



Empowering Partnerships For Education

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Dear DCIU and DCTS Families,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you are staying safe.

In April, we informed you about Governor Wolf's order to close all Early Childhood Education and K-12 programs in Pennsylvania through the end of the 2019-20 year in an effort to keep staff and students safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents, students and staff were suddenly challenged with a whole new way of teaching and learning. You all adapted and persevered, and we cannot thank you enough for your hard work and exceptional efforts.

With a highly unprecedented 2019-20 year behind us and summer well underway, I am now writing to inform you of DCIU and DCTS plans to reopen schools and programs for all children, students, and clients for the 2020-21 year. We have been working diligently to develop a Health and Safety Plan in accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) guidance for reopening childcare, preschools, and schools in Pennsylvania. The Plan, which was developed by a team of DCIU and DCTS administrators and staff and County health and emergency officials, guides our decisions and protocols in keeping students and staff safe and attempting to mitigate issues related to the pandemic. The DCIU Board of Directors approved the Health and Safety Plan on July 1, 2020.

The goal of our Health and Safety Plan is to put guidance and strategies in place to support pandemic mitigation efforts. The Governor's office, PDE and OCDEL have categorized reopening into three broad phases: red, yellow, or green. These designations signal how we may begin easing some restrictions on school, work, congregate settings, and social interactions. In the Red Phase, DCIU and DCTS schools remain closed and remote learning will continue. In the Yellow and Green Phases, DCIU and DCTS will totally reopen for all students and staff with modifications for safety.

Per the Plan, the launch date for in-person learning to begin again is July 1, 2020 for Early Head Start, August 31, 2020 for Early Intervention, and September 8, 2020 for all other programs. Although we plan to open school as close to "normal" as possible to provide familiarity and stability for our children, students, and clients, the 2020-21 year will not be "business as usual." To the extent practicable, in-person learning will provide social distancing and other modifications where possible to help minimize the risk that someone becomes infected.

The Health and Safety Plan can be found on the DCIU website (www.dciu.org) or by clicking this link: [**DCIU-DCTS Health and Safety Plan**](#). Here is a brief summary of the main segments of the Plan:

- **Cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and ventilating learning spaces, surfaces, and any other areas used by students (i.e., restrooms, drinking fountains, hallways, and transportation)**

- DCIU and DCTS will continue to provide regular cleaning of surfaces with soap and water and will disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects within our buildings and on DCIU operated vehicles at least daily, including door handles, handrails, sink handles, elevator buttons and drinking fountains.
- **Social Distancing and Other Safety Protocols**
 - Our goal is social distance in classroom/ learning space that allows for 6 feet of separation among students and staff throughout the day, to the maximum extent feasible. When that's not possible, the goal is 3 feet
 - Limit the use of cafeterias and other congregate settings, and serving meals in alternate settings such as classrooms
 - Urge increased hygiene practices for students and staff including the manner and frequency of hand-washing and other best practices
 - Posting of signs, in highly visible locations, that promote everyday protective measures, and how to stop the spread of germs
 - Restrict visitors and volunteers in our buildings
 - Limit the sharing of materials among students and children under the age of 5 and among elementary grade (K – 12) students
 - Limit in-person meetings as much as possible and conduct virtual meeting instead
- **Monitoring Student and Staff Health**
 - Monitor students and staff for symptoms and history of exposure; require daily temperature and symptoms checks prior to arriving at programs
 - Use of face coverings (masks or face shields) by all staff
 - Use of face coverings (masks or face shields) by students over the age of 2
 - Unique safety protocols for students with complex needs or other vulnerable individuals
 - Restricting staff and student travel, professional development and field trips

Finally, I encourage you to review the Health and Safety Plan. Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact your child's principal or building supervisor. I also want to remind you that the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and community continues to be a top priority. We will continue to do our best to ensure the health and safety of all stakeholders.

Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Sincerely,



Maria Edelberg, Ed.D.
Executive Director