

Health Decision Making Document

As we move forward from our Covid 19 protocols and into a long-term Communicable Disease Plan to support our Health Policy, Tree Frog's priority is the health and safety of all the children and caregivers at our daycare. This Plan outlines the policies and practices we follow to achieve that goal to the best of our ability. As a licensed childcare facility, we are responsible for acting in the best interest of the group, and to ensure we are able to adequately cover our staff to child ratios at all times. While we appreciate that these policies and procedures may be difficult for individual families when they impact care for your child, we are always acting with the good of all in mind.

We will continue to do our daily health checks at drop off and rely on parents to share any information that may be relevant to your child's ability to participate and enjoy their day. We fully recognize that following some illnesses, symptoms such as cough and runny nose may linger for a while, and these should not require children to stay out of care once they are past the acute and contagious stage. In the interest of protecting everyone's on-going health, we do ask parents to check in before coming if you are unsure if your child is well enough to attend, and to recognize that at times symptoms develop or worsen over the course of the day, requiring us to send children home. Staff will continue to self-monitor and follow the same guidelines for when to stay home.

With all that in mind, we do understand that there may be factors our caregivers are considering that may not be as relevant, or evident, in a home environment. It is our hope that the following information will clarify these factors, and help families better understand the first sentence of our health policy a bit more clearly: **"When children are ill, the active environment of the daycare is not the place for them. They require a more relaxed atmosphere and more individualized attention than the daycare can provide."**

While the criteria for specific illnesses outlined in our Health Policy are our main guide, there are other elements related to that statement that we consider when determining if a child is well enough to be in care for the day.

1. Ability to participate in program:

- Are they able to engage in active outdoor play for up to 1.5 hours at a time, several times throughout the day?
- Do they require a rest or nap outside of regular times?
- Does regular play cause coughing bouts?
- Are they lethargic or less able to regulate their emotions than usual?

2. Symptom factors:

- Do they have a combination of two or more symptoms which increase the risk of spraying other children, toys, equipment, and staff with mucus and spreading germs (coughing, sneezing, runny nose)?
- The more frequent and higher the volume of mucus, the greater the sanitation risk to everyone in the environment. This also impacts a child's ability to play and engage with the group as they need to attend to nose wiping and handwashing more frequently.
- Are they identifying discomfort or signs of illness that are unusual for them (tummy ache, sore ears etc)

- Are symptoms new or worsening as the day progresses?

3. Capacity:

- The age and program of the child will impact our ability contain spread and support individual children in frequent personal hygiene needs. The level of support in containment children require impacts both them and their peers, as staff attention is focused on hygiene needs and sanitizing.
- Does the child:
 - wipe their own nose?
 - identify the need for a nose wipe?
 - cover their coughs appropriately and consistently?
 - use their sleeves, hand, or toys to wipe their nose?
 - put toys and hands in their mouth?
 - have the developmental ability to maintain personal space?
 - wash hands and independently?
- Is the daycare at a staffing capacity that allows us to support extra hygiene needs? In the event a staff member is away or unwell our capacity may change, and we will be mindful of the risk of more staff being affected in a way that could result in a functional closure.

While these are all factors which aid us in making the decision to send a child home, the staff never make that choice lightly. In every case, a great deal of consideration for the group, and the child, has gone into reaching that decision. We strongly encourage parents to err on the side of caution, or check in, if they are unsure- we realize sometimes things develop over the day, but it is always preferable to make the call yourself and be able to plan in advance than to have to pick your child up. In the event you do receive a call to pick your child up, please do so as promptly as possible, and follow the guidelines of our policy to determine when your child can return to care.

Thank you,

The Board and Staff of Tree Frog Daycare

Notes:

- The policies of FHCCS are created by the Board of Directors and followed by the staff of Tree Frog Daycare.
- To ensure consistency, the daycare follows Public Health guidelines and our own policy in all cases, not the directions of individual doctors.