



**TOTH**  
MONTESSORI  
NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, DC



## **Full Day Toddler Parent Handbook**

**2020-2021**

Updated July 2020

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## **Welcome from the Head of School**

Dear parents and caregivers,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. We hope that you find this handbook both useful and accessible. As you know, this school year will be somewhat different for all of us due to the Covid 19 public health crisis. ToTH's administrative team has spent many months planning for a safe reopening of the school. This means that we will have many changes, from changed staffing to new class sizes, modified daily operations to long term planning, and enhanced safety and cleaning protocols to socially distanced learning for toddlers and preschoolers. But what won't change this year is ToTH's commitment to providing a world-class, fully implemented Montessori early learning experience.

We have many things to be excited about, including the return of our dedicated teaching staff, many of whom are now returning for their third year with the school. We also have three teachers who have started or will soon be starting their Montessori teacher certification training. And even though our student population must be smaller this year due to safety regulations, we are thrilled to have so many students (and siblings!) returning to our classrooms. These returning students will play an essential role in welcoming our brand new students and acting as leaders and guides in the classrooms. Their confidence and independence will inspire confidence and independence in their peers, thus creating a sense of peace and joy in the community.

We feel so lucky to be able to serve all forty of our families this year, and I personally look forward to working with our parents and caregivers. If there is ever a question about the Montessori curriculum, classroom practices, child development, or our general philosophy about early childhood education, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and we will schedule a virtual meeting.

Sincerely,

Natalie Baginski  
Head of School

## **Purpose of This Handbook**

This handbook provides an overview for the community, parents, teachers, au pairs, nannies, board members, and other invested adults regarding policies, philosophies, and procedures. It is meant to be read in its entirety. Our expectations and guidelines are based on two things: 1. all we've learned during our nine years of experience as a school, and 2. best practices in Montessori education. They are not meant to be perceived as rules that restrict freedom, but as guidelines that keep our children and teachers thriving and focused on what truly matters. Please bring any questions and concerns about this handbook or anything in it to our Administrative Director. We are happy to go over the rationale behind our policies and to include parents as partners in the process of building a better school community.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to offer families an authentic Montessori experience that is right for our community. We aim to make every day count and we prepare our environment to maximize the children's independence and success. Our hope is that joy, curiosity, creativity, and friendship are the predominant experiences.

## **Who We Are**

ToTH Montessori is a private Montessori School licensed by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Our toddler and primary programs engage children aged 18 months to 6 years old in a learning environment guided by teaching teams that always include a MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) endorsed trained Montessorian, or one who is seeking that credential. We operate according to International Montessori Council (IMC) standards. We are families on Capitol Hill and beyond. We are passionate about giving the children in our community the best early learning experience possible and we adhere to what we believe are instructions straight from Dr. Montessori's principles and guidelines.

## **What We Believe**

We believe that children are worthy of deep respect. We believe that during this important developmental time, it is imperative that children are given a peaceful environment in which to explore their curiosities with self-correcting, multi-sensory materials through self-directed learning. We believe in uninterrupted work and play. We believe children learn best when the school environment is a collaboration between teachers and children and parents, working together as a warm and supportive, courteous community. We believe earlier is not better and children deserve space to develop according to their nature.

## **Our Guiding Principles**

1. Children learn best in a child-centered, multi-age environment.
2. Praise and extrinsic motivation are not necessary.
3. Teachers must be spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually prepared to work with children and should receive ongoing professional development.
4. All interactions between the child and adult should be positive, without reward or punishment.
5. We must not hurry development; earlier is not better.
6. There is no average and we hold space for the child to be who she is and develop at her own pace.
7. What the children "learn" is not about a product. We refer to predicted educational outcomes for Montessori education and observe to assess growth.
8. It's not about the materials; *the toddler is the curriculum.*

9. Routine, structure, organization, beauty, logic, choice, friendship, and predictability are essential components of any strong early childhood program.
10. Activity should be self-guided and the adults are there to assist.

## **Management and Administration**

### **Head of School**

Natalie Baginski is a MACTE endorsed trained Montessori educator at the Primary age group with 13 years experience working in schools. She is responsible for recruitment, retention and credentialing of qualified staff, implementation of board approved 3-Year Strategic Plan, owner/board partnership, evaluation of staff, managing professional development and training for staff, growth of program strategy, evaluation of educational program, fiscal responsibility and alignment with strategy, expectations, guidelines and procedures, quality of Montessori materials, social media, newsletters, parent workshop planning and evaluation, and parent support. Parents may contact Natalie at on her cell phone at 571-527-7396 or in the office at 202-748-5930 or via email at [natalie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:natalie@toddlersonthehill.org)

### **Admissions and Enrollment Director**

Ila Furman, responsible for open houses, recruitment and admissions, enrollment, phase-in schedules, immunization and health records, enrollment forms, tuition payments, observation appointments and schedules. Parents may contact Ila at: [ila@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:ila@toddlersonthehill.org)

### **Administrative Director**

Stephanie Sarvana, responsible for all administration, general communication with parents, editing, human resources and benefits, school licensing and overall management of parent committees. Parents may contact Stephanie on the office phone at 202-748-5930 or via email at [stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org).

Parents can learn more about all of our teaching staff on our [website](#).

ToTH maintains a Board of Directors/Owners to provide oversight and support for the head of school and administration. The Board includes ToTH's founders Sara Agarwal, Joy Wilder, and Anya Landau French. The Board will review its policies each year and make any necessary changes accordingly. Parents will be informed of any changes as we are ready to communicate. ToTH reserves the right to alter its policies and program at any time. You can reach the board by contacting Anya Landau French, the board liaison, at [anya@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:anya@toddlersonthehill.org).

## **General Information & Policies**

### Location

Our full day toddler program is located inside of the Arthur Capper Recreation Center at 1000 5th Street SE, Washington, D.C. 20003. ToTH has a private entrance located at the north end of the building. At this time, due to the public health emergency, guests are not permitted to enter the building.

### Dates of operation

The school year begins on August 31, 2020 begins and ends July 30, 2021. The last day of school is always a half day and ends at 12:30pm. For dates of holidays and breaks please view [our calendar](#).

### Hours of operation

The school day begins at 9:00 a.m. and goes until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### Adult to child ratios

ToTH's toddler program adheres to a Montessori adult/student ratio and currently OSSE has approved our classroom to have up to 8 students with 2 teachers.

### Teaching Team & Contact Information

Zharray Johnson and Karen Solache are co-teaching team for the full day toddler classroom. The teachers can be reached during the school day via Bloomz or **the class cell phone: (202) 281-0435**. You may contact Zharray at [zharray@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:zharray@toddlersonthehill.org) and Karen at [karen@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:karen@toddlersonthehill.org).

### Drop-Off Procedures

Please drop off your child no earlier than 9:00 a.m. and no later than 9:15 a.m. We will greet full day toddlers at the side door of the classroom located on K St.. Please walk down the sidewalk on K Street toward the large glass doors and your teacher will be waiting for you. **Please see the Covid 19 handbook supplement at the end of this document for enhanced drop off procedures during the Covid 19 public health emergency.**

### **Tips for a smooth drop off**

1. Please have all of the child's items zipped into their backpack (lunch, diapers, extra clothes). Do not hand multiple items to the teacher.
2. If it is cold, please drop off your child wearing all outerwear (coat, mittens, hat) or make sure that all items are stored in the backpack.
3. Please have your child walk up to the door while holding your hand. They may prefer to be held or carried, but we want them to practice walking to the classroom independently.
4. Your role is to model friendliness and courtesy during all interactions with other adults. Say "good morning" to the teacher receiving your child, be confident, optimistic, and brief when saying goodbye: "Goodbye! Have a great day at school. I will see you at pick up time!"
5. If your child protests, cries, or generally has difficulty with your departure, please let the teachers manage the situation. You should still smile, wave goodbye, and walk confidently away. Do not linger or show worry. The teachers will send you a quick note or photo later in the morning to assure you that your child is ok.
6. So that the teachers can place their full attention on the children, they cannot have conversations during drop-off. If you feel that there is important information that your child's teacher should know at the beginning of the day, please send a text message to the class phone or a message through the Bloomz app.

### Pick-Up Procedure

Pick up is between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Children should be picked up at the classroom side door on K St. Please send a text message to the class phone to alert the teachers when you are on your way to pick up so that they may have your child toileted and ready to leave when you arrive. Children picked up late will be subject to our White Rabbit (late) policy, which is posted below.

If someone is picking up your child who you have already listed as an authorized pick-up person on your enrollment paperwork, please notify your child's teacher ahead of time with the person's name and phone number. **The person must bring a photo ID with them to pick up and show it to the teacher.** If you are sending someone who is not listed, you must call the office and inform us and send person with ID. If you would like to permanently add to or change your list of authorized pick up persons, please reach out to Stephanie Sarvana at [stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org).

#### *\*\*A note about pick up*

Although convenient, pick up is not the best time to gather information about how school is going, especially with the Covid 19 safety procedures. If you have any need for communication about your child's experience, please request a phone call or video chat with your child's teacher. Make sure you are checking the updates, videos, and photos on Bloomz! Feel free to text your child's teacher on the classroom phone if you have a specific question that is timely.

### Inclement weather and other unscheduled closings

Please look for weather related closure notifications from the Bloomz app or your email early in the morning on days there is a weather event or other emergency that might result in school closures. *ToTH does not offer make up days for closures as extra days have been built into our schedule.*

### Late Pick-up Policy

- We ask that the parent or caregiver who is picking up the child text the classroom phone 15 minutes prior to arrival to say they are on the way. Should this person be running late, they must call the classroom phone to notify the teacher of their ETA.
- If a child has not been picked up by 4:55 p.m. and we have not heard from the parent or caregiver, the teacher will call or text both parents.
- If a child has not been picked up by 5:00 p.m. and neither parent can be reached, the teacher will call the child's emergency contact.
- If a child has not been picked up by 5:05 p.m., the child will wait with the administrator on duty outside of the classroom until the parent arrives.

It is critical that children are picked up by 5:00 p.m. Our teachers need to focus on nightly cleaning routines and preparing for the next day.

Invoices for late pick up fees will be sent by Stephanie via Curacubby. Any White Rabbit invoice not paid in full within 14 days will result in a temporary suspension from school until the invoice is paid. Any abuse of this system or perpetual tardiness at pick up may result in expulsion from the program.

### Late Pick-up Fees

First late fee:

5-10 minutes late: \$10

11-15 minutes late: \$20

16-30 minutes late: \$30

>30 minutes late: \$50

Subsequent late fees:

5-10 minutes late: \$20

11-15 minutes: \$40

16-30 minutes late: \$60

>30 minutes late: \$100

Montessori teachers commit themselves to being rested, patient, tolerant, open, mindful, attentive, intuitive, tireless, and passionate caregivers when it comes to the precious, short time we spend with the children. For that reason, our well being outside of school and our ability to attend to our administrative tasks in a routine and timely manner once the children are gone, is such a high priority.

### Nannies and Other Caregivers

If your child will be dressed by a nanny, au pair, or other caregiver, and the lunch is prepared by the caregiver, and if it is the caregiver who will be dropping off or picking up, etc., it is necessary that your caregiver be on our email distribution list and have their cell phone number on the classroom contact list so they can get updates about school. **It's important that your caregiver read this handbook and our Covid 19 daily screening and drop-off/pick-up procedures.** Please involve your caregivers, share this handbook, make an introduction over text or email, and support their ability to set your child up for a successful time at school.

### Inclement weather and other unscheduled closings

Please look for notification of weather related closures from the Bloomz app or your email early in the morning on days there is a weather event or other emergency that might result in school closures. *ToTH does not offer make up days for closures as extra days have been built into our schedule.*

### Immunizations and Health Records

Each child must be current on immunizations, as a condition of enrollment. We must receive each child's up-to-date immunization records and completed health and dental forms by the enrollment forms deadline. *Health and dental forms expire annually and must be completed again and resubmitted upon expiration.* This is a requirement of the Office of the State Superintendent for Education. All questions related to the immunization requirement should be discussed with our Admissions Director, Ila Furman.

### Illness Policy

Please refer to the Covid 19 handbook supplement at the end of this document for our current illness policies.

**Please inform your child's teacher that your child will be absent by texting the classroom phone at (202) 281-0435 or sending a message through Bloomz.**

### Medicines

If a child requires medicine at ToTH, this should be discussed with administration in advance and a [Medical Authorization Form](#) should be submitted. We will keep your child's medication in its original container in a secure location and it must contain a label, expiration date, and dosing instructions.

### The Urban Playground

Unless there is inclement weather, the children go outside on the ToTH/Capper playground, or elsewhere in the neighborhood such as Canal Park, everyday in the morning and afternoon. Outdoor time is an important part of our early childhood education program. Children who engage in unstructured, outdoor play have better outcomes and we value this time as much as we do our indoor time. Adults are strategically placed on the playground so that every area is visible by a teacher at any given time. Teachers are there 'loitering with intent' and keeping the children safe. There is a gate with a lock on the playground. We embrace going up the slide, digging in dirt, and all other manners of natural child's play. Please consult with your child's teacher if you have questions about why certain play is or is not allowed.

### Observations in the Classroom

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, parents cannot come into the classroom and do formal observations of the environment, nor can we have in-person parent discussions. It will be necessary that all parent-educator communication this year be virtual. We will devise a robust engagement system of check ins, videos/photos, and Bloomz posts to provide parents with a "window" into the learning environment.

## **Business and Finances**

### Invoices and payment options

We are happy to accept Visa or MasterCard payments via our online invoice and payment site Curacubby. Payments made by check should be made payable to "Toddlers on the Hill." Please email [Ila Furman](#) if you need your invoice reissued.

*\*\*\*Teachers are not authorized to accept checks or health forms or other important documents for administration; please deliver your items to Ila Furman. For mail, please use Toddlers on the Hill, PO Box 15560, Washington DC 20003.*

### Late payments

When payment is not received in full by 5 days after the deadline, it will be considered late and subject to a late fee in the amount of \$50.00. When not received 10 days after the deadline, an additional late fee of \$100.00 will be applied. After 14 days ToTH reserves the right to refuse to admit the child to the program and may offer the child's opening to another family. If a check is returned by the bank for any reason, the parents will be subject to a returned check fee of \$35.00.

### Terminations of Contracts and Refunds

#### **Elective Termination**

If a family decides to terminate their enrollment contract before the end of a trimester, ToTH requests that families give 30 days' notice prior to the end of the trimester. All application fees and deposits and tuition are nonrefundable. With the exception of families called away for active military duty, ToTH is unable to refund program fee payments (tuition) already made for a given trimester.

### **Termination with Due Cause**

The Head of School reserves the right to immediately terminate a family's enrollment contract with due cause. In this case, refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any dispute or claim arising out of the de-enrollment of a child or any other related matter that cannot be resolved between the parent and the Head of School will be elevated to the board of directors. If a resolution still cannot be reached, we will engage in non-binding mediation. ToTH will go to great lengths to be kind, honest, helpful, and supportive in all situations while remaining true to our mission and purpose. The following situations may be considered grounds for dismissal from ToTH:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow published school policies or procedures, even after helpful intervention from ToTH staff (e.g. drop-off/pick-up times and procedures, daily supplies, submission of required forms).
- Inability or unwillingness to follow communication protocols laid out in this handbook. When a parent has a question, concern or grievance, they should make every effort to bring their issue to the appropriate person, as outlined in the "Community Expectations for Communication" section.
- Inability or unwillingness to respect a member of the community's privacy. Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging or harmful information is not acceptable.
- Inability or unwillingness to treat ToTH's teaching and administrative staff, students, or other ToTH parents and caregivers with basic respect courtesy. ToTH teachers, staff and parents are all expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior.
- Any parent or caregiver who engages in dangerous, disruptive, or destructive behavior on school property will be asked to leave the school. In addition, such incidents must be reported to OSSE via an Unusual Incident Report form.
- Discrimination or harassment of any person in the ToTH community on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business is counter to our values and will not be tolerated.

### **School Communications**

#### Bloomz

[Bloomz](#) is a free app that ToTH teachers and administrators use to communicate with parents and share photos and videos from the classroom. Each parent will receive an invitation to join their child's "classroom" on the app at the beginning of the year. Parents may also request access for other caregivers, such as nannies or au pairs. Your children's teachers will manage a Bloomz account for parents and it's strongly encouraged that parents download this app and turn on the notifications. Teachers will check this account before arrival and again before dismissal. It's a private portal and resembles Facebook. There are a variety of text and shared message options as well. Please actively

engage in Bloomz for anything that has to do with the learning community. You can also alert your teacher about a late arrival, an “off morning,” a lost mitten, or ask basic questions via Bloomz.

#### Google Group Emails

The ToTH Full Day Toddler 2020-2021 Google Group (tothfd2021@googlegroups.com) exists primarily for parents. This allows for parents to arrange playdates, send birthday invites, and plan social events with other parents in the ToTH community. It is also occasionally used by ToTH administration to send important announcements or newsletters to all parents.

#### Instagram

Our Head of School uploads content to our account @tothmontessori. It’s a window into the community and activities. Please join us!

#### Observations and Parent Education

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, parents cannot come into the classroom and do formal observations of the environment, nor can we have in-person parent education discussions. It will be necessary that all parent-educator communication this year be virtual. We will devise a robust engagement system of check ins, videos, parent education workshops, small group and one on one sessions this year to ensure families do not feel disconnected.

#### Contacting Teachers or Staff

ToTH is a small, neighborhood school. We believe in honesty, flexibility, kindness, and we have an open-door policy when it comes to discussing the program, a family’s needs, or a specific concern. If a question or a concern arises, please seek out friendly dialogues. When a parent has a question, concern or grievance, they should make every effort to bring their issue to the appropriate person, as outlined below:

#### **For Curriculum, Student, and Classroom issues:**

- First: Child’s teacher (via school email address, classroom phone number, or Bloomz app)
- Second: Administrative Director (via school email address, Bloomz app or office phone number)
- Third: Head of School (via school email address or office phone number)

#### **For General School Operations and Policy issues:**

- Enrollment, Tuition, Immunizations & Health Forms: Director of Enrollment and Admissions (via school email address or office phone number)
- All other matters: Administrative Director

#### **For questions about the Montessori pedagogy, resources, or deeper consultation:**

- Head of School

In a situation where you do not feel comfortable talking to the Head of School, please reach out to the board by contacting board liaison Anya Landau French at [anya@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:anya@toddlersonthehill.org). In all regards, we are friendly with error.

### Community Expectations for Professional Communications

#### **Employing ToTH Staff Outside of School**

For the protection of these most important relationships between teacher, parent, and child, we ask our parents to not ask ToTH staff to provide personal childcare.

#### **Scheduling Meetings**

Staff must refrain from discussing ToTH's students or school issues when they are in the company of ToTH parents outside of school hours, e.g., birthday parties, sport events, public encounters, playground, and school functions. We invite you to request a call or meeting so we can put you on our calendar and make sure you have our undivided attention when we speak with you about your and your child's experience at ToTH.

#### **Social Media Policy**

For the purposes of maintaining professional integrity and negating the possibility of conflicts of interests we ask that parents do not invite ToTH teachers or staff members to join them on social media, and vice versa. We do however maintain a very active ToTH presence on social media and we encourage parents and teachers alike to join ToTH on Instagram and Facebook.

#### **Privacy Policy**

Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging or harmful information is not acceptable.

## **Parent Education and Resources**

### Montessori Resources

Parents will receive occasional articles, newsletters, or announcements from the Head of School via email, Bloomz, and Instagram on Montessori philosophy as well as practical information relevant to parents with children enrolled in a Montessori school. Parents will also receive [resources](#) such as blogs, podcasts, apps, websites, and other avenues for self-study via our website, Instagram, and virtual parent workshops.

### Parent Workshops

Our Head of School and MACTE endorsed teachers will host virtual workshops this year, due to Covid 19.

### Parent Teacher Conferences

Teachers will meet with parents twice each year in the months of November and May. This year we will meet virtually, due to Covid 19. If you find yourself needing more, please reach out to your child's teacher for a virtual conference any time; you are not limited to November and May.

## **Preparations for Starting School**

Before the school year begins there are things you can do to help your child normalize in a Montessori environment. Aside from talking with your child about school, you can:

- Allow your child to walk, ride a balance bike or scooter; use the stroller less
- Eat snack and meals sitting down and refrain from inviting your child to walk around with food.
- Practice taking shoes (slip on or velcro straps) on and off at home.
- When you go on an outing, use your child's backpack and allow her to carry her own snack and water bottle.
- When a toy is no longer being used at home, model putting it back in its place.
- Support the ground rule that "we throw balls and frisbees," but not random objects in the house. At school, we do not throw work inside; we only throw balls and frisbees outside.
- If your child likes to jump and run, offer opportunities for running and jumping outside and verbally reinforce that we jump and run outside. Inside we walk.
- Instead of using words like "good job" and "I like how you...", practice offering a smile or a non-judgmental observation, such as, "What bright colors you used!" If your child is reliant on extrinsic motivation at home, she will seek the same at school, and intrinsic motivation is an important predicted educational outcome for Montessori programs.

### **Classroom Policies and Procedures**

#### Phase-In / Back to School

Every Montessori school has a phase- in system to ensure that children new to school are welcomed in a very peaceful way and first impressions are as positive as possible. The "first day of school" is not necessarily the first day of school for everyone. It's important that our returning children are able to reintroduce themselves to school without a group of new toddlers. It's equally important that our new friends have the attention from the guides that they will need to have good first experiences. For this reason, we phase in students slowly for the first month of school. Specific start dates for brand new ToTH children will be sent out at least a month before school begins. If your child has attended ToTH previously, your child will start on the very first day of school. If your child is starting the year new to ToTH, plan on not starting the first week.

**\*\*We do not prorate tuition for later phase in dates\*\***

#### **Phase-In Process For New Students**

- This process requires that your child arrives on their scheduled first day at **9:30 a.m.** This first day will be a **half day** and it will end at **12:00 p.m.**
- On day two, we will invite your child to stay and nap with us and pick up will be at **3:30 p.m.**
- On day three, your child is invited to stay the full day, until 5:00pm. But we do like to remind you that a slower start that first week is advised for toddlers, so if you are able to pick up before 5:00 p.m. that first week, it's sometimes best, depending on the child.

Please decide now who will be the person dropping off at school each day, it's best, especially in the beginning, if it's the same caregiver.

Note: Tears and crying can happen; please hold your head high, show your child you are confident, walk away as if everything is fine, *and it's OK for you to cry too privately...*

We have phased in close to 300 toddlers over the years and in each and every instance, toddlers fall in love with the classroom, their friends and their teachers. The fact is, the energy of the person dropping off, and his/her thoughts, tone, body language, and confidence will set the tone for how a child feels about being dropped off. The parent/nanny/caregiver sets the tone for drop off each and every time, starting on day one. Lingering, watching, worry, multiple goodbyes, etc. will make it harder for the child, so please give one last hug, say “I love you, have a wonderful day, I will pick you up soon.” and depart.

#### Parent-Provided Supplies/Classroom Support Week

This year, due to safety concerns, instead of having parents purchase and deliver groceries for the classroom snack and supplies, we will invoice each family for snack funds 5-6 times during the year. Groceries will be delivered directly to the school and snack will be prepared and served using enhanced safety protocols due to Covid 19. We intend to buy some non-perishable items in bulk in order to lower costs, so the approximate amount due for a family’s assigned week will total somewhere in the range of \$30-50. A payment schedule will be sent out before the start of school.

Morning and afternoon snack usually consist of crackers or pretzels, cheese, fresh fruit and/or veggies, mini bagels with cream cheese, etc. Our snack will be vegetarian due to dietary restrictions of some of our children; please put meat in your child’s lunch if you prefer they have meat at school.

#### Children’s Daily Supplies

It is our goal that the arrival and dismissal routines at ToTH are smooth for the children, and we encourage children to be independent with their belongings throughout the session. For this reason, we ask that parents send **only** the following items to school each day:

**\*\*\*EVERY SINGLE ITEM SHOULD BE LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD’S NAME\*\*\***

Pre-printed name labels can be purchased from [Mabel’s Labels](#) .

- 3-4 face masks (only for children over the age of two who can independently put on and take off the mask.)
- 1 labeled backpack per child (cartoon/character free). **The backpack should be large enough to comfortably fit the following items:**
- 1 labeled **diaper envelope** per child, provided by ToTH
- **5 to 6 diapers daily**
- 1 labeled Ziploc bag with two complete sets of seasonally appropriate **extra clothes**, including one pair of extra shoes, which will be kept at school.
- For toddlers in underwear: 5-6 pairs of extra underwear to be kept at school.
- Teachers will send home soiled clothing in a plastic bag and a note for which items need to be replaced with new extras.
- **Character/Cartoon-free lunch box** (preferably bento box style with easy to open lid)
  - We recommend the [Sugarbooger Good Lunch Bento Box](#) or [Cat and Jack Bento Box \(Target\)](#). We do not recommend the popular Bentgo lunch box for toddlers as it is difficult for the child to open independently.
- **1 balanced, nut-free, mostly sugar-free lunch** (food items not invited to school include anything on the class allergy list, anything made with nuts, including nut butters (sunflower seed butter is fine), candy or other sugary treats, juice/soda, pouches, and items in packaging or containers that children cannot manipulate on their own. Due to Covid 19 we want to avoid

having our teachers touch or handle the children's food items. If a teacher must provide assistance, she will wash her hands and wear gloves before handling the item.

\*We will ensure that any allergies are communicated to teachers and parents and those foods will not be invited into the room. Parents should inform the enrollment director in writing and verbally if their child has any serious or life-threatening allergies.

*\*\*Please note that water bottles are not being used at school this year. Children serve themselves water throughout the day using a water dispenser and disposable cups. Please do not include a water bottle in your child's backpack. If your child would like milk at lunchtime, a container of white milk (cow, soy, no nut milks) may be sent in the child's lunch box.*

- Pair of closed-toed **outdoor shoes** with no shoelaces that can be worn on the playground.
- **For sunny weather:** labeled hat and sunscreen (we recommend the mini roll-on sticks).
- **For cold weather:** labeled hat, pair of mittens or gloves, pair of mitten clips, warm shoes or waterproof boots.
- **For rainy days:** labeled rain boots, a rainsuit, or raincoat, and waterproof pants (we try to play outdoors every day).
- ToTH provides pillows and blankets for nap time. They will be washed at least once per week. We do not allow children to use stuffed animals or security blankets from home.

We request that no toys, pacifiers, jewelry, electronics, or other non-essential items are brought to school as children this age have difficulty with personal items at school.

#### Toddler Dress Code

ToTH utilizes a character/cartoon-free dress code. **Items of clothing may be any color or pattern.** We encourage simple, easy-to-manipulate items of clothing that children can put on and take off independently. This helps with toileting and allows for physical distancing. Please do send children to school in special items of clothing as these items could become dirty or damaged during playtime.

**Tops:** Short-sleeved and tank top options are fine for warmer weather. Long-sleeved shirts are recommended for cooler weather. **PLEASE NO ONESIE BODYSUITS!**

**Dresses:** Long, short-sleeved, polo, and tank options are all permitted, however dresses should be loose fitting and simple (no tutu-skirts, belts, ties, or rompers as they can make toileting difficult.)

**Bottoms:** Elastic waistband leggings, sweatpants, and shorts are permitted. Please make sure that bottoms are easy for your child to get on and off by themselves. **Please no buttons, zippers or belts.**

**Sweaters/Hoodies:** Sweaters, sweatshirts, cardigans, and vests that can be zipped are appropriate.

**Outside Shoes:** Children should wear a pair of sturdy, comfortable, and close-toed shoes to be worn outside on the playground. Shoes may be slip ons or have velcro straps. **Please no shoes with shoelaces, buckles, or open-toes.**

**Outerwear:** Please send your child to school each day with appropriate items of outerwear based on the weather forecast, including jacket, boots, rain or snow pants, waterproof jacket, hat, gloves/mittens and mitten clips.

### Characters, Cartoons, and Make Believe

In our limited time with your child we want the focus to be on concrete reality. To avoid unnecessary distractions at school, please make sure your child's clothing, shoes, backpack and lunch box are cartoon and character free at ToTH. When your child wants to take something with a character to school, just remind her that, "those are for home, not for school..."

### Toileting

In a toddler classroom, toileting is just as much a part of the curriculum as sitting to eat snack or using work from the shelves. There is no perfect time for all children to begin toilet learning and what works is different for every family. At ToTH we support a family's right to decide when they are ready and we support families by having a positive and easygoing toileting routine at school. If your child is transitioning to underwear, please inform your teaching team ahead of time via Bloomz message and let us know how it's going, and wait for an acknowledgement that your child's teacher knows you are potty training. *Have a conversation with your teacher before your child shows up in underwear.* Your teachers will want to talk with you about your set up at home, share observations with you, and make sure we are on the same page and ready for success before the first day in undies. Give us a chance to be prepared to support you. [Read up on toileting the Montessori Way](#) so you have an understanding of the Montessori approach. Please understand that if your child is coming to school in clothes that are not conducive to toileting (tight leggings, long dress shirts, etc) we will not be able to give your child the Montessori toileting experience at school. Please follow the dress code.

### Three Year Old Phase-Out Policy

For existing ToTH families that return for a second year and those whose child will be turning three in our toddler program, the teacher might want to talk with you about how your child is doing. Not all three year olds should remain in a toddler classroom. If your child is regressing, we will discuss a way to peacefully and smoothly phase out your child. Parents and teachers together will decide the best course of action and a date will be chosen for a phase-out. It is our intention to keep every child in toddler until the end of the year if we can and we will do our best to keep a few spaces in our Primary program vacant so if children need to "move up" they can. Those spaces are limited.

### Community Expectations on Child Behavior

Living peacefully with others is an overwhelming challenge for toddlers when their strongest impulse is to express language through their bodies and not their words. Cognitively, motor messages, such as the urge to push, hit, or bite another child, override verbal messages at this developmental age. Even when words do come, sometimes they do not accurately or effectively express what the child is trying to say. Physicality is not a sign that something is wrong and toddlers will have conflict with other toddlers, especially in the beginning.

### **Persistent Disruption/Aggression**

When a toddler persists in disruptive or aggressive behavior, the teacher will shadow the child until the child has calmed and can refocus his/her attention positively. During more extended periods of unacceptable behavior, which can last for several days or even weeks, the teacher will continue to interact with the child using gentle but firm, positive support and clear, simple language. The teacher may meet with parents to discuss ways to replace the aggression with positive coping mechanisms, both inside and outside of the classroom. Parents concerned about their child's coping with their own or other children's behavior—in or out of the program—are encouraged to consult the teacher. At no point will we talk with you about another child; we will talk with you about your child.

Remember that we are all working together to encourage the children to absorb social and emotional skills. Although we will have some bumps along the road, with modeling and consistency children will be able to express themselves effectively and appropriately, eventually.

### **Ongoing Disruption/Lack of Success**

It can happen that a child's personality, in conjunction with developmental/sensorial issues, makes it hard for a child to normalize into a social environment. Although this is rather rare and we believe Montessori works for most children, it is important that parents understand that not every child who is 18-36 months is ready for a three hour session with eleven other children. Children who are lacking in autonomy, delayed in orderliness and maturity, extremely introverted, presenting with spectrum disorders, or experiencing a sensorial integration issue can sometimes find it overwhelming to be in a large group.

Whatever the case may be in each individual circumstance, the teacher will make any and all adaptations she can to do everything possible so that the child can reap the benefits of the environment and gain independence, orderliness, autonomy, etc. She will inform parents of any issues/adaptations and also give recommendations for support from home.

It is ToTH's policy to be inclusive with any special needs when we can adequately meet the child's needs. If a) adaptations have been made and b) parents have supported the teacher by following through with recommendations at home, and the child is still not gaining from the environment, the teaching team and Head of School will meet with the parents and help them find a more suitable environment, or suggest the child take a break from school. Under this circumstance whereby the criteria a) and b) have been met, ToTH will refund any money for tuition for the days not used and offer the space to another family. If any specific issue is detected and we feel a specialist is needed, we will recommend a specialist and are available to communicate with any specialists, even if the child is no longer at ToTH.

It is our belief that if the ground rules are consistently followed and positively reinforced, the necessity of external discipline will be diminished.

### **Biting**

Biting often results from frustrated, inadequate communication and/or lack of impulse control—two developmental tasks for young children. Toddlers are in the process of mastering language and often lack the words to fully express their needs, feelings, and thoughts. In the absence of words, toddlers employ their bodies; they push, grab, scratch, and sometimes bite. This is developmentally appropriate.

Because impulse control is still being developed in young children, in conjunction with lack of language skills, physicality can include using teeth to get someone's attention. Often giving words to children who have bitten or teaching them to take turns will help with the behavior. It is not unusual however, for a toddler to bite once or twice.

When a child bites another child at ToTH, our policy is that both sets of parents are informed of the incident without using the other child's name. The parents of the child who has bitten are given some advice by the classroom teaching team that speaks to the developmental tasks discussed above.

Right after the biting incident, the child who has bitten is told “I can’t let you bite”. If developmentally appropriate, the “biter” helps the “hurt child” by giving the “hurt child” an ice pack, after the wound is washed with soap and water. If there is a mark a picture is taken.

If the biting behavior continues, and this means after three bites, a meeting is then set up between the lead teacher and the parents of the child who is biting. Each time a bite occurs after the third bite the parents are called by the administrator to pick up their child for the day. The teaching team and Head of School will have a meeting with the parents to discuss how best the child can be supported at school and at home. Sometimes we suggest that the parents consider having their child evaluated for oral/motor sensory therapy and/or play therapy.

If the above procedures are not successful, the Head of School will discuss other alternatives with the parents, including the option of the child taking a break from school. We may also try a teething necklace and reduced hours.

## **Emergency Response Plan**

### **Building Evacuation**

- Take Go-kit including: class roster, parent contact information, class phone, walking rope, and first aid kit.
- Walk up K Street, toward Canal Park, away from the building.
- Call 911.
- If necessary, continue on to our safe haven.
- Safe haven: Van Ness Elementary School, 1150 5th St. SE.
- No children will be released to parents outside or on the way to the safe haven.
- No one may re-enter the building until approved by the fire department or police.

### **Sheltering in Place**

- All exterior doors will remain locked.
- Should it become necessary, children and staff will be guided to closed off interior spaces within the school, such as offices, bathrooms, or large closets.
- No one will be admitted or allowed to leave the premises until the threat is alleviated.

***ToTH’s full Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is on file with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and a copy may be provided by the Administrative Director upon request.***

### **Parent Notification During an Emergency**

All parents will be notified of an emergency as quickly as possible, first via Bloomz alert, then via text message. Please have the Bloomz app on your phone and make sure your cellular setting is “on” to receive updates when not on wifi. Set the alert to “on” so that you receive a ping or vibration any time a Bloomz message comes through. It may be necessary to first escort the children to safety and then notify parents once settled so there may be a delay in the time we are aware of the emergency and the time you are notified.

Children will only be released to people authorized to pick them up. If you would like to update your child's authorized pick list, please contact Stephanie Sarvana at [stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org).

*\*\*In cases of certain kinds of emergency, we will not notify parents at the expense of student and staff safety. If you hear of an emergency via social media or neighbor first and have not heard from us, text the classroom phone.*

**Handbook Supplement for Families Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
**(Updated: July 20, 2020)**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has shared the most recent recom



mendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DC Health and has developed guidance for child care providers operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency. ToTH has developed this COVID-19 operations handbook in order to ensure that our daily operations are in compliance with state and federal guidance.

This document is subject to change and will be updated when we receive notification of updates to the guidance from OSSE and DC Health.

For more information on the District of Columbia Government's response to coronavirus please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov). The CDC's most recent, supplemental guidance for child care providers can be accessed [here](#). This guidance will be updated as additional recommendations from the CDC or DC Health become available.

To stay tuned to updates please visit [www.toddersonthehill.org/coronavirus](https://www.toddersonthehill.org/coronavirus).

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## Part I: Updates to General Operations and Policies

### HOURS OF OPERATION

While ToTH is under stricter OSSE regulations to ensure the safety of our staff and children during the threat of COVID-19, **we will operate a shorter day.**

Primary Classroom	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Full Day Toddler Classroom	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Part Day Toddler (Morning) Classroom	9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Part Day Toddler (Afternoon) Classroom	2:30 - 5:30 p.m.

### SCHOOL CALENDAR

Our updated 2020-2021 school calendar offers families 211 days of school (208 for afternoon part day toddlers). This calendar is more condensed than the previous version and offers fewer extended breaks (the original calendar had 198 school days). Please see this [PDF](#) to view our start date, end date, and breaks. This COVID-19 operations calendar serves two purposes: This calendar gives students the best chance at getting all of their school days by ensuring that we are in school as much as possible this year and extensive breaks only happen if COVID- 19 infections happen in our community, or if surges in the greater DC community require we close ToTH. This extended calendar does not necessarily set a precedent for future years but meets new needs, this year, during COVID-19 operations.

### SCHOOL CLOSURE

In the event that ToTH has to close or take an unexpected break during the school year due to a mandate from DC Health or a resurgence of COVID-19 in the DC area, here is what you can expect:

- We have intentionally added approximately 13 days to the school calendar by removing previously scheduled break days in order to build in extra time in school in the event that we have to close for a period(s) during the year.
- We will engage in developmentally appropriate distance engagement during COVID-19 breaks. For children in the Primary program, there will be a set curriculum that will be followed and it will include take-home packets of materials and filmed lessons and demonstrations. Toddler families

will also receive take-home activity materials and have online circle times. In addition, families can expect to receive advice and consultation from ToTh teachers and administrators that is designed to help parents navigate home life with their children.

## CLASS GROUP SIZES AND RATIOS

**OSSE now requires that no more than 12 individuals (teachers and students) are clustered in one group.** During our first phase of re-opening we will ensure appropriate social distancing at ToTH by operating with 10 students and 2 teachers in each classroom. The Primary classroom will be partitioned according to OSSE guidelines to allow for a total of 20 students and 4 teachers (*Please see Primary Partitioning*). A minimum of 8 teachers will be employed at all times. One administrator will be on site at all times. As we increase our population size we will monitor staffing and adjust as necessary.

In the event that OSSE eases group size regulations, ToTH will bring in waitlisted students quickly and in such a way that 2 teachers can consistently maintain uncompromised quality. We will halt additions past what is comfortable, until we are staffed up with additional teachers.

## WAITLISTING

It will be necessary that some families who want to attend ToTH for the 2020-2021 school year, who have paid a deposit and who have asked us to keep their deposit so their space is secure will need to start later in the year once OSSE eases regulations. It could be that we will not have a space at all if our occupancy is not increased during the year. *All ToTH classes will begin with a first cohort of 8 and everyone else will remain on a waitlist. You will not be charged tuition until you are pulled off of the waitlist and given a start date. Anyone not starting in the first cohort will have prorated tuition starting on your child's first day of school. Second and subsequent cohorts must pay the full amount due before starting school and all subsequent trimesters must be paid in full by the due date. Families who cannot pay tuition on time in the full amount due will be disenrolled and a waitlisted family will be invited to start immediately.*

To help us choose who will have a space in the first cohort, we will prioritize families who:

- have a child(ren) returning to ToTH
- have siblings previously enrolled at ToTH
- have a parent employed at ToTH
- are in good financial standing with ToTH

*To create and invite second and subsequent cohorts we will choose based on keeping a balanced class regarding age and gender, to the extent possible.*

At this time, we cannot predict when school will open up for a second cohort of children. OSSE's group size requirements are not tied to the Mayor's ReOpen DC phased plan. OSSE is aligning regulations closely with recommendations from the CDC and DC Health. We cannot predict if the second cohort will bring in all waitlisted families, or if we will only be authorized to increase group size more slowly. All data coming in from OSSE that affects population size will be shared with families in a timely manner.

## STAFFING PLAN

- Our classes will be led by four teaching teams: Javacia Finney and Tierra Barnett (Part Day Toddler), Karen Solache and Zharray Johnson (Full Day Toddler), Renata Faccioli and Gladys Mariscal (Primary 1), and Morgan Brown and Sasha Sargent (Primary 2).

We remain committed to each team having at least one MACTE trained teacher (or someone in training) and all teachers who are not MACTE endorsed will participate in professional development until the time comes that they can begin the full training. Please ask [natalie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:natalie@toddlersonthehill.org) directly if you have questions about MACTE, Montessori training, ToTH's vision for co-teaching teams and a non-hierarchical system that has banished the outdated culture of titles and "leads" and "assistants."

## PRIMARY PARTITIONING AND GROUP ASSIGNMENT

OSSE's COVID-19 regulations allow us to partition our Primary classroom and create two groups of 10 students. After careful consideration, we have decided to go forward with partitioning the space as that would allow 20 families to be a part of our Montessori Primary community until group size regulations are amended.

The partition will be at least 6ft tall with no holes or gaps and have space on either end to create a "hallway" that one group may use to access the restroom/classroom door. The two groups will be kept completely separate and not share class space. The restroom will be cleaned and disinfected after each group's use.

## DAILY ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

- **Primary Arrivals/Departures**
  - Prior to arrival parents should submit the "[Daily Health Screening Form](#)" online to expedite the "ASK, ASK, LOOK" and temperature screening process (please see DAILY SYMPTOM SCREENING). Parents must take the child's temperature no more than 2 hours prior to arrival and report the temperature on the online form.
  - Children in Renata and Gladys' class will enter through the main foyer between 8:50-9:00am and children in Sasha and Morgan's class will enter through the main foyer from 9:00 to 9:10 a.m. (If you arrive later than 9:10 a.m. you may need to wait until after 9:30 a.m. to drop off your child to ensure that the Primary and Toddler children do not mix.
  - Upon arrival, parent and child should approach the main entrance, maintaining at least 6ft of distance between other families. Staff members will confirm receipt of the daily screening form, complete a visual inspection of the child, take the child's temperature with a touchless thermometer, and a teacher will escort the child to the classroom.
  - Children may be picked up any time between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Parents must call ahead to notify staff of their arrival so that the child can be escorted to the main foyer doors.

- **Full Day Toddler Arrivals/Departures**
  - Prior to arrival parents should submit the “[Daily Health Screening Form](#)” online to expedite the “ASK, ASK, LOOK” and temperature screening process. Parents must take the child’s temperature no more than 2 hours prior to arrival and report the temperature on the online form.
  - Children will enter through the classroom side door on K Street at 9-9:15a.m.
  - Upon arrival, parent and child should approach the classroom doors, maintaining at least 6ft of distance between other families. Staff members will confirm receipt of the daily screening form, complete a visual inspection of the child, take the child’s temperature with a touchless thermometer, and a teacher will escort the child to the classroom.
  - Children may be picked up any time between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. at the Full Day Toddler classroom sidedoor on K St. Parents must call ahead to notify staff of their arrival so that the child can be prepared for departure.
  
- **Part Day Toddler Arrival/Departures**
  - Prior to arrival parents should submit the “Daily Health Screening Form” online to expedite the “ASK, ASK, LOOK” and temperature screening process. Parents must take the child’s temperature no more than 2 hours prior to arrival and report the temperature on the online form.
  - Children will enter through the main foyer at 9:15-9:30 a.m. and 2:30-2:45 p.m. when no other classes are arriving.
  - Upon arrival, parent and child should approach the main entrance, maintaining at least 6ft of distance between other families. Staff members will confirm receipt of the daily screening form, complete a visual inspection of the child, take the child’s temperature with a touchless thermometer, and a teacher will escort the child to the classroom.
  - Parents/caregivers should be lined up (maintaining 6ft distance) at the front entrance by 12:15 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. Children will be escorted to the door individually.

## IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH FORMS

There has been no change to the OSSE and ToTH requirement that every child must be up-to-date on vaccinations before starting school. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant decrease in the number of children up-to-date on their vaccination schedule. This is occurring in DC, regionally and nationally. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the federal Vaccines for Children program is reporting a 70 percent decrease in the number of immunizations ordered by medical providers and administered to families over the past few months.

**Each child must be current on immunizations, as a condition of enrollment. We must receive each child’s up-to-date immunization records and completed health and dental forms by August 21, 2020.** If your child attended ToTH last year their health and dental forms on file may be up-to-date. Please contact Ila Furman at [ila@toddersonthehill.org](mailto:ila@toddersonthehill.org) to confirm your child’s status. Health and dental forms expire annually and must be completed again and resubmitted upon expiration. This is a requirement of the Office of the State Superintendent for Education. All questions related to the immunization requirement should be discussed with our Admissions Director, Ila Furman.

Families may have apprehension with scheduling routine vaccination and preventative health visits. This is understandable in a time of uncertainty and rapidly changing events. District health providers have altered their operations to safely provide care. Examples include offering telemedicine, accepting vaccine-only appointments during certain hour blocks, separating sick and well patients, wearing personal protective equipment, and recommending that only one parent accompany their children to appointments.

If you are hesitant to go to your health care provider, please reach out to your pediatrician and ask about the safety precautions they have put in place.

- Resources:
  - [DC Pediatric Immunization Locations](#) and a [search tool](#) to find a primary care center in DC.
  - American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizing the importance of receiving care during the COVID-19 pandemic (available here in: [English](#), [Spanish](#)).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT

All enrolled families will be required to submit a signed “COVID-19 Acknowledgement and Agreement” form to affirm their understanding and acceptance of new health and safety policies and procedures at ToTH Montessori. This will be due by August 21, 2020 or your child’s assigned start date.

## Part II: Health and Safety Guidelines

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

We will ensure appropriate physical distancing at ToTH by operating with 10 students and 2 teachers in each class. Other measures include:

- Restricting all outside visitors including parents, siblings, nannies, DPR staff, volunteers, delivery persons, etc. and allowing only ToTH children and ToTH staff to enter the ToTH suite.
- Keeping the same group of children and staff together each day (as opposed to rotating teachers or children);
- Each group/classroom will not share spaces (i.e. classrooms, hallway, gymnasium, playground)
- Maximizing space between individuals in a classroom, including while at tables and in group and individual activities;
- Spreading children out during circle time;
- Staggering drop-off and pick-up times and locations so that groups do not mix:
- Parents will adhere to door-side drop-off and pick-up of children and will maintain at least 6ft of distance between families;
- Allowing administrative staff to telework, leaving one administrator in the office at any given time;
- No storage of items such as strollers, bikes, scooters, car seats, diaper bags, etc. will be allowed inside ToTH. Bike racks are available outside of the ToTH entrance and the Capper Recreation Center entrance.

## HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS

Children and staff at high-risk for contracting or experiencing severe illness due to COVID-19 must **consult** with their medical provider before participating in congregated child care. This includes people with:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic Lung Disease
- COPD
- Moderate to Severe Asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromised conditions
- Obesity
- Severe obesity (>40 BMI)
- Pregnancy
- Sick cell disease
- Smoking
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Liver Disease

If your child has one of the conditions listed above, please submit a signed doctor's note that expressly clears the child to participate in group child care to [ila@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:ila@toddlersonthehill.org). Any parent or household member who has a condition not on this list, but is still concerned about their safety, is encouraged to connect with their medical provider.

## DAILY SYMPTOM SCREENING

Children and staff will be screened for the presence of respiratory symptoms or fever upon arrival to the facility each day using the process below. *Currently we are exploring ways to make this screening process efficient, such as having parents submit answers before arrival via a webform or phone call.*

**CONFIRM:** Parents/guardians must check their child's temperature, and staff must check their own temperature, two hours or less before arrival to school, and report that number to staff members upon arrival.

**ASK:** Parents/guardians and staff will be asked about whether the child or staff member has experienced one or more of the following symptoms that has not been previously evaluated by a healthcare provider:

- Fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) or chills
- Cough
- Runny nose/Congestion
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea

- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- Poor feeding or poor appetite
- New loss of taste or smell
- Or any other symptom of not feeling well.

**ASK:** Parents/guardians and staff will be asked if they or their child have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 or a person who is awaiting COVID-19 test results.

**LOOK:** Child care staff will visually inspect each child and staff member for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

**Any child or staff member meeting “Yes” for any of the above “ASK, ASK, LOOK” criteria in the program’s daily health screen shall not be admitted. Such families or staff shall be instructed to call their health care provider to determine next steps.**

Once the child or staff has followed the steps outlined by their health care provider, including potential COVID-19 testing if necessary, they may return to care as long as they provide a written or verbal assurance that they are cleared by the health care provider to do so. ***Anyone awaiting a COVID-19 test result should stay home until a final result is received.***

#### EXCLUSION AND DISMISSAL CRITERIA

***Exclusion Criteria:*** Children and staff should **stay home, or not be admitted**, if:

- Have had a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or any of the symptoms listed above in the “Daily Health Screening” section of this guidance in the last 24 hours.
- Are confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Have been in close contact in the last 10 days with an individual confirmed to have COVID-19.<sup>6</sup>
- Are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or have a close contact who is awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- Have traveled in the last 14 days to any place other than Maryland, Virginia or a low-risk state, country, or territory, unless they received a negative COVID-19 PCR test after limiting daily activities for at least three to five days after returning from travel.

Please see the [Illness Decision Tree](#) and the [Return to School Decision Tree](#) documents for further instructions.

Recommendations regarding these timelines are evolving, and guidelines will be updated if further information becomes available from DC Health and the CDC.

***Dismissal Criteria:*** If a child or staff member develops a fever or other signs of illness, we will

follow [OSSE Licensing Guidelines](#) regarding the isolation and dismissal of children and staff.

- For children, a ToTH administrator will immediately isolate the child from other children, notify the child's parent/guardian of the symptoms and that the child needs to be picked up *as soon as possible*, and immediately follow cleaning and disinfecting procedures for any area and toys with which the child was in contact.
- For staff, a ToTH administrator will send the staff member home immediately and follow cleaning and disinfecting procedures for any area, toys and equipment with which the staff member was in contact.

## POTENTIAL EXPOSURE AND COVID-19 REPORTING

Please consult the [COVID-19 Symptom, Exposure, Positive Test Protocol](#) document. If ToTH a child or staff member at ToTH has tested COVID-19 positive, the following procedures must be followed:

- Parent or staff member will message Stephanie Sarvana on Bloomz, send an email to [stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org) or call 520-237-3211 to report test results.
- Staff or students diagnosed with COVID-19 should not enter ToTH until they have been cleared from isolation.
- ToTH will submit an Unusual Incident Report to OSSE.
- ToTH will notify DC Health
- An investigator from DC Health will follow-up within 24 hours .
- In consultation with DC Health, ToTH will have a notification process in place to share the following with staff and parents:
  - Notification to those staff and families of children in close contact with the individual and will state the quarantine requirement; and
  - Notification to the entire program that there was a COVID-19 positive case, steps that will be taken (e.g., cleaning and disinfection).
  - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
  - Referral to the Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov); and
  - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing).
- DC Health will instruct child care facilities on dismissals and other safety precautions in the event a known COVID-19 individual came in close contact with others at the facility.
- In the event ToTH closes, we will submit an Unusual Incident Report to [osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov](mailto:osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov) and contact our designated licensing specialist at OSSE.

### ***Cleaning, Sanitization, and Disinfection of Affected Spaces***

In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case in a child or staff member, ToTH will immediately follow any steps outlined by DC Health as well as cleaning, disinfection and sanitization guidance from the CDC, [linked here](#):

- If seven days or fewer have passed since the person who is sick entered the facility, ToTH will follow these steps:

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning or disinfecting to allow respiratory droplets to settle.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas.
- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is sick entered ToTH, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

## NON-MEDICAL (CLOTH) FACE COVERINGS

All ToTH staff must wear a non-medical (cloth) face covering at all times while providing care. If a staff member is unable to wear a face covering for a medical reason they may be able to get a waiver from OSSE to participate in congregate child care by receiving a written note from their health care provider. Staff without a medical clearance from a health care provider must wear a face covering or should not participate in congregate child care.

The CDC recommends wearing non-medical face coverings in public settings and in circumstances in which physical (social) distancing is difficult, including in child care facilities, when feasible. Further guidance from CDC on the use of face coverings, including instructions on how to make and safely remove a cloth covering, is available [here](#).

**All parents and caregivers must wear a face covering during drop-off and pick up times.**

**Children *above the age of two* are required to wear non-medical face coverings in the child care setting.**

- Parents/guardians should wear non-medical face coverings any time they interact with ToTH staff, including for drop-off and pick-up.
- Children age 2 and older should wear a face covering, when feasible, and if deemed developmentally appropriate by the parent/guardian and child care provider. *Such children must be able to safely use, avoid touching, and remove the covering without assistance.*

Instances when face coverings do not need to be worn:

- Non-medical face coverings should not be placed on children age 2 and younger, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Face coverings should not be worn by children during naptime.
- Ensure additional protocols are in place to support the safe use of clean masks.
- Staff and children wearing face coverings are to bring multiple clean coverings each day, as feasible.
- Staff and children must exercise caution when removing the covering, always store it out of reach of other children, and wash hands immediately after removing.
- The benefit of such a face covering is to limit the spread of secretions by stopping individuals from touching their mouth or nose, limiting spread if an individual has COVID-19 and limit individuals from contracting COVID-19 if around a COVID-19 positive person. **If children play**

**with their or others' face coverings or if they are not removed and stored safely, their use should be discontinued.**

## HYGIENE

ToTH will follow the below hygiene practices to help keep child care facilities clean and safe.

- Teach and model good hygiene practices, including covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or tissue and washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- Hand-washing must take place frequently throughout the day, including:
  - At the entrance to the facility;
  - Next to parent sign-in sheets, including sanitary wipes to clean pens between uses;
  - After going to the bathroom or changing a diaper;
  - Before eating, handling food, or feeding a child;
  - After blowing or supporting a child with blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing;
  - Before and after staff gives medication to a child;
  - After handling wastebaskets or garbage; and
- If soap and water are not available, and the hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol is to be used. This will only be used by a child under very close observation from a staff person or parent/guardian and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Signage will be placed in every classroom and near every sink reminding staff of hand-washing protocols.

Added safety measures:

- Parents are required to put their child's long hair back in a ponytail or braid to ensure long hair is not touching their faces, mouth, surfaces, or other children.
- Parents must dress their children in simple clothing that doesn't require a teacher to tie bows, clip buckles, etc. Loose extra fabric, jewelry, head bands, bows, and other adornments that will require reclipping or touching are not welcome at school.
- In Primary, if your child cannot manage it on her own (shoes, belt, buttons, etc) the article of clothing is not welcome at school. If your child comes to school in something that requires an adult's management your child will be asked to change into their extra clothes/shoes; or the parent will be called to come bring appropriate clothes.

## CLEANING, DISINFECTION, AND SANITIZATION

All child care providers must regularly clean, disinfect and sanitize surfaces, toys and materials per [District guidance](#) on cleaning and disinfecting and the [CDC's updated guidance for childcare providers](#).

Emphasis will be placed on regular cleaning and disinfection of **high-touch surfaces**, including but not

limited to door handles, chairs, light switches, toilets, playground structures, and faucets. Learning **materials**, including those used indoors and outdoors, must be frequently cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

- Materials that have been in children's mouths or soiled by bodily secretions will be immediately set aside. These materials will be cleaned and sanitized by a staff member wearing gloves, before being used by another child.
- Machine washable toys should be used by only one child, and laundered in between uses.
- Mats/cots and bedding will be individually labeled and stored.
- Mats/cots will be placed at least six feet apart while in use and cleaned and sanitized between uses.
- Bedding will be used only by one child and will be sent home to be washed weekly.
- For all cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting products, we will follow the manufacturer's instructions for concentration, application method, contact time, and drying time prior to use by a child.
- ToTH will place signage in every classroom reminding staff of cleaning protocols.
- Playground structures must be included as part of routine cleaning, especially high touch surfaces, e.g., handle bars, but do not need to be disinfected.

## MEALS

ToTH will serve snack and lunch according to the following the physical distancing and hygiene guidance above and per the CDC:

- Lunches are to be brought from home daily in easy-to-open lunch boxes or containers to minimize the need for staff assistance;
- ToTH will space children out during snack and lunch;
- Meals will be served individually; there will be no family style meals, sharing of utensils, or food preparation works;
- Children will not share food;
- Children and staff will wash hands before and after eating, and will not share utensils, cups, or plates;
- Staff should wash hands before and after preparing food, and after helping children to eat;
- Tables and chairs will be cleaned and sanitized before and after the meal;
- If handling individual lunch boxes, staff must wash their hands between the handling of each lunch box. Food items should be removed from the lunch box and placed with the child, or plated separately, and then the lunch box returned to the child's cubby; and
- Observe all other local and federal food safety guidelines.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have questions relating to this guidance please contact Stephanie Sarvana, Administrative Director, Licensing & Compliance at (520) 237-3211 or [stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org](mailto:stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org)

**For resources and information about the District of Columbia Government's coronavirus (COVID-19) response and recovery efforts, please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).**