



Early Literacy Academy

CHILD CARE CENTER

May 15, 2020

Dear ELA Family,

Thank you for your patience as we attempt to remain compliant with the ever-changing regulations between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia. I'd like to start this update with a huge THANK YOU to the families who have continued to support us through this pandemic. I know that there are many sacrifices that are being made and we are thankful for the support. We would not be hopeful of a strong reopening if it were not for your support and dedication. Your words of encouragement and gratitude are uplifting during these difficult times.

Although I would love to have a much more detailed update for you, we are receiving the same vague and sparse information as you are from our local and state government. So far we are hoping that we can reach the Yellow Phase identified by the Governor and reopen in early June when the current stay at home order is scheduled to end. We know that working families will need us now more than ever to be available to provide safe, reliable care as parents are called back in to work and some start on different paths. With all of the stories of the childcare system collapsing, we are doing all within our power to make thoughtful decisions that will allow us to continue to be here for you.

In our ELA business continuity plan, the 25% tuition reduction was carefully considered to ensure that our basics are covered - the lion's share is being utilized to cover our staff's salary and health benefits. We designed the plan with intentions to reopen fully staffed when permitted, allowing the business to absorb whatever impact the pandemic would have on our ability to provide services. We predicted a 40% loss in enrollment and to date approximately 30% of our students at our Oxford campus and 50% of our students at our Fairmount campus have withdrawn from the program. Comparatively, ELA tuition rates are generally 15-50% lower than similarly situated programs yet offer more services such as a curriculum and food program. When centers report that they have cut tuition rates by 50%, it can be pretty deceiving like those department stores that raise prices to offer a discount after raising prices. I also know of at least one center in the area that boasts a 50% reduction during the pandemic, yet their base tuition is \$3,500 monthly. Their tuition at half price is still more than our full tuition. ELA has always been proud to offer high quality childcare at an affordable rate. The only areas we have really been able to save on costs are food and some supplies - the remaining expenses have stayed consistent or actually increased. We will also incur additional costs to be able to comply with new regulations. I assure you, we are not operating with a profit and have utilized company and personal reserves to meet our business obligations. As decisions on grants and loans are being rendered, we will continue to evaluate our ongoing financial obligations and make decisions to ensure we are able to open fully staffed when the time comes. If there is any possibility of an additional tuition reduction, the decision will be announced globally. While I would love to consider each family's situation independently, I am also committed to maintaining a fair process. Our costs for care are fixed, non-negotiable, and will remain the same for every family. I am certain that the last thing a family

wants to hear once the order is lifted that we are unable to open right away. We also have more families returning each week and hopefully will be open to everyone soon.

For families who withdraw from the program, once the stay at home order is lifted, we will establish a baseline re-entry date, then begin providing an earlier dates to families who were able to support us financially during this pandemic. I will publish a chart that will list departure dates and re-enrollment eligibility dates. Our ability to re-enroll will be based on our current enrollment numbers and our ability to remain fully staffed. We will continue to provide care to children of essential employees and have had an influx of applicants for care and employment over the past few weeks, so I am incredibly hopeful that all will be well from a business perspective. Once we are again on stable ground, there will be incentives provided for families who were able to support the continuity of our program during the pandemic. In the interim, we will continue to provide Zoom lessons and curriculum bags for students to engage with their teachers throughout the day.

Please review the increased health and safety procedures established as we reopen to ensure our facility remains a clean, safe space for all students and staff members. We are required to demonstrate enhanced safety and emergency procedures in our daily routines. Our Administration will continue to work to ensure that our staff understands and is implementing the practice of social distancing outside of the work environment. Any staff member presenting with an illness may not report to work. Vendors will be required to take additional precautions and conform to minimal contact visit standards to reduce the outside traffic to our centers.

- **Operating hours** – Until further notice, ELA will continue to operate from 7am – 6pm. We will reevaluate this policy in the coming weeks as SEPTA returns to regular schedule on May 17, 2020. Only families dropping off or picking up students may have access to our building.
 - Withdrawn families will have designated weekend pickup times to retrieve personal belongings.
- **Sanitizing** – We will continue our enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures for all toys, commonly touched and hard services. We will be unable to store strollers and car seats until further notice.
 - Ongoing weekend deep cleans are still in effect.
- **Drop-off and pickup** – Drop off and pickup will occur in a sectioned off part of the center. Students will be brought to parents. Please do not venture beyond the designated waiting area for parents. Please allow yourself enough time to become acclimated with our new policies.
 - Oxford campus – Designated space in the theater area
 - Fairmount campus – Designated space on the first floor
- **Social Distancing** – Please be aware of social distancing guidelines. We may need families to wait outside during drop off and pick up. We ask that one parent enter the facility for drop-off and proceed immediately to hand washing in the bathroom. The one parent rule should apply for pick-up as well
- **Masks** – Adults will be asked to wear masks during pick drop off and pick up. We may briefly ask that you remove it to confirm your identity if necessary. At this time our requirements say that the staff is to “wear masks when feasible”. We will continue to evaluate these guidelines and determine what is in the best interest for the safety, health and emotional well being of our little ones.

- **Menu** – Please be flexible with our menu. Some of our items are unavailable and/or limited in supply. We will make sure all meals are balanced and familiar, but they may be served out of order.
- **Fevers** - Students with temperatures above 100.4 will not be allowed into care. Temperatures will be taken daily upon arrival and throughout the day. In the event that your little one presents with a higher than normal temperature, they will be required to stay home for at least one full program day. Please do not give your little ones fever-reducing medicine prior to dropping them off and be vigilant about answering calls from the center and responding to messages from Brightwheel.
- **Tummy Troubles** - Students with loose bowels will not be accepted into care. In the event that your little one presents with loose bowels, they will be required to stay home for at least one full program day. Please be vigilant about answering calls from the center and messages from Brightwheel.

This list is not exhaustive of the methods we are taking and changes that might be implemented. We sincerely appreciate your patience, flexibility and understanding while we navigate these uncharted waters together. Know that we will make it through this in the safest way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaToya Monroe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LaToya Monroe
Owner/Director