.

According to current policy, tabletop surfaces must be washed after each activity and before and after snack/lunch times. The staff will have access to hospital grade disinfectant that has been approved for use in a school setting. Surfaces will be cleaned frequently, and staff will be instructed to wash their hands often.

All water fountains have been reconfigured to be water bottle refilling stations.

As noted, Building Blocks Developmental Preschool's building is maintained by Commack School District's custodial staff. Commack School District provides their staff with any required PPE necessitated by the cleaning agent being used. Restrooms and high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs will be disinfected several times throughout the day. Bathrooms and classrooms will be thoroughly disinfected nightly.

The disinfectant products used are Diversey Oxivir, Diversey Virex, Diversey Alpha HP and they will be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions.



Continuing to layer multiple prevention strategies, teachers and office staff are encouraged to open windows and doors to increase ventilation whenever possible while maintaining the safety of the children. Given the young age of our student population and the need for security, exterior doors are never to be maintained in an open position. Where possible, filtration will be upgraded to MERV 13;

ventilation will be closely monitored during the school year and will be immediately repaired as needed.

Hand Sanitizers are available through the hallways in the school building. The custodial staff will check them routinely to ensure that they are full and operational.



Each classroom has its own sink and will continue to have an adequate supply of soap and paper towels.

REMOTE INSTRUCTION



Building Block's Developmental Preschool takes its guidance for remote instruction from the memo to the field from NYS Department of Education Commissioner Rosa on July 29, 2021 which is summarized below:

- Schools should remain open for in-person learning, so long as allowed by public health authorities.
- The NYS Department of Education does not require the provision of on-line or remote instruction
- Building Blocks will work with families to offer remote instruction during times of mandated whole-class quarantining.

Should a situation arise where Building Blocks Developmental Preschool is directed to transfer to all remote instruction, a plan is in place to provide distance learning to all our students. The plan encompasses the following depending on individual child and class needs:

- Large group learning sessions
- Small group learning sessions
- Individual learning sessions
- Video lessons
- Video special enhancements
- Teletherapy

- Small group enhancement activities
- Instructional packets posted through Google classroom

All lessons, activities and instructional packets will follow Building Blocks Developmental Preschool's current curriculum.

This plan will be posted on the Building Blocks website, emailed to all Building Blocks staff and enrolled students, and will be available in print if needed.

DA – 9/1/2021