

## Welcome Back!

August 11, 2020

Given the unique circumstances of the past 6 months, that phrase takes on a new dimension of meaning for many of us. We have learned some new vocabulary (social distancing, e-learning, PPE, etc.), new methods of serving children and families, the importance of regular hand washing, and to not take anything for granted. I do hope you had some time this summer to relax, reflect, and prepare for a school year filled with inspiration and creativity that will spark the imagination of all the children.

As we begin our new year together, there are many exciting things your leadership team has been working on to keep the focus of our work on the pursuit of excellence for our program.

While this past year was so abruptly interrupted, our 3 Program Focuses remain consistent moving forward:

- Improvement of Attendance
- Improvement of Instruction
- Improvement of Performance

We will be referencing these in every aspect of what we do to move this program from Good to Great!

Before we were interrupted by a global pandemic, we were beginning to make some real progress on attendance. Attendance celebrations, challenges, and goals in each classroom are essential as we return to ensure this progress continues and attendance remains a priority. Attendance habits formed now will strongly influence the children's attendance as they go on to elementary school and beyond. We need to work to ensure every child is **exceeding** the minimum standard of 85% attendance! This is a project for ALL STAFF!! Encourage your children, encourage your families, and encourage your staff to make a difference!

Improvement of Instruction will be the main focus this year. With full implementation of Creative Curriculum studies, Site Leaders on site every day, and the continued growth of our Instructional Coaching, instructional practice and thus student performance will show marked improvement. We plan to specifically target CLASS scores in the Instructional Support Domain, which has been historically low across the country and in our program. Growth in this and the other domains is essential to the success of our children and this program.

In the attachments that follow, you will find important program updates, schedules, calendars, and other miscellaneous items that need your attention.

You are all leaders! You are empowered to do the very best you can for our children and reflect on your current practice to bring about continuous improvement! Enjoy the remaining days of summer and I look forward to seeing you later this month.

Sincerely,

Matt LeClere

## **Program Updates:**

Classroom Schedules: Please double check your classroom times on the included form, due to various reasons, some **times** and **Class Days** have changed from last year. If you have any questions, please contact your supervisor. Full Day classrooms have all been transitioned into Duration classes this year. The varied start times maximize the number of children we can serve based on families schedules.

Staff Calendar: We have some professional development days planned throughout the year so please pay special attention to those. In addition, all make-up days will be held at the end of the school year. If your classroom is closed for the day, you **may** now use vacation time to cover that time or take it as unpaid time off.

New this year are 2 parent-teacher conference days. These are set aside for teaching staff to be able to complete their conferences on schedule. These days will be used as work days for all other staff so there will be no class on those days. The 2-hour workday coming back from winter break is meant to get classrooms back in order before school resumes.

Transportation: Bus service is only available in Burlington this year. Door to door transport will be offered to AM Dual classrooms to and from school, the part day classroom to and from school, and the PM Dual classrooms home from school. In order to allow enough cleaning time between groups of children, scheduling transportation was quite a task this year.

Electronic Forms: This year many of our forms will be completed electronically. Not only will forms still be on the website, forms such as the behavior report and incident reports will be linked to events in Child Plus. Other forms will be completed this way as well so the leadership team will be sharing more component specific information about this over the next few weeks.

This year we will also be using a program called Eversign that will allow us to send forms to families so that they can be signed electronically. More information will be shared about this as procedures are put into place.

Corse: The Corse building is almost ready for children. The staff there have been working feverishly to unpack, put away their things, and get classrooms and offices set-up. It is a beautiful facility and so many people have worked so hard to make this transition smooth. Thank you to Monte, Dawn, Jackie, Kathy, Jen, Eric and the kitchen staff, Jill and her FDS, and all the staff at Corse. Great Job and Thank You!!

Site Leaders: Kathy Scott has completed the transition and is now the Education Coordinator and Site Leader for Tallarico, Eichacker, and Richardson. Her office is at the Tallarico center and she will be communicating her schedule for being in Ft. Madison. Jackie Bietz has transitioned to the Education Coordinator and Site Leader at Corse, which is where her office is now located. The Tolson center has Dawn Cazin as Site Leader, however, as she continues her duties as Education Manager, she continues to have her office at Central office.

The Site Leader is your “go to” person at each site. They will work to make sure the site is running smoothly, managing daily operations, and dealing with any immediate issues that may come up. For education staff, this is your supervisor. Family Development Specialists, cooks, nurses, and custodians, your supervisor remains the same, however, immediate issues at the site should go to the Site Leader. Component specific questions should still go to that component coordinator.

Masks: With the advent of COVID-19 it has become necessary to adjust the way we think and do things. One of those variables is the wearing of masks. After consultation with Amy, our contact at the Health Department, we have decided to follow their recommendation that ALL staff and children be **required** to wear masks when 6 feet of social distance cannot be maintained. This means that during classroom time, except for eating and sleeping, children should be wearing masks. They do not need to be masked when playing outside. Every effort should be made to positively reinforce the wearing of masks during these times.

Class Size: As a response to COVID-19, we are acting on the advice of the local Health Department to limit class sizes to no more than 10 students and making efforts to keep these children in cohort groups. OHS has granted us the flexibility to limit our classes without restitution or penalty. We will, however, be offering a virtual option to those children not enrolled in face-to-face classes to make sure we are providing services to as many children as we can based on our funded enrollment slots.

Virtual Services: As just mentioned, we will offer virtual services to some children in our program. This option is primarily for those that were not able to attend due to limits on class size. However, based on our parent survey results, some families preferred a fully virtual option for their children. These services will look a little different than they did last year. They will include uploaded video, suggested activities for the families to do with their children, and virtual one-on-one services.

Virtual Pre-Service: Given the current situation with COVID-19, having preservice in a single location with our entire staff in attendance would be considered counterproductive and unwise. Therefore, we will be offering a virtual preservice training this year. This will include a message from 2 guest speakers via Zoom, pre-recorded content video from coordinators, Zoom meeting format for component specific information, and an independent study element which everyone will need to complete. More information will be made available as the date gets closer. Right now, it is vital that you make certain you have access to Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) on a machine with a speaker and a microphone. You do not need to download the software, you will simply be sent a link to click on and follow. You may share a surface or laptop if you keep your groups small, **no more than 3 people to a group.**

Pre-Service will begin at 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 with a live Zoom meeting to welcome everyone back. Please make sure you allow yourself plenty of time to follow the link, in case any technical problems arise.