

Reopening at Cornerstone Center for Early Learning in the Time of COVID-19

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**CORNERSTONE CENTER
FOR EARLY LEARNING**

OVERVIEW

Cornerstone Center for Early Learning (CCEL) puts the health and safety of children, families and staff first. We continue to stay apprised of the latest information regarding the COVID-19 virus through the St. Louis City Health Department, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). CCEL will use guidelines, recommendations and regulations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and St. Louis City Health Department to establish best practices to remain open during the COVID 19 pandemic. Constant communication between these organizations is required to have the most up-to-date information to make informed decisions around the operation of programming.

This information will be used in conjunction with the CDC's guidance for [programs that remain open](#) and their guidance for administrators of [child care programs and K-12 schools](#). This guidance does not supersede applicable federal, state, and local laws and policies for child care programs.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#General>

**Cornerstone Center for Early Learning will reopen on
Monday, June 15, 2020 with modified hours of
7:30am-4:30pm Monday-Friday**



Supporting the Emotional and Social Well Being

As we welcome children back to CCEL during COVID-19, we know that we must be attuned to the emotional and social well-being of the children. Children were asked to leave CCEL abruptly and will be returning to a school that looks and feels different which can create a potential trauma. The experience of children and families over the last couple months as they managed the stay-at-home order and the lack of social connections also created a new normal for children that will impact how they return to CCEL. Children and families will be rebuilding relationships with the teachers and the school and we know that we must emotionally partner with everyone through this transition.

Teacher Support

Your classroom teacher is your number one supporter right now. If you have not already done so, please plan to connect with your child's classroom teacher(s). If you need help with that let us know. It can be comforting to see familiar faces and know that though we are apart, we are still together. We will provide ways to introduce face masks and thermometers to help prepare children for when they return. This should be done with the parent there to support the child.

Take advantage of this time to talk to your child about what he or she misses the most about his or her classroom. Classroom teachers will be working prior to opening to ensure that all children have a sense of LOVE, BELONGING and APPROPRIATE POWER when they re-enter their classroom space. That includes seeing their family board or their name on their cubby space. Families can help the classroom teachers by emailing new/updated family pictures for day one.

Administrative Support

The Administrative Team members are here to support children and families. Families who may have individual concerns or issues should schedule a time to meet virtually or via the phone with Toni Jackson, Center Director. It is our goal to best support you and your family to make as smooth a transition as possible.

What Can I Expect When My Child Returns?

It is important to know that every child's return experience will be different. Some children may race through the front door as though nothing has changed. Some may cling a little tighter. There may be tears. Some children may be afraid of the thermometer or face masks that staff members will be wearing. Some children may be fine one day and not at all fine the next. All of these fears and reactions are valid and we will partner with you and your child through all of it.

Since we can not know how a child will react, there are a few things that families and teachers can do to be prepared to support children through this transition process. The first is to allow



your child to express their feelings, whatever they are. We can listen openly to children and be there to help them process their experience. Next, parents and teachers need to communicate and partner. This is a really important time for open communication so that everyone involved with the child knows what feelings they are expressing and how they are expressing them both at home and at school. Work together to be able to provide a consistent, supportive message to children. Also, we as adults are who children are looking to. They read our emotions and often will mirror them. Be aware of your own emotions as it will help you to understand your child's emotions. Finally, try to create a consistent routine as you and your child return to CCEL. Consistent routines for bedtime, morning, drop off, goodbyes, etc. help children feel safe.

This is why we will be providing videos to show children masks, thermometers, the new drop-off procedure, etc. The better we can prepare children ahead of time, hopefully the easier it will be to acclimate.



What Will be Different when Cornerstone Re-Opens

Quick Snapshot

While the need to provide a quality and a safe place for children will never change, the way that services are provided, as well as interactions between staff, children, and their families will be different. This document goes into more depth on these changes in the following pages. Some of the changes that will be included in reunion plans are:

- Smaller group sizes and static groups
- Drop off and pick up occur in front lobby
- Electronic sign in and out for families with daycare assistance
- Social and physical distancing strategies
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - All adults in the facility will be required to wear masks
- Vigilant hygiene
- Daily health checks
- Defined space for ill children and staff
- CCEL will have zero tolerance for symptoms suggesting an acute illness. As we anticipate there will be minor symptoms or gray areas, we appreciate your full cooperation as we enforce conservative guidelines that aim to optimize the safety and health of all children and staff in attendance and limit the spread of Covid-19

Programs Temporarily Discontinued

During the first phases of re-entry, the following typical classroom procedures must be put on hold:

- Toothbrushing
- Family style dining
- Outside visitors or guests/volunteers
- Combining of classrooms in indoor or outdoor spaces
- Limited whole group activities (this may include circle or community time)
- Visitations to other classrooms or other community spaces in the building



General Preparedness and Planning--Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

In preparation for our reunion, the building has undergone a deep cleaning and sanitization process. Our staff have received training in the proper three-step cleaning and sanitizing process and our classrooms and communal spaces reflect necessary changes in the environment to mitigate the spread of the virus. We ask that all families review proper personal hygiene techniques with their children on a daily basis.

Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Procedures

- [Wash hands](#) often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Remember to supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.
 - The goal is to increase hand hygiene as much as possible during this pandemic.
 - The Caring for Our Children recommendation below is to use soap and water when possible and when there is visible soiling, but hand sanitizer is permissible if soap and water is not available. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended to significantly increase the frequency of hand hygiene. If alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available and will increase the frequency that children and staff do hand hygiene, then use it if necessary. Remember that alcohol-based hand sanitizer is toxic if ingested and must be kept out of reach of small children.
- Nightly deep cleaning and sanitizing will occur
- Playground equipment will be sanitized between classroom uses
- Bathrooms and other high contact areas will be sanitized throughout the day
- Cloth toys and hard to clean toys will be removed from the classroom spaces
- Toys will be sanitized throughout the day after use

Personal Protective Equipment

Staff at CCEL will be provided with three reusable/washable cloth face masks. Disposable face masks are on hand in the event they are needed. Staff will continue to wear gloves during cleaning, diapering and preparing food. Hand washing or use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after these procedures is always required, whether or not gloves are used.

- [Current Guidance on Use of Masks](#)



- Adults and children over 2 years should wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth when in the community. Children at CCEL will not be required to wear a mask.
- All adults in the building will be wearing a cloth face covering; children are not required to wear masks. If a parent would like for a child over two years old to wear a mask, that discussion should occur with the center director prior to returning.
- Cloth face coverings will NOT be put on babies and children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.
- A cloth face covering prevents the spread of the virus from the user to another person. It also prevents the user from touching their nose and mouth.
- A mask does not protect the wearer from droplets in the air spread by another person or child.
- Children may not be able to reliably wear, remove, and handle masks.
- Do not wear masks when engaging in vigorous physical activity.

We understand the challenges of wearing face coverings while serving young children. Staff at CCEL will wear cloth masks while in the center. Cloth masks are used to reduce the likelihood of transmission of the virus to other staff members and children.

Procedures for sick children and staff

- If children are sick (uncontrollable cough, runny nose, fever, fatigue), please keep them at home and notify the center of the absence.
- Staff will continually monitor the health of children throughout the day. If a child shows any symptoms (cough, runny nose, fever, fatigue, changes in behavior), the parent or guardian will be notified and the child will be escorted with a staff member to the designated sick room.
- Children may return to the center after clearance from a physician or a negative COVID 19 test.
- Sick staff members should not return to work until they have met the [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#) or have a negative COVID 19 test.

If someone becomes sick:

- The multipurpose room has been set up as a sick room. Any child or adult who becomes sick at the center will stay there (with another adult at all times) until he or she is picked up. The room will then be cleaned and disinfected.
- Families at the center will be notified when any child or adult is sent home sick.



- CCEL will follow CDC guidance on how to [disinfect the building or facility](#) if someone is sick. We have contracted with a cleaning crew that has the proper disinfectants to properly clean our building.

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member, we will:

- Notify local and county health officials.
- Cornerstone Center will close for a minimum of two days if a staff or student is diagnosed with COVID-19 to complete a thorough cleaning. We will follow the advice of our local health officials.
- Notify all individuals who have come in contact with or in close proximity to the confirmed individual.
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas.
- If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

When can a person with COVID-19 return to the program?

- A person with COVID-19 must be isolated for a minimum of 7 days after symptom onset and 72 hours after their fever resolves without fever-reducing medications. For example, if the fever and symptoms resolve on day 7, staff can return on day 10.

Plan for Absenteeism Among Your Staff

- CCEL staff completed a survey to gauge which teachers and staff are able to return and when. Teachers and staff unable to return to work due to various reasons, including school-aged childcare needs or those at higher risk for severe illnesses from COVID -19 will be staying home at this time.
- CCEL will reduce the hours that the center is open in order to accommodate a smaller number of staff.



Procedures During Time of COVID-19

Social Distancing Strategies

Cornerstone Center for Early Learning understands that social distancing is complicated and difficult to maintain in an early childhood care setting. Here are some ways that we can help to mitigate the risks:

- No combining classrooms in outdoor or indoor communal spaces.
- Classrooms will be open with up to 10 preschoolers, up to 8 two year olds, and up to 4 infants/toddlers with 2 teachers.
- The classroom groups will remain with the same children in the classroom each day with the same teachers. No floater teachers will be used to move between classrooms. Floating teachers will be assigned to specific classrooms or will perform supporting functions outside the classroom.
- Classrooms will be overstaffed in order to properly provide the necessary breaks for teachers during the day and the necessary sanitization.
- Staff do not enter other classrooms throughout the day.
- Drop off and pick up will occur in the CCEL lobby
 - More information on drop off and pick up can be found [here](#). (need to change to link to our procedure)
- At nap time, children's naptime cots or cribs are spaced out as much as possible. Children are placed head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.

Clean and Disinfect

[Caring for Our Children](#) (CFOC) provides national standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection of educational facilities for children. Toys that can be put in the mouth will be cleaned and sanitized. Other hard surfaces, including diaper changing stations, door knobs, and floors will be disinfected continuously throughout the day by teachers and the cleaning crew.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) provides [guidance on cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces](#). This guidance provides specific information and supplies that are needed to implement a vigorous cleaning and disinfecting schedule.

Here are the procedures that CCEL has in place:

- An additional teacher is in each classroom to perform the necessary cleaning and disinfecting procedures throughout the day.
- All toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized (cloth toys or others too large) will be removed from classrooms.



- Each classroom has a dirty and clean toy bin outside of the classroom door. When a toy has been used by a child (for infants and toddlers, if the toy has been placed in the child’s mouth, etc), the toy will immediately be placed in the dirty toy bin outside of the classroom door. The administrative staff and kitchen crew will routinely clean and sanitize the toys then return them to the classroom for a new rotation of use.
- Classrooms are purposefully overstaffed to allow one teacher to concentrate on cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting throughout the day following the three step cleaning process (wash with soap water, rinse, sanitize).
- All cleaning materials are to be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Cot sheets, crib sheets, lovies and blankets are laundered daily. The center has purchased an additional supply of cot and crib sheets, so a freshly laundered crib sheet is used each day. All soft blankets and lovies must remain at the center and be machine-washable.
- Cots are sanitized after each use.
- Classrooms will have their own set of “outdoor” toys. Those toys will remain with that set of children and brought in and out on the playground.
- The playground equipment will be sanitized between groups of children using the playground.
- Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures. In an over-abundance of caution we will limit the selection of books out at one time and rotate allowing at least 24 hours between use.

Healthy Hand Hygiene Behavior

- All children and staff engage in hand hygiene at the following times (not an exhaustive list):
 - Arrival to the facility and after breaks
 - Before and after preparing food or drinks
 - Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
 - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
 - Before and after diapering
 - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
 - After playing outdoors or in sand
 - Before and after handling sensory material such as playdough
 - After handling garbage



- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance to the building where soap and water are not readily available.
- Assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone.
 - After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.

Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- For the most specific information on drop-off and pick-up, please see this [document](#).
- Children will be dropped off at the center directly in the lobby.
- A portable handwashing station is set up at the entrance of the facility, so that children can wash their hands before going to their classroom.
- Parents/guardians will sign in using an electronic sign-in system. More information on how to perform the sign-in will be provided in a separate communication.
- The staff member assisting with drop-off will use a sanitized thermometer and a gloved hand to check the temperature of the child before getting him or her out of his or her seat. The temperature must be under 100°F. The staff member will ask the parent or guardian about the child's health and potential exposure.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for [severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- Families should talk to their children about this different drop-off procedure in advance. Please see the video [here](#) to assist you in ways to have a meaningful “good-bye” with your child without physically hugging.

Screening and Exclusion Procedures Upon Arrival

Persons who have a fever of 100⁰ or above or other signs of illness (cough, runny nose, fatigue) will not be admitted to the facility. Parents should be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Please call the center if you are keeping your child home due to this reason.

- Individuals who have a fever or other signs of illness will not be admitted into the center.
- Individuals with a history of COVID-19 exposure, including travel within the last 14 days in a state or country identified as a hotspot for COVID-19, and those showing signs of illness will not be admitted into the center.
 - Children who are sick, with the typical reasons kids get sick (vomiting, rash, diarrhea, pink eye etc.) should be excluded in accordance with licensing policies.
 - **Individuals should be fever free for at least 72 hours**, without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol® or Advil®) before returning.



- Current information about when individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 or individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should stay home is available on the [COVID-19 Resource Center](#).

Modified Ratios to Ensure Safety

Classrooms will be open with up to 10 preschoolers, up to 8 two year olds, and up to 4 infants/toddlers with 2 teachers. No new children or caregivers will be allowed to enter throughout the day.

- When possible, children will be kept 6 feet apart during nap time (can have cots oriented head to foot).
- Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces will occur as often as possible due to the addition of an additional teacher in each classroom.

No nonessential people in the center

No nonessential visitors or volunteers will be allowed in the center. Only children and their teachers will be allowed in each classroom.

Outside therapists and counselors will not be allowed in the center at this time. The center will be happy to assist in setting up virtual sessions with therapists or assist in scheduling therapy sessions at home.

Food Preparation and Meal Service

- Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided by St. Louis City Public Schools.
- Formula and baby food will continue to be provided.
- All meals will be served to children instead of family-style dining so children are not using the same serving utensils.
- Disposable cups, plates and utensils will be used.
- Staff will continue to eat with children at tables with one space in between each child.
 - It is important to maintain a social climate and communal eating though we are not serving ourselves.

CCEL will follow all other applicable federal, state, and local regulations and [guidance](#) related to safe preparation of food.

Physical Space

During the initial phases of re-opening, changes to the physical space of classrooms is necessary to allow for social/physical distancing and ease of cleaning and disinfecting.



- Less furniture in each room to allow children to spread out.
- Fewer toys
 - Toys will be used in a rotation manner so they can be disinfected between uses
 - Fabric toys will be removed from classrooms
- Rugs will be replaced with plastic mats that can be cleaned and sanitized when children are not using them.
- To maintain a sense of LOVE, BELONGING and APPROPRIATE POWER for our center, the physical space in each classroom will include family boards/pictures, individual cubbies, job charts, etc. Child artwork will remain on the walls so children may see themselves reflected.
- The fish continue to create a warm and welcoming entry space for all children. CCEL will not stop children from saying hello and good-bye to their friends, the fish, but will disinfect the glass throughout the day and entry and exit process to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- In infant-toddler classrooms, all adults will wear shoe coverings when entering or designated 'classroom shoes' to reduce the risk of outside contaminants being on the floor where children crawl and play.

Use of Playgrounds/Outdoor Space

Spending time outside is an important time of the day to retain. Children of all ages will have an opportunity for daily outdoor play, weather permitting. The following adjustments will be made during the early phases of re-opening.

- Time outside but in smaller chunks of time
- One classroom at a time (stable group) on the playground
- Disinfect equipment between stable groups (wearing gloves)
- Plan activities that limit close physical contact, sharing of equipment, and waiting in line

What should we bring to school?

- Children should come to the center with two extra changes of clothes in a ziplock bag with his or her name on it on the first day.
- Families are asked to minimize outside toys brought into the center. Lovies or special naptime blankets or toys may be brought to the center on the first day, but will be washed and kept in the child's cubby throughout the time here.
- CCEL will continue to provide all diapers and wipes.



Communication with Families

Regular communication with families is important. It will be even more difficult now that you cannot physically see your child's teacher. Your child will come home on Friday from the center with a written communication. (Infants and toddlers will continue to receive daily sheets.) Families are also encouraged to call throughout the day to check in on his or her child's progress or well-being. Family members may call the center and be transferred to their child's classroom throughout the day.

CCEL is working on creating other forms of communication for families with classroom teachers throughout the day. We will continue to update families as we begin to implement new forms of communication at the center.



Vulnerable/High Risk Groups

Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. To protect those at [higher risk](#), it's important that everyone practices [healthy hygiene behaviors](#).

- We encourage staff members who are considered high risk or vulnerable to talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk and to self-determine if they should stay home. We support the decision of those staff members. UCCC also asks that families who fall into the high risk category also talk with their healthcare provider to determine if returning to childcare if appropriate or not for their child at this time.
- Information about [COVID-19 in](#) children is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that many children have mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. If you have children with underlying health conditions, talk to your pediatrician about their risk.

Financial Responsibility

Families who are sending their child(ren) to CCEL will be responsible for tuition payments based on the child's age effective his or her start date.

The financial implications of being fully-staffed and under-enrolled is very challenging for any early childhood education center. CCEL is considering a variety of ways to continue offering high quality child care under the current guidelines and restrictions. We will continue to keep families updated regarding any changes that must occur.

Parent Resources

Support for returning to care

- Here is a resource from [Zero to Three](#) on supporting the transition back to child care
- [Video](#) to support hellos/goodbyes

Helping children understand masks and thermometers

- A quick resource about masks from [Zero to Three](#)
- [A story about masks](#)

More general resources

- [Sesame Street](#) has many resources available about supporting children and families during this time including hand washing, supporting children when they miss their friends, creating routines, and more.
- [Conscious Discipline](#) has lots of free printable stories to support children understand what is going on right now in the world as well as webinars and resources to support parents.

Other Resources

CDC's website contains a variety of resources for child care programs and K-12 schools, including detailed guidance, considerations for closures, and frequently asked questions for administrators, teachers, and parents. Together, these resources provide additional information on:

- What to do if a child or staff member at your facility becomes sick.
- Closures of child care programs.

The resources emphasize that any decision about temporary closures of child care programs or cancellation of related events should be made in coordination with your federal, state, and local educational officials as well as state and local health officials. Child care programs are not expected to make decisions about closures on their own.

Guidance is also available on these topics:

- [Children and COVID-19](#)
- [Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- Information about COVID-19 and:
 - [Pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)
 - [Stress and coping](#)

EXPANDED RESOURCE LIST

National Center on Early Childhood Health & Wellness (NCECHW)

- Email: health@ecetta.info
- Website: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health>
- COVID-19 Health Information:
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/physical-health/coronavirus/health-hygiene>

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

- Guidance Related to Childcare During COVID-19
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/guidance-related-to-childcare-during-covid-19/>
- Guidance on Providing Pediatric Ambulatory Services via Telehealth During COVID-19
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/guidance-on-providing-pediatric-ambulatory-services-via-telehealth-during-covid-19/>



- Critical Updates on COVID-19
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs in Emergencies
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/children-with-special-healthcare-needs.html>
- Supplemental Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>
- Talking with Children about COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

Caring for Our Children (CFOC) Online Standards Database

- <https://nrckids.org/CFOC>

Child Care Aware® of America

- Coronavirus Updates and Resources for Child Care Providers
<https://info.childcareAware.org/blog/coronavirus-updates-and-resources-for-child-care-providers-and-crrs>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Missouri Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

- http://www.moaimh-ec.org/covid-19?utm_source=Members+and+Friends+%28signed+up+for+info+etc%29&utm_campaign=2b4936c8c7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_10_17_01_47_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_93c06658ce-2b4936c8c7-54755235

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

- <https://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/covid-19-updates.php>
- Frequently Asked Questions for Child Care Programs Re-Opening After Being Closed due to COVID-19
<https://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/pdf/faqs-child-care-re-opening-after-covid.pdf>

Missouri Department of Mental Health, Early Childhood Mental Health



- <https://dmh.mo.gov/healthykids>

Missouri Department of Social Services

- <https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19/>

National Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Association

- Caring for Children while Social Distancing
<https://cacfp.ispringcloud.com/acc/a6v1jvU0NDYzOA/s/44638-uWjzs-d0E7Q-6puDA>

Office of Child Care

- <https://childcare.gov/covid-19>

Sesame Street: How to Self Hug with Abby Cadabby

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa_qNH8u3OM

