



STEVEN M. NEUHAUS
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DR. IRINA GELMAN, DPM, MPH, PhD
COMMISSIONER

COUNTY OF ORANGE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

November 6, 2020

Dear Preschool Parents and Legal Guardians:

I hope that this letter finds you and your family healthy and safe. As you know, the New York State Department of Health, through an Executive Order signed by Governor Cuomo, had allowed the resumption of in-person pre-school special education services. Pre-school services as well as the transportation to these services is provided through the Orange County Department of Health.

The local impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic as of November 4, 2020 has resulted in 14,094 confirmed cases as well as 500 deaths to date in Orange County. Of those cases, 46% have been in individuals 18-44 years of age, with the second largest number of confirmed cases in the 45-64 age group (32%). Orange County is currently experiencing a surge in new positive cases. In fact, we continue to see new COVID-19 positive resident cases in Orange County daily. While children account for 963 cases or (6.8%) of the total cases, this virus is completely new and although some symptoms are common among those suffering from the illness, the complete list of symptoms, as well as long term complications remain unknown. In fact, some children seem to be at risk for developing more severe complications from COVID-19, such as multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), which is of great concern, especially for children who are medically fragile. For more information about MIS-C, please visit the following website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/mis-c.html>.

Of additional concern is that the New York State Department of Health has not mandated regular interval testing for COVID-19 prior to in-person service provision for providers of preschool education. This is especially concerning because masks are not recommended in children under two years of age. Further, many children under the age of 5 will not be able to wear masks due to underlying medical conditions and/or inability to keep the masks on for a prolonged period of time, and the providers may also not be able to wear masks due to the nature of the services being provided.

As of the date of this letter, in consideration of all these factors, please consider the continuation of distance learning services and/or parent transportation reimbursement whenever possible.

In order to have in-person pre-school services and/or transportation services, please read the attached Acknowledgement form, sign it and return it to the OCDOH Early Intervention Office prior to the first day of services.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Early Intervention Office at 845-360-6630.

The OCDOH takes the health and safety of our children very seriously, even more so during the worst public health crisis in a century. While infection rates are increasing daily, we need to proceed with caution and take every step possible in resuming in-person services safely and responsibly.

Best regards,

Dr. Irina Gelman, Commissioner
Orange County Health Department



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EARLY INTERVENTION/PRESCHOOL FAMILY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Return Signed Forms to:

Early Intervention Program: Please return a copy of the signed form to the child's Ongoing Service Coordinator. Thank you.

Preschool Services: (Provider obtains from family) Please return a signed copy of this form to both the County and the child's School District. County forms may be sent to: OCDOH/Intervention Services Division at 124 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924 or fax to 845-291-2418. Thank you.

I acknowledge receipt of the **11/6/20 OCDOH Commissioner Letter** to Early Intervention and/or Preschool families regarding the Orange County Concerns for the Global COVID-19 Pandemic.

DATE: _____ Early Intervention Preschool Services

CHILD'S NAME: _____

PRINT PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

11/10/20:wm