December 21, 2020

Dear Preschool Families:

Since reopening after the spring closure, we elected to not require facial coverings for any of the children in the ELC. Several factors influenced this decision, and we are currently revisiting this policy and would appreciate your feedback.

Factors include:

* The CDD Health Guidance for Childcare and Summer Programs strongly recommends facial coverings for children over 2 years old **when developmentally appropriate**. The guidance defines “developmentally appropriate” as “when children can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering.” Based on our observations, we felt that the children in our program would have difficulty following these recommendations.
* We are concerned that staff will be spending a lot of time managing the children’s mask wearing, and that this would lead to power struggles.
* At the time of our re-opening, there was little community spread in our area.
* We learned that the WHO (Worldwide Health Organization) guidance differs from the CDC. “An international and multidisciplinary expert group brought together by WHO reviewed evidence on COVID-19 disease and transmission in children and the limited available evidence on the use of masks by children. Based on this and other factors such as children’s psychosocial needs and developmental milestones, WHO and UNICEF advise that children aged **5 years and under** should not be required to wear masks. This is based on the safety and overall interest of the child and the capacity to appropriately use a mask with minimal assistance.” (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19>)
* We have learned that the definition of “close contact” that would primarily pertain to children in the ELC does not factor in mask-wearing. Anyone (adult or child) in a classroom for 90 minutes or longer with an infected person is considered a close contact, mask or not.

All that said, we are constantly reflecting and reviewing our policies and procedures to meet the moment. We are offering a survey [LINK HERE](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Uhllm_rmmUSUx6qN7AxrOg70RzdyUhFPqdUZcQix0wtUNFFTTjFXVzBTQlgyQ0pLQkdYOUVDVktQMi4u&wdLOR=c8D7DFCAC-6DFB-4E96-9BC7-42E10382ABFA) to hear your perspective. Thank you!

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