

Transitioning Back to School 2020-2021

Promoting Independence

While our program has always promoted independence, we now also consider it a hygiene issue. Self-sufficient children allow teachers to decrease direct contact throughout the day. Though younger students will require some teacher support as motor skills develop, we can set them up for success through planning ahead and practice! Our team realizes the following recommendations will take time and energy at home. We greatly appreciate your efforts in helping keep our classrooms as hygienic as possible.

Packing lunches

- Practice opening and closing your child's lunchbox at home, as well as the containers used to store food.
- Make this into a game by hiding toys inside the containers, or timing your child to see how fast they can open everything.
- Pre-open packaged food such as granola bars and cheese sticks.



Gear

- Practice opening/closing zippers or buttons on gear.
- We recommend water bottles with a straw, so teachers do not need to open lids.
- Celebrate progress made with zippers, packing gear into backpacks, etc.
- Dress up a stuffed animal in outer layers.



Outdoor toileting

- We encourage parents of girls to practice outdoor toileting in your backyard!
- Teach them the following method: find a tree branch to hold onto; pull down layers to knees; squat low with feet wide; use one arm to hold layers out of way; do an air dry "wiggle" before redressing.



Face Masks

We want to ensure children (ages 5+) are comfortable both wearing masks at school and having their teachers in masks. Here are some ideas for your family to make this transition easier.

Check out Conscious Discipline's [helpful video and resources](#), and The American Academy of Pediatrics [guide](#) for how to talk about face masks and choosing the right mask for your child.



Try out this rhyme:

*I have a mask, it's really cool!
I wear it when I am at school.
Under my chin and over my nose,
That is how a safe mask goes.
My friends and I all have them on,
To stay healthy till the germs are gone!*



Pretend play that it's the first day of school. Dress up stuffies as teachers. Put masks on in the car before walking into "classroom" where you meet the masked "teachers".



While wearing masks, make silly faces in the mirror. What emotions can you show without your mouth?



At school, we will compare masks to animal adaptations. Adaptations are like superpowers for survival, including snail shells, porcupine quills or whale baleen. Brainstorm different animal adaptations and ask your child what their favorite "animal superpower" would be.

When students are not required to wear masks (eating, hiking, active games and climbing), they will store masks in a bag. Practice cleaning hands with hand sanitizer, removing the mask by ear loops, folding it inward so the outside surfaces touch, then storing in a bag and sanitizing hands again.

If masks have the same pattern on both sides, please indicate the outside with initials, fabric marker doodles, or a patch.