



Dear Parents,

You don't know me. But we are connected. I work on behalf of the teachers who are caring for your child when you go to work during this pandemic. I get to know hundreds of them all across this city. I worry about all of them. I am asking you to care about them, too.

As child care programs try to reopen, our city's early educators need our gratitude and support. They don't get the pay or often the respect that they deserve. Many choose to live on the margins for the honor of being in the classroom. They are no different than the teachers in the K-12 system, except that they are returning to the classroom earlier without the protections of policies that allow them to close in a surge. Like you, they are compelled to work as they have bills to pay and families to care for. And in order to be open for you, they are moving mountains.

Teachers have worked long hours to learn new health protocols and to provide great learning while keeping children safe. They came in when you weren't looking to move all the furniture to allow for social distancing and create outdoor classrooms. And even now, they do extra to clean and to sanitize the toys, to wash the linens and to wipe down the bathrooms—all in addition to creating rich learning experiences everyday for the children while you are away.

They welcome your child every day with big smiles and hide the fears that every teacher is holding about getting Covid-19, passing it to someone, or bringing it home from work to their own families. They juggle the joy of teaching with the new bravery that is required to care for children. They lean on one another for support as they know that you also have a lot to worry about.

We are thankfully learning that Covid-19 is not transmitted easily from child to child in early care settings. It is largely transmitted from adult to adult and from asymptomatic children to adults. The teachers are not protected when children do not wear masks and if you do not wear facial coverings. As you return to work, use public transportation and resume your lives, you will increasingly also be exposed to Covid-19. For teachers, every family member connected to each child in their group becomes part of their microbial pool. This is true for your family as well.

There have been positive Covid-19 cases connected to families of children and staff linked to child care. It is inevitable as child care is essential and woven into communities. As a parent, you weigh the risks to your child when you leave the shelter of your home. There are no easy decisions during this pandemic and SF early educators are also doing their very best to reduce the risks for your child, for you and for themselves.

There are things that you can and should do to help your family and the teachers get through this health crisis together.

- 1) Do be part of the effort to keep everyone healthy. Keep your child at home if they have any symptoms or have been exposed to someone with Covid 19.
- 2) Follow the Health Protocols in place by the program. Understand that they may change as we learn more about how the virus spreads.

- 3) Wear a facial covering every time you drop off your child. Encourage your child to do so if asked to do so by the teachers. Teach them how to put it on and off.
- 4) When you are not at work, stay home if you can and follow social distancing protocols. Follow Shelter in Place rules. Remember that your actions in the evening and on the weekend are connected to the children, families and teachers in your child's group.
- 5) Be kind and Plan ahead. Due to possible exposures, your child care may be closed temporarily for cleaning or a classroom may be closed at any given moment. Don't get mad. It is not the fault of the teachers. It is Covid-19.
- 6) If your child must quarantine, even if they don't have symptoms, please try to understand. Young children can have Covid-19 and have no symptoms. The teachers are trying to keep all children safe, not just yours. The teachers are following the guidelines from the Department of Health. They don't make this stuff up.
- 7) Answer the phone and read the communication and emails from the staff. They no longer can hang out and talk with you as they might have in the past and rely on your partnership to do the best for your child.
- 8) Help out if your child care needs extra supplies or assistance. It may be disinfectant or gloves. It may be extra masks or face shields. It might be sanitizing the play equipment outside at the end of the day. Offer assistance.
- 9) Donate if you can to help the program survive the year. Advocate on behalf of child care's survival and well being to local, state and national policymakers. If you don't care today, they may not be there for you tomorrow.
- 10) Say "thank you for being here for us". It will mean a lot coming from you.

We can get through this and teach our children an important lesson about working together and caring for one another. We are stronger together....just 6 feet apart.

I am rooting for all of us,

Lisa Lee, Early Care and Education Program Officer, Teacher, Grandmother

In the time of Covid-19 2020