



November 12, 2020

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

We hope this letter finds you healthy and well, and we thank you for your continued support. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us all in ways unimaginable. Since the initial school closure announcement in March 2020, families, staff and providers have worked together to offer a continuation of services to children primarily through virtual means, referred to as Tele-Intervention and, in some cases, through traditional face-to-face intervention, as required.

As a preschool early intervention provider in Pennsylvania, Elwyn Early Learning Services (ELS) has continued to follow the Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL) COVID-19 guidance and statewide decision trees. We have kept abreast of current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) releases and have consulted with Elwyn's Medical Director regularly to keep our eye on the local risk factors, rates of infection and the impact that COVID-19 is having on the ELS system. We have learned that social distancing, the use of PPE, daily screening of staff/students, temperature checks, sanitization and handwashing are very effective in controlling transmission of the virus. Due to the diligence of our entire network of parents, staff and children in the application of those guidelines and practices, ELS has experienced low rates of infection in our programs. We cannot thank you enough for participating in this process and working alongside us to keep the city safe.

Despite our best efforts and as expected, the COVID-19 infection rate is on the rise in the City of Philadelphia. In determining safe and appropriate instructional models, we have been tasked with a reliance on two standard public health metrics: incidence rate and the percent positivity of diagnostic testing. According to the *COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring Dashboard*, Philadelphia stands at 164.9 incidents of infection per 100,000, and the Philadelphia rate of infection now stands at 9.1%. According to the *Department of Education Level of Community Transition Table*, Philadelphia is now in its third consecutive week of being in the "substantial risk" category for infection. More information regarding these metrics can be found at:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>.

For these reasons, effective Monday, November 16, 2020, Elwyn ELS will return to an instructional model of full remote learning and Tele-Intervention. The implementation of this Tele-Intervention model is applicable for all preschool early intervention services rendered to children in the City of Philadelphia, including multi-disciplinary evaluations, Individualized Education Program meetings (IEP), and service delivery. We will continue to support children, families, and early childhood educational settings with the implementation of early intervention services using a remote learning/tele-intervention model until further notice.

Please know that we do not take this decision lightly. We understand that this may require families to seek alternative childcare arrangements and to work creatively with their IEP teams to provide opportunities for children to access remote learning/tele-intervention. However, a reliance on citywide data and evidence informs us that this is the safest option at this time to help mitigate the spread of the virus. Please continue to work with your IEP Team, LEA Representative (Service Coordinator) and service providers to discuss next steps for shifting into this interim service delivery model.



As your partner in your child's education, we will continue to monitor the standard public health metrics, including incidence rate and the percent positivity of diagnostic testing on a weekly basis. We will continue to collaborate with OCDEL on an ongoing basis and we will remain steadfast in our dedication to keep you informed.

We encourage families that need any sort of assistance in accessing community resources to reach out to our *Family Resource Center* at 215-222-8054, option #2. The *Family Resource Center* is actively supporting families with a wide array of individualized needs on a schedule of Monday through Wednesday, 9am-3pm and Thursday, 9am-2pm. In addition, please visit the Elwyn Early Learning Services website, <https://www.elwyn.org/services/early-learning>, and choose "Current Families" to access the *Elwyn ELS COVID-19 Parent Resource Guide*.

Again, these are trying times and we acknowledge the effort and the care of our families, community partners, and early childhood education community. We wish you and your family health, wellness and good will.

Sincerely,

Veronica Williams
Executive Director
Elwyn Early Learning Services (ELS)