**Step Up Therapy Services**

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**Effective July 13, 2020, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) will allow Multidisciplinary Evaluation and SEIT Sites to conduct in-person assessments.**

We have implemented a plan within our office that follows the guidelines on physical distancing; personal protective equipment; hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection; communication and signage; screening; and physical capacity limitations as described by the NYC Health Department.

**Face Covering Requirements:**

* Staff members interacting with children/families must wear a face covering during the entire course of the session.
* Clinicians may supply alternate face coverings (such as face shields that are transparent at or around the mouth) for assessments that require visualization of the movement of the child’s mouth. These alternate face coverings may also be worn by the clinician, for children who benefit from being able to see more of the clinician’s face (for example, due to a hearing impairment).
* Everyone who will be present for the session and is 2 years or older must wear a face covering, if it can be tolerated.
* Clinicians should monitor children’s ability to keep the face covering/mask on and adjust intervention strategies to best meet children’s needs.

**Physical Distancing:**

* To the extent possible while maintaining the efficacy of the assessment, clinicians should keep 6 feet of physical distance from the child and any other person present.
* Anyone who is not participating in the assessment must maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from others who are not members of the same household.
* Make sure that family and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group or individuals consistently interact.
* We ensure physical distancing with markers using tape or signs denote at least 6 feet of spacing in areas where multiple persons might be present.
* There is a limit to the size of gatherings, and restrict nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving other groups at the same time.

**Healthy Hand Hygiene Before, During and After Session:**

* We support healthy hand hygiene!
* All staff, clinicians, parents, guardians, and children present for the session **should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or use a hand sanitizer** that is at least 60% alcohol before and after the session (including upon entering our facility).
* All clinicians who practice more hands-on assessment approaches should put on gloves and leave them on for the entire session. Leave gloves on until the end of the session. Remove by grasping the inside of the wrist end and pulling inside-out over your fingers, then discard into a plastic bag or lined trash can. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol or wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing gloves. If gloves must be replaced for some reason during the session (for example, contact with body fluids), remove them, wash hands as described above, and put on a new pair of gloves.
* Please note that wearing gloves does not take the place of thorough hand washing.

**Increased Cleaning, Disinfecting and Ventilation:**

We adhere to guidelines from the CDC, NYSDOH and NYC Health Department with regard to:

* Cleaning frequently touched surfaces (such as equipment, door handles, sink handles and drinking fountains) at least daily and cleaning shared objects between uses. Eliminating materials from use that cannot be disinfected.
* Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

**Required Screening Protocols:**

Clinicians, families, and staff must implement ongoing self-screening prior to the session to determine whether they or anyone else who intends to be present for the session:

* Has COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell).
* Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
* Has been told by a health care provider or the NYC Test & Trace Corps to remain home due to being exposed to COVID-19.
* Is required to quarantine based on the New York State COVID-19 Travel Advisory (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>).

If any of the above is TRUE, the sessions should be rescheduled for at least 14 days out or those sessions can be conducted remotely. If a session is rescheduled due to concerns about COVID-19, the clinician/agency should call the family the day before the rescheduled session to confirm that it is safe to proceed.

\*On the day of the session, before the clinician enters the home or as part of a coordinated facility intake process, contact the family to determine whether the child or anyone in the household:

* Has fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, etc.
* Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
* Has been told by a health care provider or the NYC Test & Trace Corps to remain home due to being exposed to COVID-19.
* Is required to quarantine based on the New York State COVID-19 Travel Advisory.

**While we are operating, we adopt healthy hygiene practices such as:**

* Ensure acceptable face coverings are worn by all staff and visitor’s whenever they are within six feet of children or other staff.
* Provide staff, clinicians, and visitors with an acceptable face covering.
* Alternate PPE (i.e., face shields or coverings that are transparent at or around the mouth) for therapies or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g. speech therapy). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain children (e.g. hearing impaired) that benefit from being able to see more of the employee’s face.
* Encourage, children to wear acceptable face coverings. Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2, or for anyone who is unable to medically tolerate such 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.
* Provide information on proper use, and removal of face coverings.
* Reinforce proper hand hygiene and cough/sneeze covering.
* Provide and maintain adequate supplies to support healthy hand and respiratory hygiene, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and lined trash receptacles.
* Provide signs in the waiting area of key information regarding health and hygiene to prevent exposure to Covid-19, and other healthy practices while visiting our office.

**Remember the four key actions to prevent COVID-19 transmission:**

* **Stay home if sick:** Stay home if you are sick unless you are leaving for essential medical care (including testing) or other essential errands.
* **Physical distancing:** Stay at least 6 feet away from other people.
* **Wear a face covering:** Protect those around you. You can be contagious without symptoms and spread the disease when you cough, sneeze or talk. A face covering may help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
* **Practice healthy hand hygiene:** Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available; clean frequently touched surfaces regularly; avoid touching your face with unwashed hands; and cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve, not your hands.

**\*We appreciate your understanding, and adherence to the protocols and procedures set to ensure the\* health and safety of all who work and visit the office of Step Up Therapy Services during the pandemic of Covid-19.**

**For more information on in-person special education services, please visit:**

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/doh_specialeducationguidance.pdf>