



## EVERYBODY MATTERS

8/10/20

To Board of EEC,

As an agency that provides childcare services to over 1000 low-income families and a member of MHSA, MASSCAP, and MADCA, I am writing to add our voice to the chorus of agencies respectfully asking for the following;

- Similar to the public schools, we want the ability to provide a virtual education if that is what we feel we can safely provide. We are being forced to open, or to stay open in order to receive funding. We also want to protect the health and safety of our teachers, children, and families but are not provided the opportunity to decide if we feel we can do so safely without catastrophic funding consequences. Why is early childhood being treated differently than K-12? It is time that ECE be afforded the same respect as K-12! We have the youngest learners who do not understand what is happening, who do not understand social distancing, or to keep a mask on, they don't know why they cannot play with their friends, or sit on their teacher's lap. They ask where their toys went, why they cannot play dress up or play with pretend food in the kitchen, and why they cannot sit with their friends at lunch. We are helping to create bonds and trust when teachers are nervous to get too close for fear of contracting this (sometimes) deadly virus. Many of the ECE are older or have underlying medical conditions, but are being forced back into the centers as a result of the decision put forth. We want and deserve the same considerations as public schools.

Since reopening our centers, we have had a number of self-quarantines, positive tests, closures, etc. It is a daily stressor for all early childhood directors, and educators. Trying

to staff the centers is getting more and more difficult! This past week has been especially hard and it seems like it is just starting up!

The Massachusetts early education and care systems are navigating uncharted waters, and we need your support in order to continue to serve and educate our most vulnerable families and children whether we decide this be done virtually or in person.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Lesley Kinney*

Lesley Kinney

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