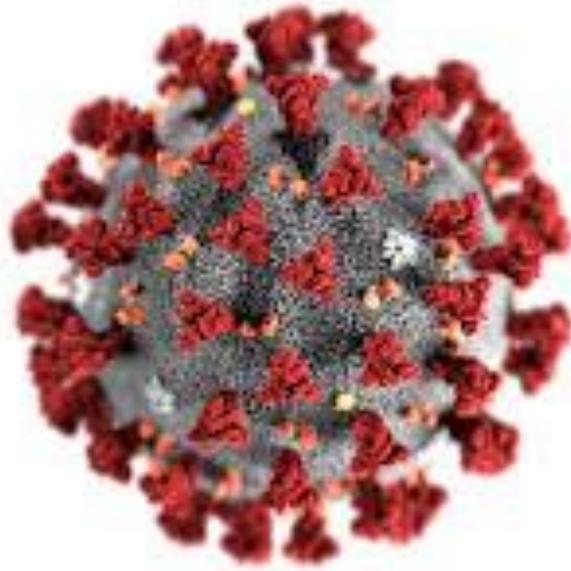


The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties



COVID-19 Protocols



Updated: September 2021

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SCREENING

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties has implemented various protocols to help screen/monitor staff and participants for COVID-19 symptoms. These processes have been put into place to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. These guidelines are based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

Participants:

1. AT HOME SCREENING:

Every morning, at home and prior to receiving services from The Arc, participants should be assisted check their temperature and screened for symptoms.

If a participant has one of the following symptoms, he/she should call The Arc to cancel services for the day:

- a. A fever equal to or higher than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
 - b. Respiratory symptoms such as a new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, congestion, runny nose or a sore throat.
 - c. A potential exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
 - d. Participant has muscle aches, chills, weakness, fatigue, headache or a change in baseline behavior without or prior to respiratory symptoms emerging.
 - e. Inability to smell or taste
 - f. Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
- *The SPARC Director or surrogate will initiate the COVID-19 Suspected Infection Protocol when appropriate.*
 - *A participant may be asked to provide proof of medical clearance prior to returning to programming after such symptoms are observed.*
 - *Failure to report known COVID-19 symptoms/exposure may result in permanent suspension from SPARC and other Arc services.*

2. PRE-SERVICE SCREENING:

Participants will be screened every day **prior** to entering The Arc building, receiving services from The Arc, or entering an Arc owned/operated vehicle. Arc staff will discreetly perform the screening, **prior** to starting services. Arc staff will record screening findings on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool, which will be stored in a secured area until the end of the shift.

Prior to coming into The Arc building or entering an Arc operated vehicle, Arc staff will discreetly:

- a. Encourage participants to remain at least 6 feet apart during the screening process.
 - b. Check participants with a no touch thermometer to monitor for an elevated temperature, defined as 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or greater.
 - c. Check for signs or reports of respiratory symptoms such as a new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, congestion, runny nose or a sore throat.
 - d. Ask if the participant has had a potential exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19
 - e. Check for signs or reports of muscle aches, chills, weakness, fatigue, headache or a change in baseline behavior without or prior to respiratory symptoms emerging.
 - f. Ask if the participant is experiencing an inability to smell or taste nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
- **If an individual screens positive for any of the aforementioned checks, The Arc will not provide Community Participation Supports.** *The individual will be asked to return home and may be requested to provide written medical clearance from his/her medical practitioner prior to returning to service. The supporters identified in the participant's ISP Back Up Plan will be called upon to provide supports in lieu of The Arc.*
 - *Arc staff will document the results of the participant screening, on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool and immediately report any positive findings to the SPARC Director. If the SPARC Director is not available, a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be notified. The Screening Tool will be maintained in a confidential area and uploaded to an electronic file system.*
 - *The SPARC Director or surrogate will initiate the COVID-19 Suspected Infection Protocol when appropriate.*

3. **REGULAR MONITORING:**

During the course of service provision, staff will continually monitor participants for changes in health and behavior every day. Concerns and atypical observations must be reported immediately to the SPARC Director or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The SPARC Director or surrogate will initiate the COVID-19 Suspected Infection Protocol when appropriate. If an individual displays any symptoms of illness or atypical behavior, the supporters identified in the participant's ISP Back Up Plan will be called upon to provide supports in lieu of The Arc. The individual may be requested to provide written medical clearance from his/her practitioner prior to returning to service.

4. **POST-SERVICES SCREENING:**

Every day, prior to concluding services, Arc staff will repeat similar screening to what was conducted at the beginning of the day, and will log the results on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool. If an individual screens positive for any of the checks, Arc staff will immediately contact the SPARC Director or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The SPARC Director or surrogate will initiate the COVID-19

Suspected Infection Protocol when appropriate. The individual may be requested to provide written medical clearance from his/her practitioner prior to returning to service.

STAFF/ARC EMPLOYEES:

1. The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton County issued a Return to Work Action Plan that describes all of the safeguards and screening protocols put into place to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. These include a Temperature Check Program, screening for symptoms, and reporting transparency. Please refer to the plan for specifics.
2. Arc staff/employees are responsible to assure they have the necessary screening materials prior to leaving the facility for service provision. This includes but is not limited to: face covering/mask, no-touch thermometer, cell phone, and the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool for each assigned individual.
3. All SPARC staff will receive training on screening processes, maintaining confidentiality and information collection/documentation.
4. The Arc will request that all employees volunteer information on employment at other provider agencies. This will help The Arc better understand opportunities for the employee to have been exposed to the virus and where possible limit the transmission of the virus.
5. SPARC staff will not be permitted to work if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19. Please see The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties Return to Work Action Plan for further guidance.

SCREENING PROCESSES:

1. Assigned Arc staff will be near the front entrance to screen individuals prior to entering the facility or an Arc operated/owned vehicle. Participants should remain in queue inside their vehicles to be screened.
2. Arc screening staff must remain 6 feet away from the participant until the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool is completed and it is determined the participant is symptom free.
3. Arc screening staff should wear a clean face mask or cloth face covering that sufficiently covers the nose and mouth area. The mask should fit snugly against the sides of the face but should allow the person to breathe easily.
4. Arc screening staff should thoroughly and expeditiously conduct the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool. Screening staff should make these interactions as brief as possible by limiting the interaction to screening questions only.
5. Individuals who may have difficulty answering the screening questions should be accompanied by a familiar supporter who is able to provide the relevant information. If an individual is unable to answer the screening questions and a supporter is not available, The Arc may decline to provide services until the COVID-19 Participant Tool can be completed.
6. If an individual has any of the identified symptoms on the COVID-19 Participant Screen Tool, the participant will not be permitted to enter the building or Arc vehicle. Staff will assure that the participant remains at least 6 feet away from other people and will discreetly notify the SPARC Director or member of the Senior Leadership Team, so

that the Suspected COVID-19 Infection Protocol can be initiated. Community Participation Supports will not be provided.

7. An individual with COVID-19 symptoms will be instructed to move to a location away from others, to prevent the transmission of the virus. The responding manager or surrogate will assist the individual to move to an alternative area where he/she can remain 6 feet away from other individuals. Weather permitting, the individual will stay outside at the picnic tables, with appropriate supervision. If the weather is not conducive to staying outside, the individual will be taken to the Classroom #1 for isolation. If this space is not available, the individual will be taken to another non-programming area. The Arc will assure the appropriate supervision level is maintained until a caregiver/supporter arrives. If The Arc is unable to reach a caregiver/supporter, an ambulance may be called. This will be done at the discretion of the Executive Director or surrogate.
8. The Arc will report any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases to all mandated entities.
9. The SPARC Director or surrogate will initiate the COVID-19 Suspected Infection Protocol when appropriate.
10. If a participant refuses screening, The Arc will not be able to provide supports to the individual.
11. If a participant or supporter knowingly fails to disclose a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection/exposure, The Arc may terminate services.
12. The Arc's Screening process will be in place until governing and regulatory entities determines it is no longer necessary to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

COVID-19 SUSPECTED INFECTION PROTOCOL

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties has implemented various protocols to help keep individuals and staff safe when participants screen positive for potential signs and symptoms of COVID-19. These processes have been put into place to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. These guidelines are based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. Staff will monitor individuals for symptoms before, during and just before ending the provision of Community Participation Supports. Information regarding the screening will be documented on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool. This Tool will be kept in a secured area and due to the volume of documentation collected, these forms will be electronically filed, in accordance with HIPPA mandates.
2. If an individual screens positive for any of the symptoms noted on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool, **staff should immediately notify the SPARC Director or member of the Senior Leadership Team. The individual should not be permitted to board any Arc owned vehicles or enter any program areas, if a concern is identified PRIOR to service provision. The individual should remain 6 feet away from others.**
3. When in the facility, the responding Director will take immediate action by assisting the individual to move to an alternative area where he/she can remain 6 feet away from other individuals. Weather permitting, the individual will stay outside at the picnic tables, with appropriate supervision. If the weather is not conducive to staying outside, the individual will be taken to the Classroom #1 for isolation. If this space is not available, the individual will be taken to another non-programming area. This will be done at the discretion of the responding Director, taking into consideration air exchange while minimizing exposure to others. Staff will provide supervision to maintain the immediate safety of the participant. The supporting staff will be provided with eye protection and a surgical mask or KN95. Supports will be limited to maintaining the immediate health and safety of the participant. Access to bathrooms and common areas may be restricted to individuals who screen positive on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool, to prevent the possible transmission of COVID-19. If symptoms develop while providing service in the community, the supporting staff will take all measures to keep the individual at least 6 feet away from the other participants and staff. If possible, the group should remain outside to prevent the

transmission of COVID-19. A relief staff may be deployed, so that proper isolation measures can be implemented, while maintaining supervision for safety. This will be done at the discretion of the responding Director.

4. The responding Director will assign someone to contact the supporter(s) listed in the Individual's Back Up Plan of the ISP. It is expected that the supporter or surrogate immediately come to pick up the individual at their location. The individual must consult with his/her medical practitioner and provide documentation that he/she is free of signs or symptoms of COVID-19 infection, before being able to return to SPARC.
5. The responding Director will notify the individual's Supports Coordinator, respective AE and any other pertinent team members.
6. If the individual's supporter(s) is/are not available or does not come to pick up the individual, EMS will be contacted at the discretion of the Executive Director or surrogate. EMS will be informed of the individual's symptoms and concerns of suspected COVID-19 infection.
7. Other individuals who are receiving services may be relocated to another area of the facility if it is deemed necessary.
8. If any other individuals are exposed to a participant who screens positive on the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool, the individual and his/her team will be notified by the SPARC Director or surrogate, of the potential exposure, but names and potentially identifying information will be redacted to protect privacy.
9. If someone has a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our facility or in one of our fleet vehicles, a professional COVID-19 cleaning will be done on all affected areas. The responding manager will close off areas visited by the ill person and make all attempts to increase ventilation in the area after participants have left the building. The facility may temporarily close if needed for safety and sanitation.
10. Please consult The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties Return to Work Action Plan for protocols that will be implemented for suspected employee infections.
11. This protocol will be in place until governing and regulatory entities determines it is no longer necessary to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties has implemented various protocols to help keep individuals and staff from contracting COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. These guidelines are based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. As per the CDC, social distancing, aka "physical distancing" means keeping space between yourself and others. **To practice social distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm's length) from other people.** Keeping space between yourself and others has been found to be one of the best tools available to avoid exposure to COVID-19. All staff and participants will receive training on Social Distancing.
2. The Arc recognizes that there will be situations where a staff person must provide support to a participant and will not be able to remain 6 feet away. During these situations, staff and individuals must wear a face covering to reduce the likelihood of the transmission of infection. If an individual is unable to wear or tolerate a mask, a specific protocol for that individual will be developed with his/her team or alternative service options may be explored.
3. When providing transportation in an agency vehicle, it may not be possible to keep individuals 6 feet apart. During these times staff should:
 - a. Encourage participants to sit as far apart as possible.
 - b. Encourage everyone to wear a mask
 - c. Assure appropriate ventilation in the vehicle. When possible, keep windows open or run air conditioning/heat by using settings to promote the exchange of outside air. Avoid recycling the interior air of the vehicle.
4. When possible, staff and participants will remain the in the same groups to prevent transmission of infection.
5. When inside the facility, no more than 3 participants will be grouped together in a program area at any given time during the provision of services. The only exceptions will be for emergency evacuation, outdoor activities where physical distancing can be practices, and/or regulatory required activities.

6. The Arc may stagger pick up and drop off times to enhance social distancing. This will depend on participant choices and needs as well as program census. Participants will remain outside of the facility, in a socially distant queue (at least 6 feet apart) until they have been screened using the COVID-19 Participant Screening Tool. It is recommended that participants remain in their vehicle for the screening process.
7. The Arc will monitor bathroom usage to promote social distancing during these times. The Arc will strive allow access to no more than 3 participants at a time in each of the main bathrooms. Exceptions will be made for emergencies. The changing room will have no more than 2 participants at a time and participants will always remain 6 feet apart from each other . When accessing the main bathrooms, staff will remind individuals about the need to remain 6 feet away from others.
8. When in the facility, staff may opt to keep office and classroom doors closed to enhance social distancing.
9. When in the facility, DSPs will secure and return program materials prior to and after services are provided. This will limit foot traffic during the provision of services.
10. The SPARC Director, Program Specialists and/or Administrative Assistant will provide community-based staff with materials needed during service provision. Assigned iPads, cell phones, van keys, documentation and other items will be given to the respective staff at the beginning of his/her shift. This will limit foot traffic throughout The SPARC facility and Arc building.
11. The Arc recognizes that DSPs and other agency personnel cannot limit or restrict the movement of participants and/or violate rights. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, all citizens, regardless of disability, have been called upon to alter their regular activities to protect themselves and others. All individuals will receive information about COVID-19 protocol changes, recommendations, and responsibilities prior to resuming in person services. If an individual is not cooperative with COVID-19 protocols, he/she may be asked to suspend services until a team meeting is held. The individual with his/her team will determine if SPARC services are appropriate and develop strategies for everyone's safety.
12. When in the facility, DSPs will look before moving with a participant through the halls, to ensure physical distancing is possible.
13. The Arc receptionist will control and monitor the flow of traffic leaving and entering the building, at the main entrance, since all other egresses in and out of the facility are designated for emergency use. This practice will prevent groups from gathering as they enter or leave the building.
14. Reduced building capacity, separated groups, and monitoring of walkways and bathrooms will enhance social distancing.

15. This protocol will be in place until governing and regulatory entities determines it is no longer necessary to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties

COVID-19 PARTICIPANT SCREEING TOOL

Participant Name: _____ Date of Service: _____

PRE-SERVICE SCREENING:

Date _____ Time _____ Staff Name/Title: _____

Body Temperature: _____

Does the participant have an elevated temperature (100.0 degrees F or greater)? YES NO

Does the participant report or present respiratory symptoms such as a new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, congestion, runny nose or a sore throat? YES NO

Has the participant had a potential exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 over the past 14 days? YES NO

Does the participant have muscle aches, weakness, chills, weakness, fatigue, headache, or a change in baseline behavior? YES NO

Is the participant experiencing an inability to taste or smell? YES NO

Is the participant experiencing nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea? YES NO

Has the participant been diagnosed with COVID-19, have a test pending for COVID-19, or been told by a medical provider that you may or do have COVID-19? YES NO

IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE ASSUME THE PERSON IS POTENTIALLY INFECTED. IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SPARC DIRECTOR OR A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM. DO NOT PERMIT THE INDIVIDUAL TO BOARD OUR VAN OR ENTER THE BUIDLING.

REGULAR MONITORING:

Date _____ Staff Name/Title: _____

During service provision, were there any changes in health or did the individual display atypical behavior? YES NO

IF AN INDIVIDUAL'S HEALTH OR BEHAVIORAL STATUS CHANGES DURING SERVICE PROVISION, IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SPARC DIRECTOR OR A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties
COVID PARTICIPANT SCREEING TOOL

Participant Name: _____ Date of Service: _____

POST-SERVICES SCREENING

Date _____ Time _____ Staff Name/Title: _____

Body Temperature: _____

Does the participant have an elevated temperature (100.0 degrees F or greater)? YES NO

Does the participant report or present respiratory symptoms such as a new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, congestion, runny nose or a sore throat? YES NO

Does the participant have muscle aches, weakness, chills, weakness, fatigue, headache, or a change in baseline behavior? YES NO

Is the participant experiencing an inability to taste or smell? YES NO

Is the participant experiencing nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea? YES NO

IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE ASSUME THE PERSON IS POTENTIALLY INFECTED. IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SPARC DIRECTOR OR A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM.

For management use only

Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

Notes: _____

TIME IN

TIME OUT

UNICENTRIC MINS

PERSONALIZED PARTICIPANT RE-INTEGRATION PLAN (PPRP)

Prior to resuming services, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties will request a team meeting to develop a Personalized Participant Re-Integration Plan (PPRP). This plan will detail concerns specific to the participant and will describe how supports can be delivered in a safe and effective manner while following regulatory guidance. These plans will focus on strategies to help keep individuals safe from contracting COVID-19. The PPRP will be developed using ODP's COVID-19 Individual Transition Guide(ITG) and once finalized, will be included in the participant's' Individual Support Plan (ISP).

1. The Program Specialist(s) will schedule team meetings, using virtual technology, to determine each participant's support needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The questions noted in the ITG will be asked when appropriate. In addition, the following information will be collected:
 - a. What are the individual's needs regarding toileting? Are there any barriers to assisting someone with toileting when in the community? If so, how should DSPs support this individual when there is a toileting need in the community?
 - b. Are there any new ideas, activities, or locations that the individual would like to pursue when resuming in person supports?
 - c. What unique concerns should be considered when providing supports to the individual?
 - d. If the individual is unable to tolerate a mask, how can he/she be safely supported when receiving in person services?
 - e. What kind of supports is the individual interested in receiving? Remote? In home? Community? Facility? Blended?
 - f. Any other considerations or questions identified (at the discretion of the Program Specialist or team member).
3. During the development of the PPRP, the individual's back up plan will be reviewed and updated. Each participant should have a minimum of 2 supporters who can be available to transport the individual in the event that he/she is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is engaged in behavior that puts others at risk for infection (i.e. refusing to wear a mask, refusing to follow social distancing guidelines, etc.). Participants and supporters will be informed of SPARC's new protocols regarding screening, symptoms, and responsibilities.
4. The team will identify risk mitigation strategies for all service provision concerns, which will also be included in the PPRP. This includes how services can be provided if more intense risk mitigation strategies are implemented by governing entities.

5. The Program Specialist will be responsible for keeping the PPRP up to date and notifying SCs of changes as needed.
6. Each participant, and/or guardian, will be informed of changes regarding program operations, protocols, responsibilities, and limitations. As updates occur, information will be distributed accordingly.
7. The PPRP will be in place until governing and regulatory entities determines it is no longer necessary to be concerned regarding COVID-19 or if regulatory guidance changes regarding the components of the plan.

ODP's ITG:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/coronavirus/Documents/Individual%20Transition%20Guide%20%20Final%205.11.20.pdf>

Are there any new ideas, activities, or locations that the individual would like to pursue when resuming in person supports?

What unique concerns should be considered when providing supports to the individual?

Service interest (check all the apply):

Remote (technology i.e. Zoom) In home None
 Community Facility

Contacts for Back- up Plan (at least two people should be identified)

Name	Phone	Other
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

<hr/>	<hr/>
Name (printed)	Date
<hr/>	<hr/>
Signature	Title

MASK USE

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties has implemented a mask protocol to help reduce prevent the transmission of COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. These guidelines are based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. In accordance with current Center for Disease Control guidance, face coverings should be made of cloth and:
 - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
 - Be secured with ties or ear loops and include multiple layers of fabric
 - Allow for breathing without restriction
 - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
2. In accordance with current Center for Disease Control guidance, proper mask use entails:
 - a. Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
 - b. Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
 - c. Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
 - d. Make sure you can breathe easily
3. If an individual has an exception that prevents him/her from wearing a mask, the individual and his/her team should seek clarification from the health care practitioner regarding mask use.
4. If an individual is unable to tolerate or is afraid to wear a mask, the team should seek out resources to help the individual adjust to wearing a mask. Alternative services, such as in-home supports, may be offered to individuals who are unable to wear a mask.
5. The Arc requires participants to wear face coverings when services are being provided outside of the individual's home and when social distancing is not possible. This includes any time a participant is in an agency operated vehicle, in public places and in the facility. If an individual refuses to wear a face covering when outside of the home, The Arc may decline to provide services until a team meeting is held to discuss risk mitigation strategies. Staff are always mandated to wear masks when providing

in person supports. When providing in-person supports, community-based staff may de-mask to eat or drink.

6. The Arc recognizes the importance of offering multiple mask breaks during service provision. If an individual requests to remove his/her mask, encourage him/her to do so outside or in a well-ventilated area, where he/she can stay 6 feet away from others. Teams should develop support guidance for individuals who requires arm's length supervision in certain settings.
7. Individuals must remove masks to drink and eat. During these specific circumstances, staff must encourage participants to stay 6 feet away from each other. If a DSP must assist the individual with personal care when there may be increased exposure to respiratory droplets or body fluids, such as feeding or drinking, he/she will have the option to don a plastic face shield IN ADDITION TO the cloth face covering. When in the facility, staff will remove his/her mask to drink or eat, but **this must be done during a break and not in the presence of participants.** When in the facility, staff will be given short breaks throughout the day to de-mask, eat and drink. When in the community, staff may briefly remove his/her mask. Mask removal should only be done when absolutely necessary and when the removal of the mask does not put participants at risk. When appropriate, staff should use this opportunity as a teaching experience - so that individuals can learn and practice safe de-masking habits.
8. If an individual is having difficulty acquiring a mask, The Arc will attempt to assist him/her to obtain masks.
9. If for medical or other reasons, and individual receiving services is unable to wear a mask, the use of a full-face shield as an alternative may provide some benefit and should be permitted. However, for staff, plastic face shield are not acceptable alternatives to masks.
10. Staff and participants will receive training on mask use and best practices.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties recognizes the importance of education and training to help reduce prevent the transmission of COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. Trainings have been developed based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton’s Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton’s Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. All staff and participants will receive training in the following areas:

Training Topics:
ALL ABOUT COVID-19 (SYMPTOMS, TRANSMISSION)
HOW TO OBSERVE& REPORT SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR REPORTING SYMPTOMS AND SUSPECTED/CONFIRMED COVID-19
CLEANING, DISINFECTING & SANITIZING BEFORE,DURING AND AFTER THE PROVISION OF SERVICES
MASKS, FACECOVERINGS, THE USE OF PPE AND BEST PRACTICES
REDUCING THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19/BEST PRACTICES AND HANDWASHING
ACTIONS THE ARC IS TAKING TO KEEP PARTICIPANTS SAFE
NETWORKING/FINDING APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITEIS
MAINTAINING PERSONAL SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

2. All staff will receive training on these topics BEFORE they provide in person Community Participation Supports. Staff will also be trained on sick leave policies and the importance of not reporting or remaining at work when ill. Please see The Arc’s Return to Work plan for details.
3. All participants will receive training on these topics upon resuming services. The manner and speed in which the trainings will be delivered will depend upon the unique needs and learning styles of each individual.
4. Families and supporters will be provided with information regarding program changes, responsibilities, and service limitations due to the pandemic.
5. The Arc will help individuals, families, supporters, and staff to seek out Trauma Awareness and other mental health resources upon request.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) AND SUPPLIES

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties recognizes the importance of having adequate and accessible supplies of protective equipment and sanitizing products to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. Protocols for usage and storage have been developed based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. To assure the proper use and monitoring of PPE and sanitizing supplies, these items will be stored and locked in the facility. At the beginning of each shift, it is the responsibility of the DSP to assure they request any materials they will need to remain safe during the course of their shift. Necessary materials will be removed by the SPARC Administrative Assistant, Program Specialist, SPARC Director, or a member of the Senior Leadership team. As items are pulled from the stockpile, the usage will be tracked to assure that all staff are properly and adequately using the materials. Additionally, it will help management staff assure supplies are reordered as they are used.
2. Each DSP will be provided with 5 cloth face coverings and one plastic face shield. It is the responsibility of the DSP to report to work each day with at least one clean face cloth and have access to his/her face shield. Staff must notify management immediately of any issues related to mask use, accessibility, or any other PPE related concerns.
3. During the course of service provision, staff must have access to: hand sanitizer, surface disinfectant rated to kill COVID-19(<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>) and disposable gloves. Additional PPE and supplies will be made available as needed. Gowns, respirators, and other PPE will be reserved for situations deemed as an emergency by an Arc manager.
4. When staff and/or participants are done utilizing sanitizers and other products, they should be safely secured to prevent misuse. For participants who are unable to safely use poisons, such materials should be locked when not in use. In the facility, each program room has a locking cabinet to secure these poisons. When in the community, staff will be equipped with a locking bag or box to assure these items are not accessible to those who cannot safely use them.

5. The Arc has established cleaning protocols for both the facility and the community. Areas that have been deemed as frequent touch points will be sanitized regularly throughout the course of the shift. Agency operated vehicles will be sanitized before the provision of service and upon ending services for the day. The facility rooms will be cleaned frequently, especially before and after lunch. DSPs will be provided with education on how to properly sanitize these areas. When necessary, a DSP may be deployed solely to sanitize the facility throughout the course of service provision. The role of this DSP will augment the regular cleaning and sanitizing efforts that each DSP will conduct throughout the course of the shift.

6. Staff and SPARC participants should engage in regular, thorough, and frequent handwashing throughout the day. All staff and SPARC participants will receive training on proper hand washing. Circumstances where handwashing must occur:
 - a. After sneezing, coughing, or blowing one's nose
 - b. After using the restroom
 - c. Before and after eating and/or drinking
 - d. Upon arriving to the facility
 - e. Before departing the facility
 - f. Any times hands are soiled
 - g. Before and after providing personal care to an individualIf a sink is not available, hand sanitizer should be used until facilities become available. Upon gaining access to a sink, hands should be washed at the first available opportunity.

7. The delivery of services in SPARC is contingent upon having adequate supplies of PPE and sanitizers. If national product shortages occur, thus preventing The Arc from being able to secure the necessary supplies to keep participants and staff safe, services may be temporarily suspended until the materials are re-stocked.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties recognizes the importance of communicating information, changes and concerns to staff, participants, supporters and stakeholders. As guidance is altered by governing entities, The Arc will adapt protocols and policies accordingly. When this occurs, The Arc will communicate these changes promptly to pertinent parties and will take into consideration the most recent guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). All protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. The Director of SPARC and members of the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for reporting and communicating changes. Management will work concurrently with The Arc's Safety Committee and will assess if additional education is needed for staff, supporters and participants.
2. The Arc will utilize a variety of communication methods to convey changes. This includes, but is not limited to: social media posts, email communications, phone calls and letters.
3. Prior to resuming services, each participant and their supporting team will be informed of "Participant Rights and Responsibilities." In addition to the basic participant rights that have been previously outlined, new COVID-19 risk mitigation responsibilities will now be necessary for all persons who utilize SPARC services. SPARC participants and their supporters will be apprised of changes to service provision visitor restrictions, etc. to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission

TRANSPORTATION

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties has implemented a best practices protocol with regard to transportation to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 during the provision of Community Participant Supports in the SPARC program. These guidelines are based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. The Arc recognizes there is an increased risk to participants who utilize public transportation. Teams will discuss the most appropriate and safest transportation methods for each individual, considering their ability to execute safe mask wearing, social distancing and other good habits to prevent being infected with COVID-19
2. The Arc will remain in close contact with transportation services, such as LANtavan, to assure an understanding of their best practices and protocols, along with changes that may affect safe transportation.
3. During the COVID-19 pandemic, waiver delivered services have been modified and adjusted by ODP, based on approved, temporary changes approved by the Federal government. As a result, SPARC is able to offer alternative services to participants, as long as these Federal exceptions remain in place. These service alterations by SPARC may include:
 - a. Providing transportation to and from SPARC
 - b. Providing in home supports
 - c. Providing 1:1 CPS services
 - d. Services provided in reduced, alternating, or atypical hours (not to include evenings and weekends)
4. All participants must have at least TWO different supporters who can provide transportation in the event of an emergency. These contacts will be updated in the participant's back up plan and should be included in the Crisis Support section of the Individual Support Plan (ISP). When there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or if an individual is engaging in high risk behavior, The Arc may call to terminate services earlier for the day.
 - a. If an individual does not have supports in place to have a back up transportation plan, the team must determine strategies to keep all parties safe and to assure that Community Participation Supports are appropriate.
 - b. If an individual is engaging in high risk behavior, or not following the outlined personal responsibilities, services may be suspended until a team meeting is held. During the team meeting, risk mitigation strategies and supports will be discussed to determine if Community Participation Supports are appropriate.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties has implemented a best practices protocol with regard to contingency planning for unforeseen COVID-19 emergencies. These guidelines are based upon guidance from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Return to Work Action Plan, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton's Employee Handbook, The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These protocols are subject to change based on evolving guidance from these and other governing/regulatory entities.

1. Should governing officials impose more restrictive risk mitigation regulations/mandates, thus making in-person facility or community services not possible, The Arc may be able to offer remote services (using technology such as Zoom) and/or in home Community Participation Supports (CPS) during this time.
2. Prior to resuming to in-person CPS, teams should identify two supporters who will be able to provide supervision to an individual, should SPARC need to cancel or abruptly end services for a COVID-19 related emergency. If an individual does not have two supporters, the team must develop a back-up plan that offers alternatives for supervision should a COVID-19 emergency exist. Each participant's back up plan will be updated to reflect the most recent information and contingency plan for services. Supports Coordinators will be notified, so that the Crisis Support plan section of the ISP details this information.
3. Due to The Arc's commitment to provide safe in-person supports, consistent staff assignments will be made. Doing so creates a challenge when staff are sick, on vacation or do not report for their shift. Teams and participants are being informed of the potential for "last minute" and planned cancelations to services. If the assigned staff does not report to work, services may be canceled and the back up plan will be implemented. If participants and teams feel comfortable, a substitute staff may be deployed when available and appropriate.
4. The Arc is always evaluating staffing patterns to assure there are enough Direct Support Professionals to meet the needs of participants. In the event of staffing shortages, administrative SPARC staff or Arc staff from other departments will be trained and utilized until new staff are recruited.

COVID-19 VACCINE

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties strongly encourages all eligible participants to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine from their health care provider. While we are not mandating the vaccine as a condition of service provision, opportunities may be limited to individuals who are not able/willing to accept the vaccine. Such restrictions will be addressed with the team to determine how to safely provide services, while incurring the lowest risk for virus transmission.

1. Please provide The Arc with documentation of COVID-19 vaccine for your records.
2. If you are unable/unwilling to have the vaccine, please consult with your health care professional for guidance on how to stay safe. Please share this information with The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, so that we can incorporate these recommended strategies to help keep participants and staff safe.
3. Information about vaccine administration will be considered protected health information and may not be shared with parties outside of The Arc, without expressed consent to do so.
4. Masks must continue to be worn, even after the administration of a 2nd COVID-19 vaccinee. This mandate will remain in place until the CDC and/or other governing bodies provide alternative guidance.
5. All staff of The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties will be encouraged to take the vaccine.

IN-HOME CPS

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, The Office of Developmental Programs has secured approval to allow for the provision of alternative service models using Home and Community Wavier funding. Appendix K explains the exceptions to services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Click the link below for more details:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/coronavirus/Pages/ODP-Operational-Guide-for-Appendix-K-Version-2.aspx>

As a result, The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties may offer in-home CPS to individuals who qualify for this service under the provisions set forth by Appendix K. An Arc DSP will provide CPS in the comfort of your home or your community, as decided on by the team.

In an effort to help keep our staff and participants safe during the provision of in-home supports, it is required that supporters immediately notify The Arc if **anyone** living in the home has been exposed to, , shows symptoms of or tests positive for COVID-19. Failure to disclose such information may result in a permanent suspension of services from The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties. Any and all symptoms and exposures must be reported - no exceptions. It is strongly encouraged that anyone in the household wears a mask or face covering during the provision of services. The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties reserves the right to decline the provision of services if it is determined that the home environment poses a COVID-19 risk.

In-home CPS, much like our other in-person services, will be delivered consistently by the same assigned staff. Consequently, if the assigned staff becomes sick, takes time off or is unavailable to work for any reason, this will affect our ability to provide the service. All participants should identify a backup supporter, in the event that Arc staff is not able to provide the service as scheduled. The Arc will strive to make arrangements ahead of the absence but realizes that such occurrences may not always be scheduled and advanced notice may not be provided.