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The Katzen Early Childhood Education Program School Reopening Plan

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Introduction:

The past several months have required us to quickly shift our long-standing views and experiences about school to one that was very different. In the matter of days, we went from seeing our students' smiling faces in person, and engaging in group learning and social interactions, to modes of communicating, teaching our students and conducting therapies from the other end of a virtual connection. We applaud and thank our staff members, students, and parents for making that shift with us, and supporting the commitment to facilitate the continued educational growth and therapeutic needs of our students. We are all very eager to get back to "normal" but recognize that "normal" will not be how it used to be. As we prepare to resume our daily operations on site and welcome our students back to in-person learning and therapies, we recognize that our responsibilities now lie much deeper than those previously held. To that end, a Reopening Task Force was developed and met frequently over the past several months to strategize, plan, and implement procedures that can best ensure the health and safety of our students and staff as we return to in-person instruction and therapies. With the input of parents, school staff members and agency administrators, we have developed the following plan to achieve our goal of providing an excellent educational experience for our preschoolers within a safe and secure environment. We are very grateful to all those who have contributed to this plan. We expect that this plan may need to be revised as we are provided with updated information from the Department of Health, the New York State Education Department and the Office of Children and Family Services. Updated plans will be posted on our website.

COVID-19 Safety Coordinator:

Dr. Heidi McCarthy; Program Director, Education Services

Reopening Task Force Members:

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our first priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. Throughout the pandemic, we have been guided by local, state, and federal agencies including the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Education Department, the Centers for Disease and Control and the Office of Children and Family Services. Any child or adult entering our building will be required to follow all public health regulations, and the protocols that have been put into place for our school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Face Coverings:

All adults must wear an acceptable face covering when in the building and on the grounds. Face coverings may be removed during short breaks if the adult is outside of the building and able to maintain appropriate social distance (6 feet or greater). The face covering must be layered and fit snugly against the sides of the face without any gaps. Face coverings will be provided by the program to any individual in need of one.

- Staff with disabilities who are unable to wear a face covering may be provided reasonable accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Face shields alone are not considered an acceptable face covering.
- Training will be provided to staff on how to properly wear and remove face coverings.

While face coverings are strongly encouraged, it is recognized that there are specific instances where wearing a cloth face covering is not feasible or safe. As per the New York State Education Department (NYSED), face coverings should not be placed on students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction. We will not be requiring our students to wear face coverings if they fall into these categories; however, we are strongly suggesting that all other students wear a face covering or maintain social distancing. If parents wish for their child to wear a face covering, they should supply, however, we have an extra supply of child-sized disposable masks for students at our site. Parents of students with special needs and/or who are medically fragile should work with their health care provider to make appropriate decisions for their child regarding masking. If students are wearing face coverings, breaks will be provided during the school day during which they can remove the covering, preferably when outside.

Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

The need for additional PPE for staff, above face coverings, will be identified based on exposure risk and need to maintain safety. Additional PPE will be provided to staff who perform routines such as 1:1 feeding and diapering.

- Face shields will be available for all staff members should they desire to wear one. Face shields must be used with a face mask. Training will be provided to staff members on the proper use of a face shield.

Social Distancing Practices:

Students will be assigned to a stable and static cohort during the school day. These groups will be pre-assigned with reasonable group size limits. Every effort will be taken not to intermingle the students with students from other cohorts. To the extent practicable, adults within each

cohort will remain static and stable. Staff who instruct more than one cohort will maintain appropriate social distancing from students and other staff members.

To the greatest extent possible, students will be distanced from each other within the classroom. Furniture and play spaces within the rooms will be arranged to support social distancing practices. Teachers and staff members will model and reinforce social and physical distancing. Students will be provided with their own set of supplies and will not engage in group activities that require sharing of materials such as water tables and sensory bins. To the greatest extent possible, sharing of toys will be limited. Frequent cleaning of shared toys will be conducted throughout the school day.

Students' personal belongings and supplies will be maintained in individual cubbies and plastic bins.

The flow of traffic in the hallways will be limited and monitored.

Staff members will maintain social distancing whenever practicable during the school day. However, closer proximity to students may be necessary in order to support their learning, therapeutic needs and safe functioning within the school building. Traffic in the hallways outside of the classrooms will be minimized and instructions regarding directionality will be posted.

While conducting therapy with students, therapists may not be able to maintain social distancing. Speech therapists, occupational therapists and social worker/psychologists will be utilizing clear polycarbonate shields on their desks/tables to provide a protective barrier. When the therapies require the students to be able to see the therapists' mouths, they will be wearing face shields and/or face coverings with a clear insert, while maintaining themselves behind the polycarbonate shield. Due to the nature of the therapy, physical therapists may not be able to use polycarbonate shields. During therapy sessions, they will be wearing PPE over their clothing and face coverings. They will also wear face shields as needed and appropriate.

Personal Hygiene and Health Practices:

Staff and students will be educated on the proper way of handwashing to prevent the spread of infection. Frequent hand washing will be scheduled into the students' school day and they will be monitored in doing so. Signage on how to stop the spread of COVID-19 will be on display throughout the school building.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol will be made readily available for staff members.

Disposable PPE will be available for staff members responsible for feeding, diapering, and/or holding a child. Receptacles in which to place the soiled PPE will be provided.

Home Symptom and Temperature Screening:

All parents/guardians and staff members will be required to sign a one-time Attestation Form. This form will attest that each parent and staff member will conduct a daily screening (self-screening for staff member and parental screening of child) prior to arriving at school and entering the building. The screening involves checking to ensure a temperature below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, no travel to states on the NYS Quarantine State List and for other COVID-19 symptoms. Students and staff members should stay at home if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or if they have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, and/or if they have traveled to a state on the NYS Quarantine State List. Once checked and cleared, the parent will adhere a sticker, provided by the school, to attest that the student has been screened and is cleared to enter the school building. The English version of the sticker for the first day of school looks like this:



Name: _____

Date: 9/8/2020

I attest that in the past 14 days my child has not:

- Shown COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive
- Come in close contact with anyone who has or is suspected of having COVID-19
- My child was screened this morning and does not have fever

Parent Signature: _____

Upon arrival to the school building, all students' stickers will be checked, and their temperature will be taken (with a touch-less thermometer). If the sticker is not adhered to the child's clothing, the parents will be called. *Parents are required to screen their child and adhere the sticker to their child's clothing every day the child attends school.

Upon arrival to the school building, all staff members will be required to provide answers to the screening questions, and his/her/their temperature will be taken. Any staff member who has not passed the screening will be sent home and recommended to contact their health care provider.

Staff members conducting temperature screenings will be wearing PPE including, but not limited to, face masks and shields.

Visitor Health Screening:

To protect the health and safety of our students and staff, visitors to the school will be prohibited unless essential. Parents who drive their children to school will not be allowed to enter the building, except when absolutely necessary. *See section on TRANSPORTATION for additional information on student drop-off and pick-up. Essential visitors who enter the

building will be immediately screened and will be asked to leave the building if they do not pass the screening. Visitor information will be maintained in visitor logs, including contact information and reason for visit, in the event that contact tracing is required.

Health Monitoring and Interventions:

Additional student wellness and health checks will be performed, as needed, during the school day. If a student or staff member is symptomatic, the nurse will be notified for assessment and care. The symptomatic student will be separated from others and cared for in an isolation area. The parent or emergency contact person will be called and asked to transport the child home or to their health care provider. Symptomatic staff members will also contact their supervisor immediately and then leave the school property.

- The isolation room will be cleaned as per CDC guidelines and will not be used again until cleaning has been completed.
- Individuals who exhibit symptoms will be asked to contact their healthcare provider for evaluation, treatment, and information about when they can return to school/work.
- CDC guidance will be followed regarding when a student/staff member may return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Unless otherwise advised by the local health department, the following will apply:
 - If COVID-19 testing is negative, the student/staff member may return to school:
 - Once they are fever free, without the use of fever reducing medication, and they have felt well, for 24 hours.
 - If they have been diagnosed with another condition, and a written note from the healthcare provider indicates they are clear to return to work.
 - If the staff member/student is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider, or if the staff member/student does not get tested for but is showing symptoms, the staff member/student should not return to school until:
 - It has been at least 10 days since the first symptom;
 - It has been at least 3 days since the individual has had a fever (without fever reducing medication); and
 - It has been at least 3 days since the individual's symptoms have improved, including coughing and shortness of breath.

Staff members will receive, and parents/guardians will be offered, training on the early warning signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Staff members will receive training on the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19.

- School personnel will call 911 for any student showing emergency warning signs of MIS-C.

The school nurse will continue to provide health care to those students who require attention for other health-related concerns. Parents should discuss their child's health care needs with the school nurse in order to develop a health care regimen. All non-essential medications and treatments should be administered at home whenever practicable. Asthma related respiratory treatment, such as nebulizer treatments and suctioning, are identified by the CDC as aerosol-generating procedures. The school nurse will discuss with the child's parent and healthcare providers if an alternate asthma medication delivery system is appropriate. Should a nebulizer treatment and/or suctioning be performed, the school healthcare worker will be required to wear a N-95 mask.

FACILITIES

Physical Space:

At the present time, there are no proposed changes or alterations to the existing physical space of the building. Students will be educated within their classrooms. The multi-purpose room will not be utilized for group activities in order to prevent the possibility of cross-contamination. The playground will be utilized, but only by one cohort group at a time. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after using the playground equipment. Cleaning, based on CDC guidance, of high touch surfaces on the playground will be conducted between each groups' use. Outdoor spaces will be used whenever possible and practicable.

Staff members will be required to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines while in any shared spaces such as school offices, copy/file room and staff lunchroom.

The school building will be utilized for before school childcare and after school childcare. In addition, space within the building will be utilized for respite care for school-aged students with disabilities. Spaces utilized for these purposes will be cleaned, following CDC guidance, before and after use. To the greatest extent possible, students will be placed in a stable and static group.

Cleaning:

Classrooms, offices, restrooms, and other utilized spaces in the school building will be cleaned regularly, following CDC and DOH guidance. High touch surfaces will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. A cleaning log will be utilized and maintained within the building. Educational materials capable of enduring cleaning will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized at the end of the school day. In addition, UV lights will be utilized in the classrooms and therapy rooms, after students and staff members have left the rooms, to provide an additional layer of disinfection. A schedule of the UV disinfection for each classroom and office space will be developed and followed once training on its use has been conducted. Training will be

conducted, and a schedule developed prior to the start of the school year. All classrooms, offices and playground equipment will receive disinfection using a Clorox 360 Electrostatic Sprayer on a weekly basis.

Ventilation:

The school is well equipped with a ventilation system that supports each classroom with a separate unit. Therefore, airflow and filtration are contained within each individual classroom. Our ventilation system has been checked and serviced and determined to be adequate, at a minimum, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other air-borne viruses. To ensure a greater degree of filtration, Needle Point Bi-polar Ionization (NPBI) Air Purification units will be installed in each of the ventilation systems. Documentation of ongoing inspections will be maintained by the school/agency. Windows will be opened as practicable, but not if doing so poses a safety or health risk to children in the school.

Safety drills:

The school will continue to conduct the mandatory number of evacuation and lockdown drills each year. Drills will be conducted in a manner where appropriate social distancing can be maintained between cohort groups.

CHILD NUTRITION

Meals and snacks in school:

The school will continue to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As such, we will follow the requirements set forth by the program, amended due to COVID-19. In addition, we will be following all applicable health and safety guidelines. Students will be required to wash their hands prior to and following meals, using the recommended guidelines for hand washing. Surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected prior to the serving of food. The students will no longer be served food family style. Students will be spaced at tables in the room to provide as much distance between each other as possible. There will be no sharing of food between students and/or staff members. For the foreseeable future, we will not be accepting any food prepared or purchased by parents to be shared with our students. Staff members assigned to serve food will not be staff members who have performed any diaper changing during that day.

Food sources during times of school closing:

In the event of a necessary school closing due to an increase in COVID-19 cases, the school will continue to make every attempt to provide food to families experiencing food insufficiency.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND WELL-BEING

We recognize the impact that this pandemic has had on our students, families, staff, and community. We further recognize the importance of our focus on this impact, and the social/emotional wellbeing of our students and staff members. Our school is staffed with three school psychologists and one social worker. In addition, we utilize the contracted services of a child psychiatrist and a developmental pediatrician. All these professionals, as well as the teachers, support staff and related service providers, will be observing our students carefully and making referrals as necessary for additional supports if needed. We will also provide parents/guardians and staff members as needed, resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral and emotional support services, and programs.

All staff members have received professional development regarding the impact that the changes in daily routines and structures due to COVID-19 have had on our students. Staff members are knowledgeable of signs to look for in students which may indicate a need for support and further intervention.

Our school utilizes AI's Pals, which is a comprehensive curriculum and teacher training program that develops social-emotional skills, self-control, problem-solving abilities, and healthy decision-making in children. This will continue to be utilized to support our students' reentry and positive school experience.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULING

Being away from in-person instruction and socialization since March has been particularly challenging for many of our preschool students with disabilities. It is the opinion of the NYSED, and of our staff members, that these young students should be attending school in-person whenever safe and practicable. Therefore, we have placed a high priority on providing in-person instruction to our young students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). We believe that bringing all our students back to school at the same time safely is possible, and therefore, the current plan is to reopen our school for instruction. However, pending further guidance from NYSED,

- If a parent/guardian or health-care provider believes that their child should not return to in-person instruction, they may choose to have their child continue to receive their instruction remotely. This must be indicated in writing to the Program Director. Any synchronous and asynchronous instruction and related service provided will be given during the school day.

Should there be a spread of the virus that necessitates greater social distancing, the school will return to full time remote learning until such time as it is deemed safe to reopen the school again.

ATTENDANCE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES

Student attendance will be monitored closely. If placed at our school by the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), frequent and/or sustained absences will be addressed with the families and reported to the Chairperson of the CPSE in the student's home school district.

TRANSPORTATION

By school bus:

Bus transportation for students placed in our program through the Committee on Preschool Special Education will continue to be provided by the County Department of Health. Drivers will be following the directives provided to them by their companies and the Department of Health. If a child is eligible for bus transportation, and the parent prefers to self-transport, the parent will be eligible for reimbursement through the DOH for mileage traveled while the student is in the vehicle. For further information, please contact the Program Director.

Parent transport:

Procedures will be put in place for drop off and pick up of students by private vehicle. Parents/guardians will drive their child to the drop off location at the front of the school. The driver will be required to wear a face covering when exiting the vehicle for purposes of removing the child from his/her car seat. For safety purposes, it is recommended that the child's car seat be placed in the rear passenger side, in order for easy removal from the car and access to the front door. Prior to removal from the car, the child's temperature will be taken, and the parent/guardian screening sticker will be read by a member of the school staff. If the student has passed the screening (temperature and COVID related questions), the parent/guardian will be asked to remove the child from the car seat and the child will be escorted into the building by the school staff member. At dismissal, each child will be brought to the parent/guardian's car, and the parent/guardian will be asked to place and secure the child in his/her car seat. Once again, the parent/guardian will be asked to wear a face covering.

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

Staff:

Should there be a need to close school, all teachers and related service providers will have access to technology devices in order to continue with instruction and related service remotely. Teacher and related service providers will continue to receive support regarding appropriate technological tools to use to facilitate the learning and development of our students.

Students:

Parents of students will be surveyed to determine if they have a need for technology for their students to access instruction should we need to return to remote learning. Every effort will be made to provide those students in need with access to technology.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

All classes in our school follow the *Creative Curriculum*, which is a developmentally appropriate program that promotes the growth of social skills, physical development, math, reading and science readiness and language skills through play, exploration, and child-centered learning. The Creative Curriculum is a NYS approved curriculum aligned with the Preschool Foundation for the Common Core. All children are expected to participate in and have full access to the general education curriculum, including children with special needs and English Language Learners. The classroom teacher is responsible for ensuring that appropriate modifications and accommodations are put in place to ensure these students receive the support they need to access this curriculum. All children will be given the opportunity daily to engage in activities from the following areas:

- Free choice play
- Open-ended art projects
- Circle Time
- Story Time
- Snack and/or lunch
- Fine motor activities
- Gross motor play
- Music and movement activities
- Science, computer, cooking, and math exploration
- Language and reading readiness activities

As stated earlier, these activities will be delivered in a way that provides, to the greatest extent possible, distancing between students. However, there are some activities for which distancing

is not as feasible. In those instances, precautions regarding the sharing of materials and person to person touch will be taken. These curricular activities will continue, to the extent practicable, should the instruction need to be delivered remotely. Instruction aligned to this academic program will include regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person or remote). The school will hire substitute teachers, assistants, and aides to support the delivery of services should staffing needs present. All substitutes will be knowledgeable of the plan and procedures.

TESTING AND CONTACT TRACING:

The Center for Disease Control does not recommend mass testing of students and/or staff prior to the start of school. Therefore, we will not be requiring our students and/or staff members to be tested at this time. If a student or staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19, they will be asked to leave the building and do one or more of the following:

- Consult their healthcare professional
- Contact the NYSDOH COVID-19 24 hotline at 1-888-364-3065
- Visit the NYSDOH COVID-19 Testing webpage for information and to take an online assessment

*This information is available at: www.rocklandgov.com/departments/health/coronavirus-covid-19/

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test result of a student or staff member, we will work with the contact tracers from the Rockland County Department of Health.

- We will notify the school community that there was a positive test result in our building
- The classroom and/or school will be closed according to the recommendations of the Department of Health (children will revert to remote learning)
- Notification will be made via phone call, email and/or notification system
- Contact tracers will be given the names of anyone who came within 6 feet of the individual for more than 10 minutes when the person was infectious.

*A log will be maintained of all those who enter the school building and each individual classroom

COMMUNICATION

The reopening plan, and any subsequent changes that need to be made to the plan, will be provided to parents in writing and verbally. The plan will be placed on the school's website and communicated via virtual meetings, letters sent via email and in the children's backpack. Translation will be provided for those whose preferred language is other than English. Parents will be provided frequent updates regarding the plan.

The school will collaborate with chairpersons of Committees on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and appropriate administrators at Departments of Health to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of special education services consistent with the recommendations on students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources. The school will document the programs and services offered and provided to our students as well as communications with parents, in their preferred language or mode of communication.

Any questions or concerns regarding this plan should be directed to Dr. Heidi McCarthy, Program Director of Education Services. She can be reached at 845-708-2001 x 3255 or Heidi.Mccarthy@jawonio.org.