

Agency Communication Regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 11, 2020

The status of the COVID-19 Coronavirus is an area of focus and concern for us all. The health and safety of our employees, students, clients, and families is a priority at The Baby Fold. The Baby Fold has always had operational procedures to address the containment of contagious diseases, including guidance for agency operations in our Crisis Management Plan to address the threat of pandemic illness.

Your agency Leadership Team has been in contact with local health officials, and we are carefully monitoring the progress of the COVID-19 outbreak. At this time, there are no confirmed cases in McLean County and officials report that the risk in Central Illinois is currently low.

We will continue to monitor the status of COVID-19 in our service areas, and take appropriate proactive steps as recommended by health care experts to protect the health of employees, students, clients, and families. As the status of the presence of COVID-19 changes, The Baby Fold will share with you any medically accurate information regarding any contagious exposure to COVID-19 that is relevant to our service to clients and overall agency operations.

We are asking all employees to engage in taking steps to reduce the transmission of contagious diseases by following the guidance issued by health experts. It sounds simple, but it truly is the first line of “defense” in protecting our staff and clients.

- **Stay home when you are sick.** Employees should not report to work while they are experiencing respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, etc. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that employees should remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze/cough, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Please continue to order hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, soap, tissues, and paper towels through your normal supply ordering process. Please note that there is an international shortage of hand sanitizer, and supplies of this product may arrive infrequently. Priority of distribution of hand sanitizer will be given to areas with high concentration of clients, with limited access to frequent handwashing due to staff supervising clients. Again, the best defense against the virus is to wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.

Additional guidance for staff is as follows:

- As always, if you have concerns regarding your personal medical care and risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus, you should consult with your own personal medical care providers

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- If a student, client, or family receiving services is known to be in the process of testing for the presence of the virus, you should report that information to **both** your Program Director and to Human Resources. An individual action plan will be developed based on these situations.
- If a student, client, or their family member would test positive for the virus, you should report that information **immediately** to **both** your Program Director and to Human Resources. An individual action plan will be developed based on these situations.
- If an you, as an employee, would test positive for the virus, we would appreciate immediate notification to both your Program Director and Human Resources so that an action plan can be developed promptly.

We are providing you with some links to the McLean County Health Department and Centers for Disease Control as your best and most updated sources of information regarding the virus:

Message from the McLean County Health Department:

The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) has been taking steps to prepare for the potential of the novel (new) coronavirus, named COVID-19, impacting McLean County. While the immediate risk of COVID-19 in Illinois is low, this is a rapidly changing situation and we understand it is important for us to be prepared for the possibility of COVID-19 cases in our community.

To this point, MCHD has held meetings with stakeholders and has communicated discipline-specific guidance, as it is received, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). To increase the sharing of information across all disciplines, MCHD will be implementing weekly status updates for all stakeholders. Attached to this email is the first weekly update which is intended to inform McLean County stakeholders of the local response status and to provide resources for ongoing response information. Following this email, this weekly update will be posted to the MCHD website (<http://health.mcleancountyil.gov>). You will see a COVID-19 banner on the home page which will take you to a resource page on which these updates will be posted. MCHD will also promote the availability of this weekly update through Facebook and Twitter.

It is the goal of MCHD to maintain ongoing response status information to McLean County stakeholders to ensure that our communities are as prepared as possible to address local cases of COVID-19.

How COVID-19 spreads <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>

Prevention and treatment. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

Frequently asked questions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>.

We want to reassure you that The Baby Fold will continue to monitor the status of COVID-19, and that the agency is prepared to implement the recommendations from health care officials as the status of the virus evolves. The Baby Fold will follow whatever advice is given by the Illinois Department of Public Health and our local health department.

Additional questions you may have should be directed to both your immediate supervisor and your Program Director. We welcome any questions or policy recommendations you may have.