



# Alternatives for Children

- ▶ ZOOM MEETING AGENDA & DIRECTIONS

ALL meeting attendees have been muted upon entry.

Please leave your mic off and turn off your camera.

The “CHAT BOX” will be OPEN and monitored for your feedback throughout the presentation. Questions will not be answered during the presentation.

Questions submitted in advance have been answered and will be covered at the end of the presentation.

Additional questions, time permitting will also be answered at the end of the meeting.

After each of the scheduled meetings a Q & A will be posted on our website.

[www.alternativesforchildren.org](http://www.alternativesforchildren.org)



# Alternatives for Children

REOPENING PLAN 20-21



# REOPENING PLAN OVERVIEW

~ **The health and safety of our children and staff is our PRIORITY!**

Each of the presentations will be the same content with questions and answers to follow.

The full “Reopening Plan” is posted on our website and the presentation will highlight some of the key points.

Your feedback is important to us. Thank you in advance.



# BLUEPRINT for REOPENING

~NYS Department of Health Guidance document:

“Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction PreK to Gr.12 during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency”

~ NYS Education Dept. Guidance document:

“Recovering, Rebuilding & Renewing: the Spirit of NY’s Reopening Guidance”

~ CDC & DOH Protocols

~ Governor’s Directives.



# Reopening Schools/Closure of Schools

- ▶ Schools can reopen for “in person” given the Daily Infection Rate remains below 5% using a 14 day average. This will be calculated by the State/ Local Dept. of Health.
- ▶ School will close their facilities if the infection rate exceeds 9% using a 7 day average.
- ▶ The Governor could also direct schools to close via Executive Order.
- ▶ Alternatives for Children will close its facility, if needed, with coordinated planning with the Department of Health.
- ▶ Other partial close downs can occur for needed disinfecting.



# REOPENING SCHOOLS/CLOSURE

► Alternatives for Children will “REOPEN” and parents will have the

OPTION:

FIVE DAYS IN-PERSON

OR

FIVE DAYS REMOTE ONLY

NO Hybrid will be offered at this time.



# OPEN/CLOSURE of SCHOOLS

- **Important**

- Reopening is a **fluid plan**, we may need to “**alternate**” between In-person and remote learning throughout the year!

Information regarding school closures will be on website, Class Dojo, via email or phone call.

NOTE:

If a parent selects remote and wants to switch to “in person” we will need a minimum of 10 days to process the request.

Transportation must be processed through the district/county and may take in excess of 2 weeks.



# Health & Safety Procedures

- Staff and Parents as Partners
- Comprehensive Staff Training on health & safety protocols, along with mandated compliance.
- Parent expectation to follow rules/guidance in parent packs, posted on website, school fact sheets and notifications.
- All staff will complete a daily health check PRIOR to arrival
- Parents will complete a health check on our Brightwheel application upon drop off and temperatures will be taken.
- Daily health checks will occur 2x per day, including temperature check (100\*)



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# PHYSICAL & SOCIAL DISTANCING

- ▶ Face Covering: Employees mandated to wear at all times, children strongly encouraged to wear masks to the maximum extent feasible.
- ▶ Classroom Cohorts: class will remain intact & have minimal or little contact with another group of children.
- ▶ Teaching/therapists teams will be limited to minimize staff in/out of rooms
- ▶ Social Distancing will be maintained to the maximum extent practicable.
- ▶ Non-essential, community use areas have been closed
- ▶ Meetings with districts/parents/teams will be held remotely(as feasible)
- ▶ Number of people entering the building STRICTLY limited



# SCREENING/TESTING/CONTACT TRACING

- ▶ Screening: daily assessment of staff and children
- ▶ Training: signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- ▶ Log: on staff health survey, on student daily health check, on OCFS Child Care Program Tracker Form for essential visitors
- ▶ Report: any changes that may occur during the day to nurse/Human Resources/parents (i.e. no fever in AM, fever later in day)
  
- ▶ Report: parents have the responsibility to call the school nurse if their child becomes ill at home or if their child will not be attending school (for whatever reason)
- ▶ Report: any positive COVID-19 cases and provide documentation (assuring confidentiality) to assist in any contact tracing efforts to local Dept. of Health



# SCREENING/TESTING/CONTACT TRACING

- ▶ Procedures for a child developing any virus type symptoms during the day
  - ~immediate notification of the nurse
  - ~separation of the child from classmates, into identified “isolation area”
  - ~parent, designated caregiver will retrieve child from designated area
  - ~isolation area will be cleaned & disinfected per established protocols

A staff member who is experiencing a change in reported symptoms will be sent home.



# Return to School Post-Illness

- ▶ Alternatives for Children will follow the CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school
- ▶ No fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines and feeling well for 24 hours
- ▶ Diagnosed with another condition AND has a clearance note stating such from a health care provider.

HOWEVER: if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test of their symptoms OR does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should stay home until:

- ~ 10 days since the individual first had symptoms
- ~ 3 days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever medication)
- ~the individual's symptoms have improved



# RETURN TO SCHOOL

- ▶ Alternatives for Children will require that children/staff exposed to COVID-19 complete quarantine before returning (14 days) to in-person instruction
- ▶ If a parent/guardian of child in our program must be isolated because they have been tested for or exhibited symptoms of COVID -19 they cannot enter the school for any reason including picking up their child.
- ▶ Staff must follow the NYS DOH “Guidance for Public & Private Employees returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure”.
- ▶ All children/staff testing positive for COVID-19 must return with health care provider documentation of clearance.



# Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Adherence to CDC, NYSDOH & NYSED requirements
- Cleaning and Disinfecting protocols for each area (classrooms, therapy areas, bathrooms, playgrounds) have been established
- Cleaning schedules have been increased and will be recorded on logs; during the day as well as the evening.
- Cleaning supplies are checked that they are safe for children and use school facilities. Ample supplies have been purchased.
- Cleaning staff have been hired to assist in maintaining a clean & safe environment.
- Deep Cleaning Protocols have been established, occur regularly & are mandatory for any “exposed” areas.

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# School Emergency Response Drills

Alternatives for Children will maintain standard operations & procedures without deviating, to the maximum extent practicable, from current NYSED and NYS OCFS requirements.

- ~ Fire Drills and Evacuation
- ~ Lock Down
- ~ Shelter in Place



# FACILITIES

- ▶ Alternatives for Children has reviewed all of its facilities to ensure the safety and health of the children & staff.
- ▶ Measures have been implemented in accordance with requirements aimed at reducing any spread of COVID-19.
- ▶ Lexan barriers have been installed at security/front desk stations other high use areas.
- ▶ Ventilation systems have all been reviewed. Individual units cleaned, HVAC systems have had H1 grade air filters installed & schedule of changing filters enhanced.
- ▶ Water filtration system installed with touchless features.



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# Child Nutrition/Snack/Lunch

- ▶ Children will have snack/lunch within their classroom.
- ▶ Mealtimes will be staggered, social distancing
- ▶ Individual snacks served, to avoid sharing
- ▶ Disposable plates, napkins, silverware
- ▶ Utilization of gloves when handling/delivering or providing any food items
- ▶ Cleaning & Sanitizing of table and surface areas
- ▶ Parents asked to send in lunch in paper disposable bags, if possible, with child's name clearly indicated.



# Transportation

- ▶ Busing: if your child is to ride the bus this would be noted on the IEP.
- ▶ Driving: if you plan to drive your child please refer to the Reopening Plan for specific pick-up/drop-off procedures at your school. Parent information to follow over the next two weeks via mail.
- ▶ Driving: please notify your district if you want to apply for “Parent Mileage Reimbursement” and suspend transportation.
- ▶ If you suspend transportation, it does take a minimum of 2 or more weeks to have reinstated.
- ▶ Please be patient with drop-off & pick up as it will take longer as we implement Brightwheel, and all of our safety and security measures. Parents may not come into the building for drop off/pick up.
- ▶ Brightwheel parent information must be entered for ALL children. Parents will receive an email invitation to Brightwheel within the next 2 weeks.



# Social/Emotional Well-Being

- ▶ Alternatives for Children understands the importance of mental and emotional well-being for students/families/staff.
- ▶ Social-emotional objectives have been identified including:
  - assessment/caring for the mental health/well-being
  - resources available
  - ongoing training and supports
  - social skills groups

Parent Training can continue remotely if designated on the child's IEP.



# SCHOOL MODELS

- ▶ In-Person: Five Days, classroom instruction, therapeutic and support services will be rendered in accordance with the IEP.

OR

- ▶ Remote: Five Days, classroom instruction, therapeutic and support services will be rendered remotely in accordance with the IEP.

Class Dojo will continue to the platform utilized, along with ZOOM sessions.

**NOTE:**

ALL families will be invited to create a Class Dojo account, in the event in-person needs to move to remote learning and tele-therapy.



# Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism

- ▶ Student attendance will be documented daily, in-person or remote.
- ▶ Documentation regarding participation and engagement will be collected.
- ▶ Alternatives for Children will contact families regarding attendance to determine reason for absence/barriers to participation.
- ▶ Chronic absenteeism will be monitored and assistance provided as feasible.
- ▶ Chronic absenteeism, lack of participation must be reported to the child's respective school district Committee on Preschool Special Education.



# Technology

- ▶ Alternatives for Children, has made improvements to its Information Technology program & systems.
- ▶ Educational Technology staff can assist families with regard to utilization of software and has identified multiple means of access to instruction via the family's iPhone, Android, iPad, Laptop, Desktop.
- ▶ Confidentiality is imperative and expected to be maintained.
- ▶ ALL families will have a Class Dojo account activated in the event instruction shifts to remote learning.



# Teaching/Learning/IEP Goals

- ▶ A continuity of learning plan is key for all children.
- ▶ Instruction is aligned with the NYSED Pre-K Learning Standards.
- ▶ Each child's Individualized Educational Plan "IEP" will be implemented.
- ▶ All programs & services are rendered by licensed and certified staff.
- ▶ Alternatives for Children has designed our plan to enable transitioning between in-person and remote, as directed by State/local officials.
- ▶ Communication is vital as we forge ahead to reopen and remain open.
- ▶ Check website, emails, newsletters, Class Dojo for important information.



# Question and Answers



Q. Will classroom teachers conduct live sessions if we go full remote?

A. Yes

Q. Can teachers/therapists wear transparent face mask or face shields instead of cloth masks?

A. Yes, while 2 cloth face coverings will be provided, staff have the option of wearing transparent face masks of their choice. Face shields require a face mask be worn underneath and cannot be used alone. Face shields and clear transparent masks have been provided to our speech pathologists.

Q. Will children be allowed to interact and play together?

A. Yes, within their cohort group (classroom) and with wearing of recommended mask(s). Staff will reinforce mask wearing with children, ie. Social stories, modeling behavior.





# Question and Answer

Q. Will AFC utilize UV light as a component of a ventilation system?

A. No. Each HVAC or air-conditioning unit was assessed. Upgraded filters installed and will be changed on a more frequent basis. Individual AC units cleaned on a prescribed schedule.

Q. Will AFC sanitize the pt/ot (gym areas)?

A. Yes, the gym areas will be thoroughly cleaned. Products have been purchased that will be utilized to clean, after each use, the mat or equipment. Additional staff has been hired to assist with disinfecting and cleaning.

Q. Will all facilities have a “deep clean” prior to the start of the school year?

A. Yes, all facilities will have had a deep clean prior to opening and on a more frequent basis. Each facility will be thoroughly cleaned each evening as well as during the course of the day on prescribed schedules and logged.



# Question & Answers



Q. How long will pick up and drop off take if I am driving my child?

A. All parents, regardless of driving or utilizing the bus must use our newly purchased “Brightwheel” application. Parent contact information must be entered in advance which will help expedite drop off/pick up.

Additional staff have been hired to assist with the volume of parents electing to drive their child.



# Question & Answers

Q. Can parents elect to change their child from remote to in-person or visa versa?

A. Yes, Alternatives for Children will work with families to accommodate their child's needs. However, appropriate notification must occur to your child's building administrator and will take a minimum of two weeks to facilitate.

Q. Can parents change their child's school time to better accommodate their needs to limit exposure?

A. Any change in program hours requires the approval of the respective school district Committee on Preschool Special Education. Alternatives for Children is not permitted to change the student's IEP which includes the program placement, length of day, frequency & duration of services, etc.



# Question & Answers

Q. When do parents need to make a final decision regarding remote or in person school for their child?

A. Classes are being scheduled as are therapeutic sessions, so it would be advisable to make the decision as soon as possible given the start of the school year of 9/8. Please contact your building administrator to advise if you have not done so.

Q. Will visitors be permitted in buildings?

A. Only essential visitors with scheduled appointments who will be screened upon arrival.

Q. If parent training is on the IEP can it be delivered remotely by phone or ZOOM?

A. Yes. You will be contacted by our staff assigned.



# Questions and Answers

Q. How are therapies going to be handled, in class, in gym or speech office?

A. As therapies are being scheduled we are limiting the number of therapists assigned to each room to minimize the number of staff entering each room. When therapy can be provided in class we are encouraging. When the child is removed for therapy, there are cleaning and disinfecting protocols for gym and office areas that are prescribed and cleaning products accessible. Again, additional staff have been hired to assist.



# Question & Answers

Q. Are schools responsible for contact tracing?

A. The local Department of Health is responsible, however, Alternatives for Children will work collaboratively should any staff or student test positive.

Q. Will contract tracers release the name of the child or staff that have tested positive?

A. No, the information is confidential. However, they will tell the potentially exposed persons that they were exposed. At which time, quarantine guidelines are mandated along with cleaning & disinfecting protocols.

Q. Do students or staff coming back from vacation (or any reason) from states on Governor Cuomo's travel advisory need to quarantine?

A. Yes for 14 days, no exception.



# Questions and Answers



Q. Must parents notify the school if someone in their household has tested positive for COVID-19?

A. Yes, if the student lives in that household they are considered exposed and should be placed on quarantine.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Will there be team meeting prior to the start of the school year or early in the school year?

A. Alternatives for Children staff are available to answer questions regarding your child once school starts. Please advise your child's teacher if you have any concerns you want shared with the team. Parent teacher "formal" conferences are typically held in October to review IEP goals and objectives. These meetings will be held virtually as of this date.

Q. Will children and staff with a suspected cold be allowed to attend school?

A. We are trying to be as cautious as possible. Please do not come to work or send your child to school if one is running a temperature 100+ degrees and exhibiting multiple signs of COVID-19. If a parent is concerned it is advised to take the child to a health care provider.





# Questions and Answers

Q. Will lunch be provided at Dix Hills?

A. Yes, only at Dix Hills as we participate in Early Head Start/Head Start at that site.

Q. Why was a decision made not to offer a Hybrid Model?

A. Many school districts are offering Hybrid Models simply because they cannot manage the volume of children in the building and the space required for each child. At Alternatives for Children we offer small class sizes to begin with so we do meet the square footage requirements for each child/classroom.

Q. Will there be an online portal to post any absences?

A. No, not at this time. The school nurse *MUST* be called.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Are there metrics in place that would cause Alternatives for Children to move all students to remote learning?

A. Yes, we are working collaboratively with the Department of Health regarding such metrics. For example, if one class had a positive case that class would be moved to remote, quarantine recommended according to CDC guidelines, deep cleaning and disinfecting of classroom (& associated areas) but the entire school would not close. If there was a rise in cases in the particular school building, in collaboration with DOH, the school may be required to close.

Q. Will there be a lag time if the school were to close?

A. The lag time should be minimized given we now have experience with remote learning. DOJO accounts will have been set up and simply need activation. Schedules of therapies will try to mimic times of those “in-person”.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Has the “open door” policy changed for parents to visit the school changed since COVID-19?

A. Yes this policy is temporarily suspended. Appointments must be made in advance and will be strictly limited.

Q. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 will notification only come from the Health Department? The concern of the delays the Health Department may have given their volume.

A. Communication is vital. Timely communication is extremely vital! Please call us if you, your immediate household members or child tests positive so we can advise (anonymously) staff and other families/children may have been exposed. We at Alternatives absolutely plan on notifying parents and staff if we are made aware of a positive case.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Can you give more information about mask breaks?

A. It is recommended that children wear masks to the extent practicable. Each teacher/therapist will determine, based on the individual needs of the child, when each child could take a break. Creative ideas are underway! Outdoor play time is also an option.

Q. If a parent is dropping off to school with another child in the car can the child remain in the car, will staff come to the car?

A. Please refer to the site Drop-Off/Pick -up Procedure that was in your Parent Pack. If staff are meeting you at the car to retrieve the student and you have another child in the car with you, yes the other child may remain in the car.



# Question and Answers

Q. What measures are taken for potty breaks?

A. Each site is different, as some facilities have bathrooms within the classrooms and others sites have bathrooms throughout the buildings.

Cleaning and disinfecting protocols for every bathroom will be followed and extra cleaning staff hired to assist. Each teacher/therapist will establish times where cohort groups do not intermingle with other classes when there are shared bathrooms. Hand washing after toileting is already a practice at AFC and is closely monitored by staff.

Q. If a child is out due to an ear infection, causing a fever of 100+ do we still require clearance from a doctor to return?

A. Yes for the health and safety of all.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Was the maximum capacity allowed in the school changed due to COVID at all? Are there less people/child/staff allowed in the school?

A. No, all sites are well within their permitted capacity so we did not have to change. Further there will be families that have chosen remote for their child and thereby the numbers reduced as a result of this decision.

Q. How regularly will staff be tested for COVID-19?

A. Staff are not mandated to be tested for COVID-19 unless they are symptomatic. When any staff or student presents with COVID-19 symptoms they must be tested and show evidence of a negative test result and full clearance issued by a health care provider before returning to school.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Will the employees conducting check-in and drop-off be the same daily?

A. Employees will be assigned for check-in/drop-off, and trained on the Brightwheel application, temperature check process and documentation. These individuals will be provided and utilize proper PPE during this transition. Handwashing/sanitizing will occur.

Q. What measures are being taken to clean/minimize sharing of materials and surfaces in the gym both at the end of and within the school day?

A. Therapies are provided on a one to one basis, in OT and PT, under the direction of a licensed physical or occupational therapist. Therapists have all been trained on COVID-19 cleaning, disinfecting protocols. Mats will be cleaned after each use. Equipment utilized, ie vests, will be cleaned between use as well. Additional staff both day and evening hired to assist.



# Questions and Answers

Q. What specific measures are being taken to clean shared craft materials/toys/books within the classroom, within the school day?

A. Individual bins have been purchased for each child. Each child will have a bin clearly labeled with their name and it will contain their own individual supplies. Teachers will have limited items available in the room accessible and these will be disinfected according to protocols established.

Q. Where will specials be provided?

A. All specials will be in the classroom cohort group.

Q. Is Alternatives required to do the virtual learning if the school/class is shut down?

A. Alternatives for Children will provide remote learning and teletherapy should a closure occur. Students are expected to attend remote learning and attendance will be monitored.





# Questions and Answers?

Q. Will logs be kept of the cleaning so we know what is done?

A. Logs will be kept as they will be inspected by the regulatory agencies.

Q. How often will the filters be changed?

A. We have established maintenance contracts for a minimum of quarterly.

Q. How many children will be in a class?

A. The number of children in the class is determined by your child's IEP.

Q. Can I send a thermos for hot lunch? Is there a refrigerator for lunch?

A. We would prefer disposable containers, however thermos containers are permissible-please thoroughly clean and disinfect any containers/lunch boxes. In order to minimize contact contamination, all of your child's items sent from home will be kept in their own cubby (utilize an ice pack if needed).



# Questions and Answers

Q. Is the plan fully approved by NYSED?

A. It is our understanding that schools have been contacted if additional information or changes were required. Alternatives for Children did submit our response completed as required, no contact regarding changes to date.

Q. How many children will use the gym at once?

A. Difficult to answer as it could be site specific, and based on whether the service can be provided in the classroom or gym area.

Q. CDC recommends against the use of masks with exhalation vents or valves because they do not prevent the spread of the virus- will staff be allowed to use these?

A. Staff will be provided with cloth coverings. Disposable are available. Nurses will have N-95 and speech therapists, face shields and cloth coverings. All staff have been trained on what face coverings are acceptable, how to wear & launder.



# Questions and Answers

Q. Will the playground be open?

A. Yes all of the playgrounds will be open. Playgrounds will be sanitized with an EPA approved cleaner/disinfectant Petra fogger.

Q. During drop off will children only be taken out of the car when they reach the main entrance so the parent could see them enter the building?

A. We cannot realistically guarantee this direct visual and will ultimately be determined by the volume of cars dropping off. See parent pack for information.

Q. Are children permitted to use hand sanitizers?

A. OCFS, CDC, DOH recommends hand washing. All bathrooms and classrooms have sinks for handwashing. Hand sanitizing stations will be located throughout our facilities. We ask that you do not send hand sanitizers with your child as they contain alcohol and are dangerous if ingested by a child. The alcohol content in hand sanitizer is flammable and we have placed our station in accordance with fire code regulations. Again, we do not encourage hand sanitizers for children.



# Questions and Answers

Q. How does Brightwheel and the new pick-up process confirm the identity of the person leaving with my child before they leave.

A. You choose and input who to authorize in the Brightwheel app. The persons you have authorized will be the only ones permitted to pick up your child. Each child will be assigned a “unique” four (4) digit code, which only you can share with the individuals you have authorized for dropping off/pick of your child.

Q. So that I can familiarize my child with it at home, what language will staff be using to remind students of social distancing?

A. Staff will utilize “common Language” when teaching/talking about physical distance. Social stories will be used to reinforce this language ie. Stretching arms, airplane arms.



# Questions and Answers



Q. What is the process for early pick-up?

A. If you know in advance that you need to pick up your child early, please send a note with child stating what time you will be coming to pick them up. When you arrive, call the office and staff will bring the child to the door and check them out on the Bightwheel app.



# Questions and Answers

Q. I understand that masks are encouraged for students. If a child removes or needs help repositioning will staff help them? Will students be guided to wear them or is it considered a family's choice and if a child shows up without a mask it isn't an issue? I am concerned that some parents aren't even trying to get their child to wear one.

A. Again masks for children are encouraged. In the classroom, social stores will be shared with children on face coverings and the reasons we wear them. If it is your choice that your child wear a mask, staff will assist them throughout the day.

Q. My son cannot tolerate a mask. I know they are not required, but I hear in another preschools mask wearing was incorporated into their child's therapy and I am very much against this.

A. Face coverings are not required for a child who is unable to medically tolerate such a covering, including students where such covering would impair their health or mental health; or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction. Please send a note to your child's teacher/administrator if your child cannot wear a mask.



# Questions and Answers

Q. How can “Parents as Partners” help keep our children & staff safe?

A. Keep you child(ren) home when they are sick or exhibiting any symptoms

Send your child with a mask and practice wearing a mask at home

Maintain communication with your child's team

Continuously check your email and our website or Class Dojo for info.

Do your part and adhere to social distancing guidelines, wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, washing hands frequently, etc.

**IT IS ALL OF OUR JOBS TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN & STAFF SAFE!!!!**