

As a working parent and as a scientist, I strongly oppose the proposal in Executive Order 122-20 to limit childcare to 50% capacity. A recent study from Yale University (<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2020/10/16/peds.2020-031971>) of 57,000 childcare providers determined that “Within the context of considerable infection mitigation efforts in U.S. child care programs, exposure to child care during the early months of the U.S. pandemic was not associated with elevated risk for COVID-19 transmission to providers.” As these mitigation efforts at childcare centers have continued, and increased, as our knowledge of virus transmission has increased, I fail to see on what basis the county proposes to limit childcare capacity to 50% - I have not located any research suggesting this is a data-supported measure. Especially worrying is that this proposal would take effect immediately, sending both childcare centers and the families they serve scrambling to figure out next steps – would all the children at the center begin attending on a rotating half-time basis? (This option would still expose the teachers to the full cohort of children and is no safer than the current limit on persons per classroom.) Would half of the children per center simply be kicked out with no notice, and on what basis would the center make the choice of which children would need to leave? What if it is not financially viable for the center to remain open at 50% capacity, leaving all the families they serve, as well as they staff they employ, with nowhere to turn? The Council cannot ignore the effect the pandemic has had on working mothers in particular (<https://www.minneapolisfed.org/institute/working-papers-institute/iwp33.pdf>), forcing many out of the workforce due to a lack of childcare – are they proposing to worsen this effect in Montgomery County by further limiting the childcare options available?

I am strongly in favor of data-supported measures to curb the pandemic – wearing masks, physical distancing, avoiding indoor dining (which is associated with a rise in Covid19 rates - [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6936a5.htm?s\\_cid=mm6936a5\\_x#contribAff](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6936a5.htm?s_cid=mm6936a5_x#contribAff)), keeping gyms closed, and improving indoor ventilation. I am pleased that the County mandated masks at daycares for children over 2. I cannot support a baseless reduction in childcare availability at this critical time. Please vote NO on Order 122-20.