

Delaware Opportunities, Inc. Head Start



Reopening Plan 2020 -- 2021

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SECTION 1

Acknowledgements and Introduction

Introduction: Tenets of the Plan

Organizations are faced with unprecedented challenges due to the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. In the midst of the pandemic, all Head Start locations were forced to close in an effort to keep families, children, and staff safe. While challenging for three and four-year olds, many of the Head Start staff continued to provide learning opportunities via remote and virtual methods. Staff delivered breakfast and lunch to families who could not otherwise receive this support through their local school district. This shift in service is something unlike Delaware Opportunities' Head Start has ever faced before. Fast forward several months and we find ourselves trying to decide the best course of action for the Head Start program heading into the fall. This decision about what to do was not taken lightly and was discussed with many stakeholders. Ultimately, it is DO's mission as a community action agency that ultimately determined Head Start's next steps. As a Community Action Agency, it is our mission to help individuals in the community, particularly during tough and challenging times. In the same way that other services and supports have risen to the challenge, so will Head Start as they gear for reopening five days a week for full days (or part days if they were previously part day). Delaware Opportunities Head Start Program is planning to reopen virtually, five days per week, starting on September 14th, with a full in-person reopening starting Monday, October 5th. Detailed information about the specifics will be sent to parents, along with providing this plan, as the September 14th date draws closer. This plan is intended to communicate with staff, families, licensors, etc. the steps that will be taken by Delaware Opportunities and its Head Start Program to ensure that children who are in our educational care are provided with the quality education and services they expect from us in an environment that is safe and remains flexible in our rapidly changing world.

~Dr. Shelly L. Bartow, Executive Director & Rose Cibelli, Head Start Director

Acknowledgement of Reopening Committee

Many dedicated and committed staff and partners weighed in on the reopening discussions that took place both in-person and remotely. Thank you to all of you that gave your input into the plan.

Thank you to Laurie Kenny, DO's Day Care Coordinator; Head Start Lead Teachers and Managers; parents; and Policy Council members.

Additionally, many hours were dedicated to attending webinars, workshops, and roundtable discussions with different groups related to reopening. Thank you to those that spent that time to collect all of the information possible to ensure an informed decision about DO Head Start's next steps was made.

SECTION 2

Communication and Family Engagement

Communication Formats for Families, Community Members and Staff

Communication with families: DO Head Start will be communicating with families via, phone, in person socially distancing and via Facebook pages and Zoom meetings. The staff will establish through conversations with the families, the best times and manner in which to communicate with them.

Communication with the community: DO Head Start will communicate changes to this plan and/or the delivery of service(s) to the community at large via its website, Facebook page, press releases, and/or its agency newsletter.

Communication with staff: DO Head Start will communicate changes to this plan and/or the delivery of services(s) to staff via agency email, Facebook, monthly newsletters, memos, and often via in-person or phone conversations. To the extent possible, major changes impacting all centers will be communicated via email so that all staff are informed in a timely manner and follow-up conversations will be scheduled to discuss concerns or questions.

The Importance of Family Engagement and the Formats in which it will occur

Families will be encouraged to participate in the program via parent group(s), Policy Council and Family Fun Days. This may appear to be different than it has been in the past, utilizing platforms such as Zoom for these meetings and sessions to take place.

Families can also participate by volunteering their time, such as reading and the activities that are noted in the School Readiness and Family Engagement Policy.

SECTION 3 Health and Safety

Health and Safety Practices

- Post signs in the center(s) on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, stay home when sick.
- Adhere to social distance; respiratory and cough etiquette; properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.
- Hand washing should be the primary way to clean your hands. Hand washing should be done with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer should only be used if soap and water is not available. Hand sanitizer works best on clean hands. Hands should be rubbed with sanitizer until completely dry. Time in schedule for handwashing; promote hand hygiene before meals; after playing outside, before and after removing PPE.
- Have on hand approved letters/messages for COVID-19 cases or potential cases for various audience(s).
- Determine procedures for sick child pickup if suspected Covid-19. Individual to wait in supervised isolation with appropriate PPE. Individual should be escorted from isolation to parent with appropriate PPE. Instruct parent to call provider; give resource for Covid-19 testing. For example, parent/guardian should stay in their car and call to announce their arrival. The sick child will be escorted out at a safe distance, while wearing PPE, to have the parent/ guardian sign the student out.
- Encourage parents to be on the alert for signs of sickness in the children and keep them home when they are sick. Provide resources to parents/guardians to educate regarding observing signs and symptoms of Covid-19.
- Remind/encourage families and staff to stay home or keep their child home if they feel sick.
- Review and understand the process for staff calling in sick. Consider providing a list of questions to supervisors to clarify what type of sickness is occurring (COVID related or not). Illnesses may need to be tracked differently in the future. Manage and isolate sick.

- Advocate to staff and children on wearing, putting on and removing face covering and/or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Send a fact sheet home with children that provide similar guidance to parents
- Communicate the importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home, proper hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Ensure that PPE, cleaning supplies, face coverings of appropriate size are available and that an accessible supply is kept on hand.
- Re-enforce that proper decontamination procedures are followed, cleaning and disinfecting.
- Designate a coordinator to be main contact for confirmed Covid-19, Rose Cibelli, Head Start Director.
- Maintain records confirming screens on children, staff, and visitors.
- Recognize number of children/staff that can return with regard to social distancing in regard to required square foot per person in different settings. A separate room/area for sick and non-sick students.
- Have an area designated as an isolation area/room. Each center must have such a space.
- Check for signs and symptoms by doing a mid-day health screening of all children and staff.
- Encourage parents to screen child before school. Check temperature and symptom screening. (accept screening info via email; telephone line; text app; paper check list).
- Individuals who have a fever of 100.4°F or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted to a center (most common symptoms are: fever, chills; cough, shortness of breath; fatigue; muscle/body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congested or running nose; nausea/vomiting or diarrhea).
- DO will inform and encourage staff to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 if they suspect possible exposure.
- Instruct staff to observe for signs of any type of illness (i.e.. Flushed cheeks; rapid/difficulty breathing- without recent physical activity); fatigue or irritability; frequent use of bathroom).
- Implement screenings safely and respectfully, in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations.
- Confidentiality shall be maintained. DO Head Start will ensure children are treated equally; and will ensure children are not singled out whose parent/guardian did not conduct screening at home.
- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Designate staff to review incoming reports.
- Create communication systems for staff and families for self-reporting of symptoms and notification of exposures and closures

OCFS Health Plan and Policies

Delaware Opportunities Inc. Head Start program will continue to abide by all NYS OCFS and OHS regulations as they pertain to the existing OCFS approved Health Care Plan. Amendments have been created to follow CDC COVID recommendations as well as new OCFS regulations in regards to COVID guidelines and requirements such as increased sanitation, exclusion policy changes, mask requirements for staff and children over the age of 2, social distancing protocols, meal service changes, non-essential center visitors, napping and daily self-certification requirements for children and staff.

Staff, Family, Children and Service Provider Self Certification

In addition to the health screening certifications described in the Health and Safety Practices on page six (6), any visitors (although will be minimized to the extent possible) to a Head Start center will be required to complete a self-certification prior to entering into the facilities.

Additionally, as referenced in other parts of this plan, both staff and children will be screened daily. Children will be screened by parents prior to coming to the center, by staff upon entry into the center and at a mid-day point determined by the program staff. The screenings conducted by staff will include a visual assessment of possible symptoms as well as a temperature check. Any child (or staff for that matter) with symptoms potentially related to COVID, including a fever of 100.4 or higher will not be allowed into the center and/or will be isolated until they are able to leave for the day. Staff will immediately be asked to leave the center and return home and will be unable to return to work until they are symptom free, have a doctor's note, and/or have a negative COVID test (in alignment with DO's reopening plan and guidance).

Designated Common Delivery site

- One point of entry and one point of exit for all children and staff
- Designated/pre-determined arrival times for staff, different from the designated/pre-determined arrival times for children.
- Families will be assigned a drop-off time in a staggered schedule to ensure that only a few families are dropping off at any given time.
- Parents will not be allowed into the center but will instead drop their child off with the Head Start staff who will walk into the building with the child.
- At pick-up time, Head Start staff will bring children outside at the designated pick-up time(s).

Fire Drills

Fire drills will still be scheduled and held as normal as they are part of licensing requirements. To the extent possible, children will maintain distance between them during the drill. Whether that is possible or not, all children and staff will wear masks during the drill and will immediately wash their hands upon entry back into the center.

SECTION 4 Facilities and Cleaning

Increase in Sanitation and Disinfecting

A daily cleaning checklist has been created for each Head Start Center with an increased level of sanitation and disinfection. Staff will be assigned to cleaning schedules throughout the day to ensure that cleaning and sanitation is taking place throughout the day, each and every day. Cleaning checklists will be completed each time cleaning and sanitation takes place, will be dated and include a time, and will be submitted to the Head Start Director daily via email. These cleaning checklists will then be copied for Head Start records and provided to the agency (DO) for record-keeping purposes.

The Head Start Cleaning Checklist has been included as an Appendix (A) to this plan.

SECTION 5 Child Nutrition

Meal service for virtual enrolled children that may not be in center attendance

With parental consent for virtual education services with the option for home meal deliveries, the Delaware Opportunities Inc. Head Start program will provide meals compliant with CACFP minimum requirements. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to children enrolled in part day programs and breakfast, lunch and snack will be provided to children enrolled in full day programs. Meals will be delivered twice a week in a temperature-controlled setting that will supply the child with enough meals to cover Monday - Friday meals.

Meal service for center enrolled children

Food Service Staff:

- Maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- Wear cloth face coverings at all times.
- Use all chemical cleaners and disinfectants in the manner recommended by the manufacturer and supervisor.
- Wear all required personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning and using chemicals.
- Follow US CDC Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.

Physical/Social Distancing in eating area for children:

- Try to distance tables so that one table is at least 6 feet from another table
- Avoid student mixing outside of the classroom
- Must wear mask when entering and exiting the eating area.

Facility Considerations:

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk (e.g., allowing pollen in or exacerbating asthma symptoms) risk to children using the facility.
- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features are working correctly.
- Make sure there are adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, wipes, and no-touch trash cans throughout the area.
- Determine any new cleaning products/protocols and decide how many times per day high touch areas will be disinfected (and the product to use)
- Shorten and/or stagger mealtimes, is appropriate via licensing requirements
- Ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection of tables between each use
- Consider alternate locations (i.e., classrooms) for eating breakfast and lunch
- Serve individually plated meals; trays already filled with food; pre-bagged lunches; etc.
- If alternate spaces are not available, ensure classroom groups sit together in the cafeteria
- Avoid the sharing of foods and utensils.
- Remind children about the importance of not sharing utensils, food or drinks.

SECTION 6

Social Emotional and Well Being

Practice of PBS (Positive Behavior Strategies formerly Pyramid Model)

The Pyramid Model is a positive behavioral intervention and support (PBIS) framework. *The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children* is to help the staff in supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving, create learning environments, provide targeted social-emotional skills, and support children with challenging behavior.

Head Start Leadership Takes Part in Trauma-Informed Champion Initiative

Head Start leaders, including the Director, Managers, Lead Teachers, TA's, and Family Service Workers, will all be taking place in a six-month trauma-informed champion initiative that will raise their awareness and understanding of trauma-informed care/trauma-sensitive practices within the Head Start setting. The skills learned and information gained by these Head Start leaders will allow them to go back to their centers and share this knowledge with their staff, lead a trauma-informed center, gain a better self-awareness, and provide better overall support and sensitivity to the families being served. This ongoing experience will guide staff through a series of reflective exercises that will task them with looking within themselves and within their centers at what strategies could be put into place to provide a higher quality of trauma-informed service.

Additional Training Opportunities for Head Start Staff

Additional training opportunities will be shared and/or made available to Head Start staff throughout the fall. These will include, but will not be limited to:

- Trauma training (for all Head Start staff, not just those participating in the trauma champion initiative)
- Mental Health First Aid/Psychological First Aid
- Training on Suicide Awareness and Prevention
- Any other identified training related to COVID, trauma, mental health, education and COVID, etc.

SECTION 7

Center Schedules

Schedules for full day and part day classrooms

The full day classrooms will operate with six-hour sessions and the part day classrooms would operate with four-hour sessions.

15-minute arrival/departure intervals

There will be staggered assigned times for families to drop off and pick up their children. A staff member will meet the families outside at drop off and pick up times to ensure that safety procedures are adhered to. These assigned times will be communicated with each individual family prior to the start of in-person programming in October.

Learning Areas

The classroom environment has been redesigned to accommodate and meet the social distancing protocols. There will be social distancing markers as guidance for the children to follow.

Isolation Area

The classrooms will provide a designated space in the approved licensed area. This area will be socially distanced, and a staff member will supervise the child that is isolated.

Block Lesson Planning

Block and center lesson planning will consist of the all the required Head Start domains in the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF).

Virtually: staff will conduct block lessons. This will be 20 – 30-minute sessions that will encompass small group, circle time and movement activities.

Center Sessions: staff will resume the typical lesson planning for the children.

Napping

The children that are in full day classrooms will rest on mats that are socially distanced. We will be following the NYS Office of Children and Families guidance.

Outside Play

According to NYS Office of Children and Families the staff are to have the children engage in outdoor play. This will continue with distancing and sanitation daily.

SECTION 8 Disability Services

Service Area Providers as Essential to Children with Disabilities

Service providers must be signed in on OCFS "Child Care Program Tracking Form" which includes the documentation that they were COVID screened. The providers must follow the same PPE guidance as staff members.

It is required that services be provided to one child at a time in an area separate from the classroom if feasible. If the service provider is conducting multiple therapy sessions, the therapy area and any common therapy items used must be disinfected between therapy sessions.

SECTION 9 Staffing

Self-Certification, Contact List and Visitor's Log

All staff are required to complete a health self-certification prior to coming into work each day. The self-certification is to be emailed directly to the Head Start Director who will then turn them into the appropriate HR member at Delaware Opportunities. Failure to complete the self-certification will result in the staff member being unable to report to work. Any staff member who answers "yes" to any question on the certification will be asked to remain at home, call their immediate supervisor, and wait for direction on next steps before reporting to work. The self-certification contains questions related to COVID-19 symptoms, traveling, quarantine, and exposure to others who may have been exposed. It is intended to help minimize exposure by only allowing those into the center who can answer "no" to each and every question on the self-certification.

Staff members are also required to keep a daily contact list that will be turned in daily to their supervisor, listing anyone they came into contact with each day. This is to aid Public Health in their efforts to conduct contact tracing if and when someone should be exposed or become ill.

A visitor's log will also be kept for each center, although visitors will be kept to minimum, ideally eliminating all visitors to maintain a static environment.

Maintaining a static environment

To the extent possible, only staff and children in each center will be allowed to enter the premises. While visitors cannot totally be eliminated, DO Head Start will make every effort possible to eliminate visitors and maintain a static environment, again minimizing the risk of exposure for the staff and children at that center. Where possible, interaction with administrative staff and community partners will be facilitated remotely or will be conducted at offsite locations.

Following signage provided

Signage will be displayed throughout each center regarding social distancing, hand washing, covering your cough, etc. Staff will help children understand these messages and will draw attention to and help them understand social distancing and how they can best do it. While there will be signage and floor markers and things such as that throughout the center, those are more so for staff and adults in center to know the spacing and such for social distancing. The staff will identify creative ways to teach children about these messages in an age appropriate manner.

General Expectations for Social Distancing for Staff, Children, and Visitors

To ensure all staff, children, and visitors comply with physical distancing requirements, anyone within the Head Start facilities will practice social distancing expectations to the extent possible:

- Ensure 6 feet distance between staff unless safety or core functions of the work activity require a shorter distance. Staff should be wearing masks/face coverings at all times, even when 6 feet distance is able to be maintained.
- Tightly confined spaces will be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless it is absolutely necessary, and all occupants are wearing masks/face coverings.
- The posting of social distancing markers using tape or signs that denote 6 feet of spacing in commonly used or other applicable areas on site.
- Limit in-person gatherings as much as possible and use tele- or videoconferencing whenever possible, particularly to minimize visitors. Essential in-person gatherings will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.
- Establish designated areas for pick-ups and drop-offs, limiting contact to the extent possible.

Use of PPE and Responsibility of Personal Environment and Hygiene

To ensure the safety of all staff, children and visitors, anyone entering into a Head Start Center will comply with the following protective equipment requirements:

- DO Head Start will provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no-cost to the employee and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of replacement.
- Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be properly stored or discarded.
- Training will be provided to all staff members on the proper use of face coverings including a. How to Wear Face Covering Appropriately b. How to Put on/Remove Face Covering c. How to Properly Remove a Face Covering d. Proper Care of Face Coverings
- When in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas, gloves will be provided; employees are encouraged to wash hands before and after contact
- Touching of shared objects and surfaces is discouraged
 - Examples of some frequently touched areas in schools i.e. classroom desks and chairs, Lunchroom tables and chairs, door handles and push plates, copy machines, handrails, kitchen and bathroom faucets, light switches, handles on equipment, shared telephones, shared desktops, shared computer keyboards and mice.
 - Frequently touched surfaces and objects will be cleaned and disinfected several times a day to further reduce the risk of germs on surfaces and objects

To ensure all staff, children and visitors comply with hygiene and cleaning requirements, DO Head Start will do the following:

- Adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain cleaning logs onsite that document date, time, and scope of cleaning

- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including hand washing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol for areas where hand washing is not feasible.
- Staff Training will be provided to promote healthy hygiene practices. Training will include, but is not limited to a. Proper hand washing techniques b. Use of hand sanitizer c. Respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes d. Proper use of face coverings e. Encourage staff to stay home when sick
- Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, proper hand washing technique, promote everyday protective measures, and the proper wearing of a face covering
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection daily, or more frequently as needed, along with frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects and surfaces, as well as high transit areas.

SECTION 10

Transportation

Self-Transport

Due to the concerns regarding safety of children and minimizing the risk of exposure, the DO Head Start Program has decided to initiate self-transport for all nine Head Start centers until at least December 1st, at which time it will be reevaluated. At such time that this decision changes, all parents will be notified.

Transportation to deliver food or educational materials

Head Start buses will be utilized to deliver meals to children during virtual learning days in September, for those family that choose to continue virtual learning even after centers open or due to quarantine, and to deliver educational materials for any families who cannot otherwise pick them up.

SECTION 11

Technology

Access for Children During Times of Shutdown

In the event of a required shutdown for any COVID-related reason, Head Start staff will work with families to provide technology (i.e. iPad) to be used for remote learning in the event that families do not have access to such technology. MiFi or recommendations for Wi-Fi access will also be provided, to the extent possible. Families utilizing technology via Head Start will be asked to review and sign a device agreement.

DO Head Start wants to eliminate access to technology as a possible barrier for remote learning during a time of shutdown. We ask that parents consider what their needs would truly be in the event of another shutdown where their child may have to learn remotely.

SECTION 12

Need for Shutdown

Determination of a Needed Shutdown

While it is the intent of the DO Head Start Program to remain open come October, it is possible that factors outside of our control could require an immediate short- or long-term shutdown. These factors could include: Executive Order, Public Health directive, OCFS directive, Head Start directive, agency (DO) decision/directive, possible or known exposure to COVID-19, or any other factor or directive related to minimizing possible exposure to staff and children attending a Head Start Center. These decisions can be made for specific centers or may apply to the entire Head Start Program as a whole. All

communication methods discussed earlier in this plan will be followed to keep families and the community informed of such a shutdown.

SECTION 13

Contacting Head Start

Communicating with Head Start Regarding This Plan or Other COVID-Related Concerns

Designated person to be notified about and handle confirmed or suspected COVID cases:

Rose Cibelli, Head Start Director

rcibelli@delop.org

607-746-1641

Designated person to be responsible for responding to day to day COVID-19 concerns or questions:

Allison Davis, Health Service Manager

adavis@delop.org

607-746-1640 x645

Designated person to be responsible for agencywide COVID concerns or questions:

Dr. Shelly L. Bartow, Executive Director

sbartow@delop.org

607-746-1601