



NOVEMBER 2, 2020

Re: New Mask Mandates & Rising Tennessee COVID-19 Cases

Dear parents and colleagues:

As we continue to balance the pressures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic against our duties to our clients, we want to once again thank you for your patience. On October 1, we announced plans to phase in group work activities back into our daily routines. We believe the therapeutic benefits of these programs to our clients is vital to their progress.

In that plan, we created "bubbles" in which clients and staff would be isolated from the majority of other clients and staff. Instead, they would be exposed to only a small, closely regulated group within the clinic. We believe that plan follows precedent set by other institutions similar in nature to Autism ETC. Because these individual "bubbles" allowed Autism ETC to contact trace easily, we feel confident in our ability to quickly take action should the need arise. We will continue to follow the protocol established in our October 1 COVID-19 update letter (*Re: Autumn Updates to COVID-19 Policies*) for dealing with symptoms or exposure of anyone in the clinic. Though we will continue to closely monitor guidelines from local and federal officials, we will continue our group work program at this time.

Last week most major counties in Middle Tennessee reinstated mask mandate policies for public places. **In response to these new guidelines, Autism ETC will require all staff to wear masks at all times while in our clinics's communal areas. Parents and visitors will continue to be required to wear masks at all times.**

This new policy, along with our isolation "bubbles" will further reduce the chance of transmission among our staff and clients and enable us to effectively address any situation that arises.

As the winter months approach, we are readying additional precautions and strategies to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic should the situation continue to deteriorate. As always, we ask you to follow CDC guidance in your daily lives. We must each take personal steps to keep our clinics safe. Washing hands, avoiding contact when sick, and wearing a mask in public places will slow the spread of disease.

For complete guidance, please visit the CDC website (**[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)**), and our latest COVID-19 guidance can always be found on our website (**autismetc.com/covid-19**). Thank you for your cooperation as we continue to face this challenge together.

We wish you and you health and safety.

Sincerely,

Autism ETC Clinical Management Team

