



Accredited by

November 9, 2020

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON THE COVID-19 LOCAL ORDER

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the COVID-19 Local Order.

We are a non-profit child care center serving Montgomery County children and their families. We fully support the COVID-19 Local Order to maintain maximum child care group sizes of 15. The increased cleaning and other enhanced health and safety protocols as a result of COVID-19 have put increased and necessary demands on child care staff. For example, in addition to caring for and teaching children, our staff disinfect the bathrooms after use by a group, they are disinfecting and cleaning toys and other classroom equipment constantly and they take periodic health and temperature checks on children throughout the day. They are true heroes. It would make it very difficult for staff to go back to our pre-COVID group sizes and still maintain the quality care and follow health and safety guidelines. In addition, with COVID numbers going up, it is prudent to maintain smaller group sizes.

Our support for these continued measures do come at a financial cost to our center. We have been operating in Montgomery County since 1975, and unlike many child care centers, are fortunate to have built up a cash reserve over these 45 years, but we are depleting it with each passing month. From April to August, we lost over \$140,000 in revenue. A federal Paycheck Protection Program loan, and a non-profit grant from the state helped to keep our staff employed, providing virtual learning to the children in our care, but that money has been depleted. We did not receive a Montgomery County Child Care Grant. We reopened in July to provide child care for children of Essential and Phase I employees at much lower capacities, at times with 2-4 children in a classroom. We are currently operating at 75% capacity at a significant loss of revenue.

We support the measure, but we are concerned that Montgomery COVID-19 Local Order and the recent order from the Maryland State Department of Education allowing child care centers to revert to pre-COVID-19 group sizes and the return to 10:1 child to teacher ratios are contradictory and will be financially burdensome. **Reverting back to the 10:1 ratio while maintaining a maximum of 15 in a group is forcing our center to make the difficult choice between hiring additional staff, or not giving our teachers a break during their 8-hour day.** Child care workers are literally sacrificing their lives in order for families to work, and we truly

appreciate that the COVID-19 Local Order will continue to protect our health and welfare. Our operating expenses are greater than our revenue, but at this stage, we are fortunate that we can still place the priority on our health and safety.

Respectfully,



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Executive Director



Deborah P. Duffy  
Assistant Director