



# Reopening Forum

Montessori Heads of School

June 25, 2020

# A bit about us:

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- Bay Area, San Mateo, CA (area of high COVID-19 mitigation)
  - Started with 8 children in my living room
  - 6 Classrooms in 4 buildings on two properties :
    - 2 YCC (18 months to 2.5/3 years)
    - 2 CH (2.5/3-6 years)
    - 2 Elementary (6-12 years)
  - 15 Staff:
    - 6 lead AMI trained teachers
    - 2 AMI trained language assistants
    - 3 untrained teacher aids
    - 1 AMI trained floater (reading aide)
    - 1 full time admin
    - 2 part-time admin
  - 110 students:
    - 60 under 6 in one converted house
    - 50 6-12 in second house across the street
  - Waitlist of 70 (as of March 2020)
  - Our area public schools are unlikely to go back more than 2 days a week if at all.
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March 16<sup>th</sup>  
to June 4<sup>th</sup>

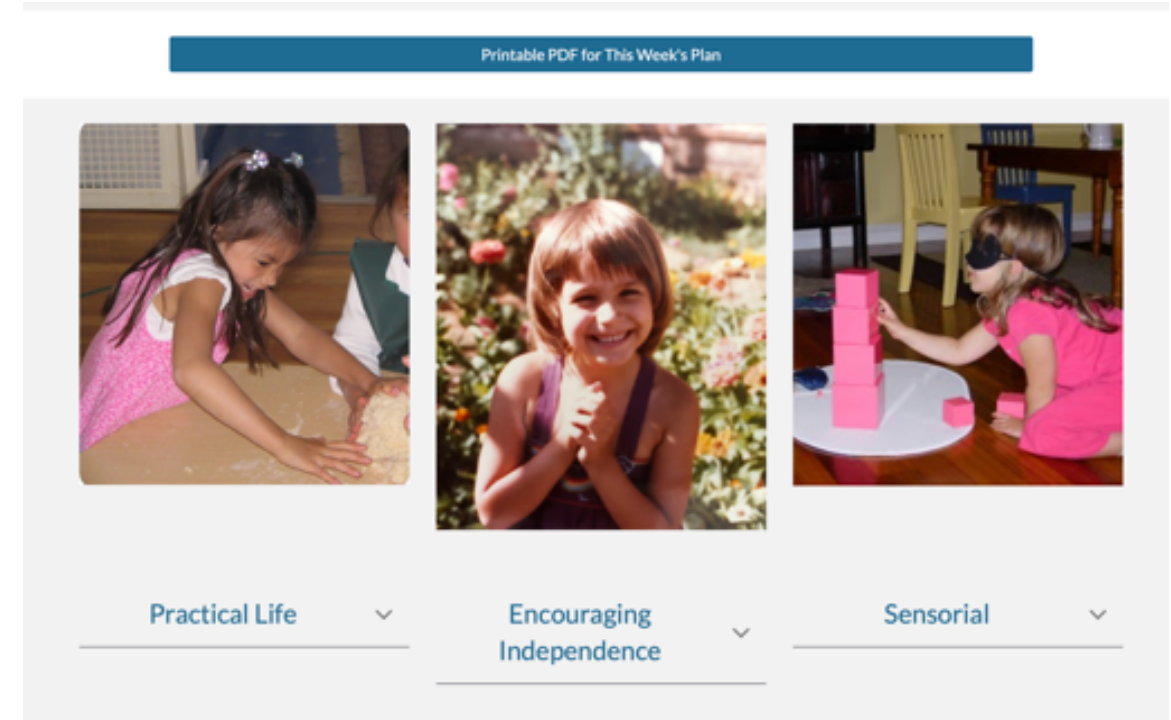
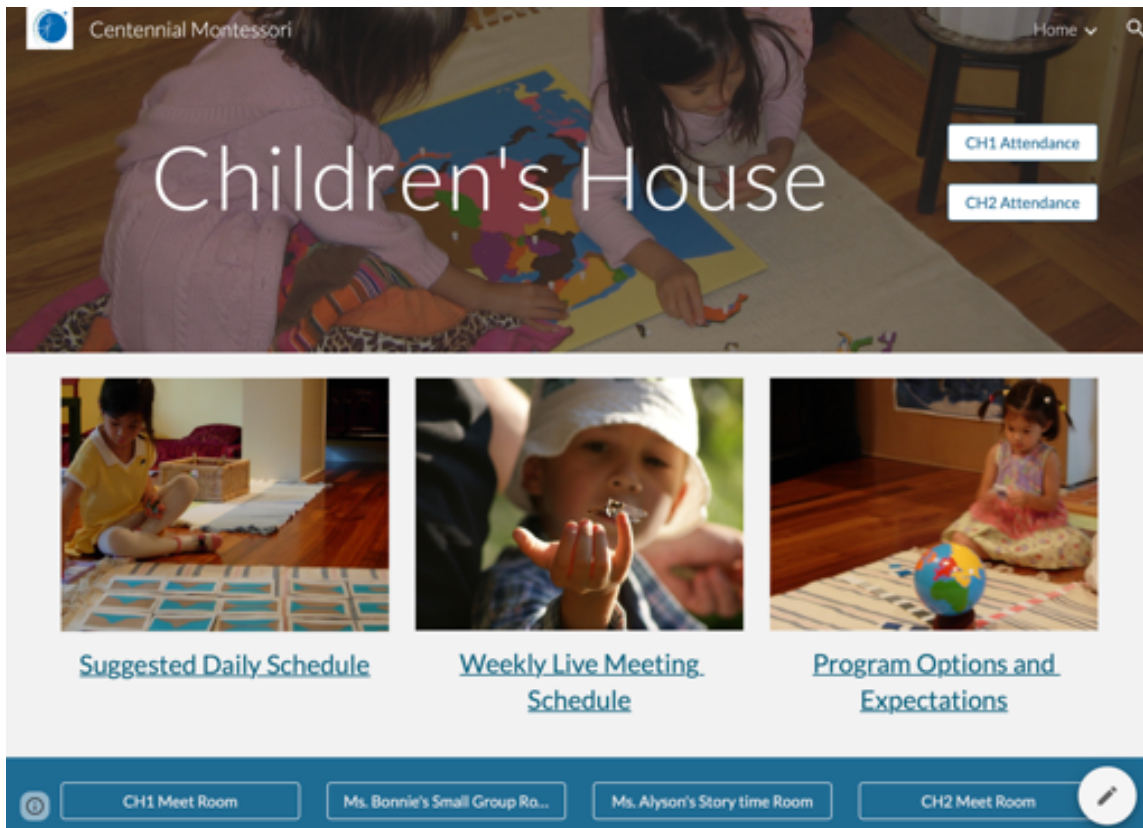
- Closed March 16<sup>th</sup>
- YCC & CH switched focus to parent education and parent consultation
- Huge emphasis on providing community & support
- Distance learning at all levels
- No refund of tuition (all our tuition is paid by Feb 1)
- Refunded summer deposits

Distance learning all levels:

- Learning at home website with weekly activities in areas of the curriculum
- Google classroom for each class (for students at Upper EI and parents at other levels)
- Weekly “mini-parent night” zooms by teachers
- Meet story times/ class gatherings
- Meet lessons for Lower and Upper EI
- Weekly parent coffee chat with Kristi
- Re-opening forums starting May 25 & going every other week



# Learning at Home Website



Thank you, Aidan Montessori, for the idea!

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# Communication

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Parents are as stressed as we are (possible cognitive/memory deficits in all from trauma). Important to find modalities where we and they are “heard” & connecting not just talked at & informed.

- Synchronous
- Asynchronous
- Written
- Visual
- Video

So most communications were recorded, slides provided, and sometimes preview email sent.




# Communication with Parents: Teachers

- Weekly letter introducing activities
- Weekly Zoom meeting with teachers:
  - Encouragement and praise
  - Helping...just enough
  - Selecting books without bias
  - On Math
  - Your almost adolescent
  - Setting up the kitchen for your young child
  - Setting up the bathroom for your young child
  - Toilet Independence
  - The value of play & boredom
  - Supporting Literacy... the Montessori way
  - And others....
- Open Hours each day for parent communication

 Centennial Montessori

[Home](#) [Attendance](#)

## Young Children's Community



[Suggested Daily Schedule](#)[Weekly Live Meeting Schedule](#)[Program Options and Expectations](#)

Young Children's Community Meet Room

Week of May 25, 2020

Dear Young Children's Community Families,

This week for your child's independence we will focus on communication and how conversations, singing, and books support the development of their communication skills. Children are eager to connect and express their wants and needs to us. This is a particularly vital time in their life for language development and supporting your child's development in this area will enable them to grow in their quest for independence.

I've included a couple of links on choosing books, [one of which details why we focus on reality in children's literature](#) and the other is on [how to avoid books that are biased](#). Consider the content and whether or not it supports the values and beliefs that you would like your children to absorb.

Before we went to Spring Break, Dania created a document on [Language development and the different activities that support this development](#). I was also able to find an article on a speech therapy website that discusses the ways in which [singing strongly supports language development](#). It's short, but very informative, and the website may have some other helpful articles.

The aid to life website has always been one that I've recommended to parents. I've included a couple of links about communication and reading to children.

[Making Conversations](#)

[Reading Stories and Singing](#)

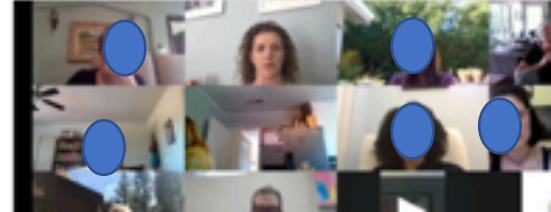
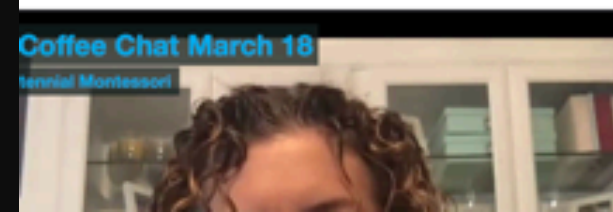
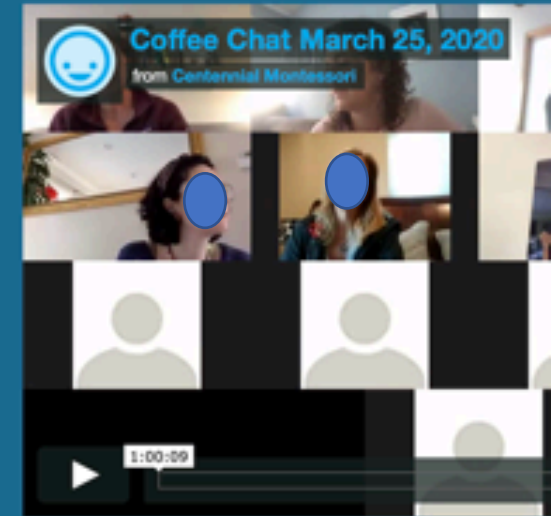
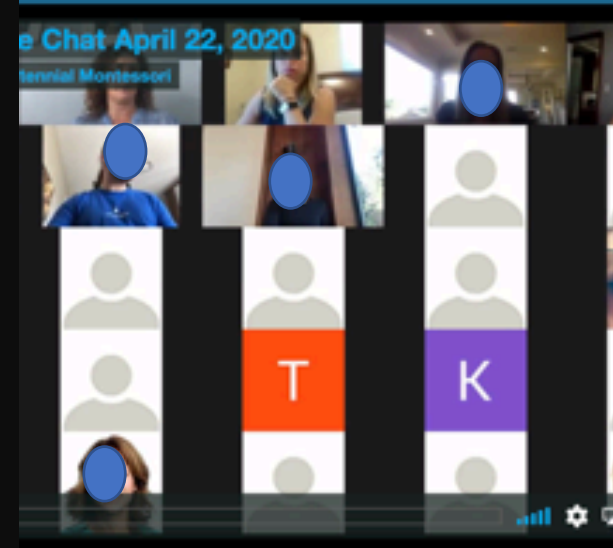
For the area of preparation of the adult, we chose to focus on ways to show respect for the child. I've always been very grateful to be in this community with parents and teachers that do show a lot of respect for young children, but as always, there are ways in which we can improve and think through our interactions with children. Some of the examples given in the article are really thought provoking and may help with connection and cooperation

# Communication with Parents: Admin

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- Weekly Coffee Chat with Kristi:
    - Intro to Google Classroom and Distance Learning
    - The Importance of Read Aloud
    - Intro to Distance Learning website
    - Mental Health of Children
    - Excitement, mindfulness, and living with uncertainty
    - Coming down the home stretch: mindfulness
    - Transitioning to Summer
    - Summer Camps
  - Individual meetings
- 

## Coffee Chats





# Communication with Parents: Surveys

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- [Distance learning survey](#)\*
- [Reopening survey \(sent multiple times\)](#)
- [Cohort Preference Survey](#)
- [New waiver/COVID statement](#)\*\*

\*Thanks to many schools on MAA!

\*\*Thanks Nido Marketing & Mission Montessori!

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## School Re-opening Survey

We know your answers may change, but we'd love to get a sense of what you are thinking currently.

\* Required

Name \*

Your answer

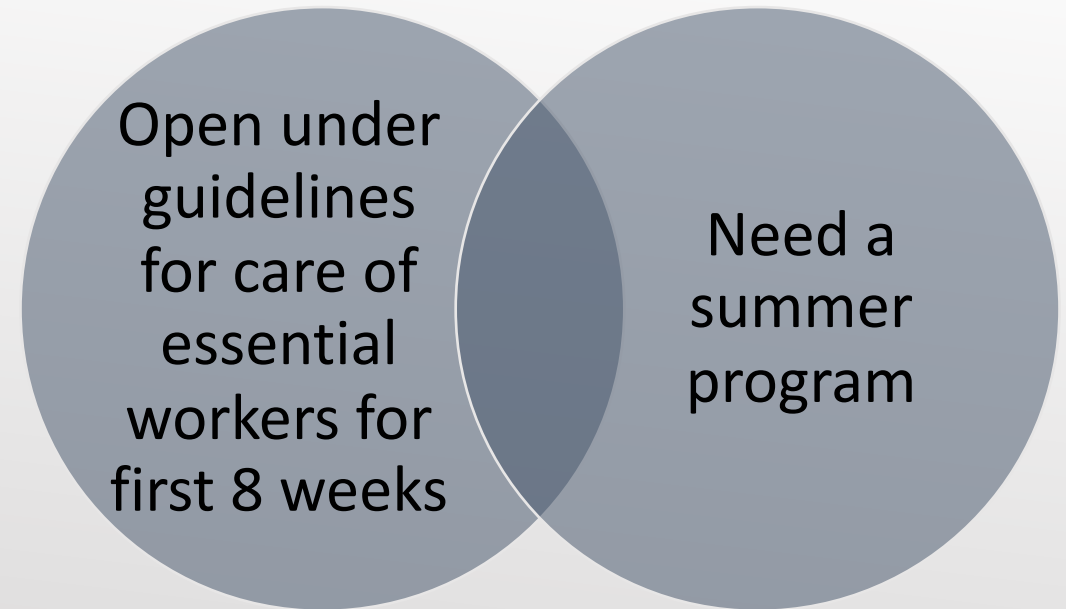
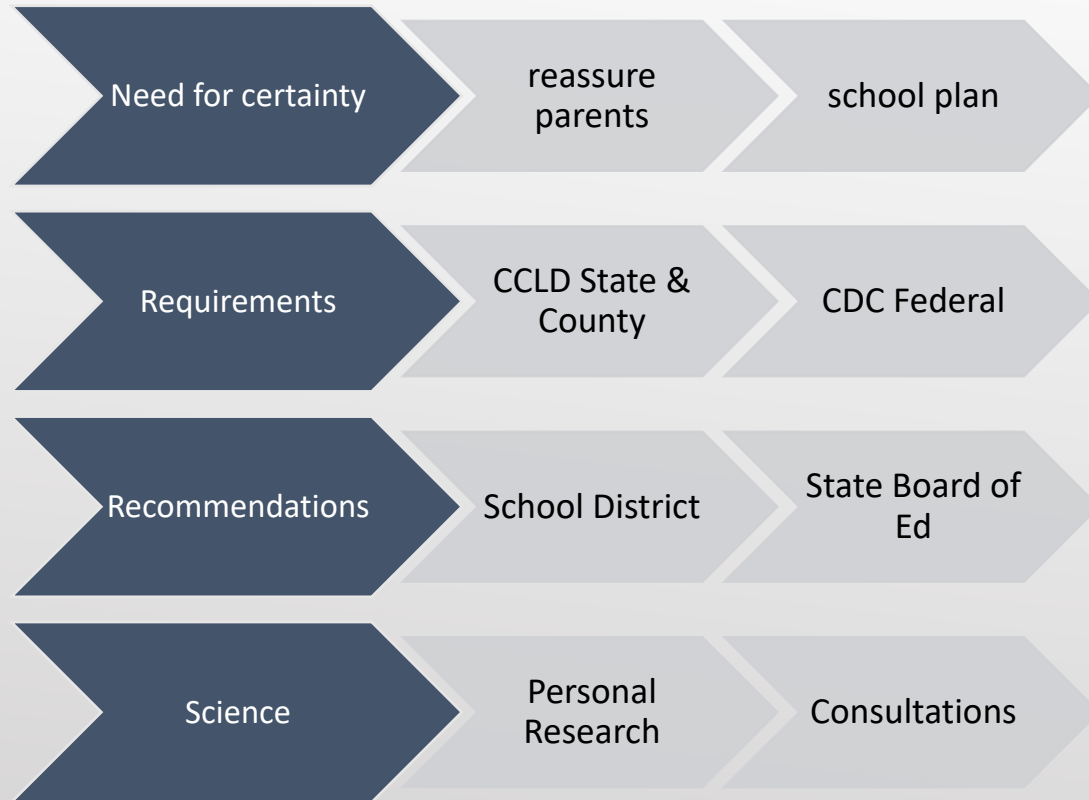
Child/Children's Name(s) \*

Your answer

When are you planning to return to school? \*



# June 1, 2020 ... important date



# Communication with Parents: Reopening

- Preview email on Friday before
- Reopening Forum every other week:
  - May 14 Forum 1: Preliminary thoughts and considerations (getting back to school)
  - [May 28 Forum 2](#): On-campus plan
  - [June 11 Forum 3](#): Update on on-campus plan & preliminary thoughts on distance plan
  - July 2 Forum 4: Update on summer
  - July 23: Forum 5: Final Plan with Distance
  - August 11: Forum 6: Welcome back to School!
- Timing was purposeful: June 1

The collage consists of four screenshots from the Centennial Montessori website, arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left screenshot shows the 'Communications' section with three items: a 'May 8th' email preview, a 'School Re-opening Survey' form, and a 'May 25th' reopening communication. The top-right screenshot shows the 'Presentations & Meeting Notes' section with two items: a 'Re-opening Community Forum' video player dated May 14, 2020, and 'Slides for Re-opening Forum' dated May 14, 2020. The bottom-left screenshot shows a 'Reopening Forum #2' video player dated May 28, 2020, with a 'Health & Safety Guidelines' slide visible. The bottom-right screenshot shows 'Slides for Reopening Forum' dated May 28, 2020, with a 'Reopening Forum #2' slide visible.

Centennial Montessori

## Re-opening Information

### Communications

May 8th

### School Re-opening Survey

May 25th

### Presentations & Meeting Notes

Re-opening Community Forum

May 14, 2020

Slides for Re-opening Forum

May 14, 2020

Reopening Forum #2

May 28, 2020

Slides for Reopening Forum

May 28, 2020

Why do we feel good coming back?

# Health & Safety First

Balance with Social and  
Emotional Health  
Familial Economic Realities

Why do we feel good coming back?

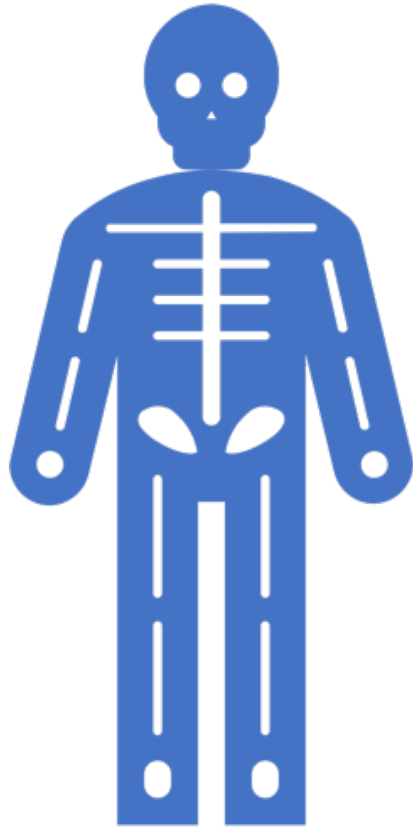
# Why Montessori is uniquely suited for this challenge

- Initial resistance from Montessori community to changing, but realize it is following the Montessori philosophy to adapt
- Guides focus on adapting environment to promote healthy development
- Environments are built on beauty, simplicity, order & routine
- Respect for the children is central to our philosophy
- Respect for the community and each other's space and rights is central to the classroom life
- Adapting is hard, but we are made for this (super heroes)





Why do we feel good coming back?



# Assessing the risk to Children & Adults

- Adults make up more than 98% of the known cases to date (CDC, April 2020)
- Of the 1.7% of children who tested positive:
  - Children 1-4: 11% (0.19% overall)
  - Children 5-9: 15% (0.3% overall)
  - Children 10-14: 27% (0.46% overall)
- 90% of the cases in children are mild. 80% of the more serious cases have underlying medical issues.
- Can they transmit it? How safe are teachers & parents?
- Without clear evidence, we will assume children can transmit the virus.

BUT DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH- this is just to illustrate my thought process.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6914e4.htm>

# Community Financial Costs

- As a Montessori school, we follow the Montessori guidelines and consciously price tuition at 75% of area private schools (we are currently at 60%) and offer financial aid to encourage a distribution of SEC among our classes.
- School is generally break-even and will be running at a deficit next year.
- We have refunded aftercare/before care & summer tuition so there has been no tuition since March deposits.
- Distance learning incurs additional costs (technology, memberships, etc.)
- Due to size of cohorts, summer program will run at a deficit.
- We held off on new students after the first set of acceptances to keep size small (down 10 students from projected & shifted more to morning)
- Substantial cost to reopen & ongoing costs (as outlined above).
- In addition, we know that parents incur increased cost if nannies need to be hired for closures or times not in school

# What can we do for families?



We will not be increasing tuition to cover the additional costs, though I am sure CMCF would accept donations! :)



We cannot offer tuition reductions for periodic distance learning. Families must decide if you can absorb the cost of tuition given the possibility of closures.



You can apply for financial aid if your circumstances have changed due to the SIP.



You may change payment plan from yearly to monthly.



You have our commitment that we will try our best to stay open unless it is unsafe to do so, thereby reducing the need for additional childcare.

## Start under Essential Worker Care Facility Guidelines:

- Safest option until we know more about transmission in children
- Reassures parents
- We can always return to this model in a surge
- Possibly allows us to stay open for YCC and CH especially
- Allows us to feel confident asking for “pop-up” childcare for school age.





# Maximizing on Campus Learning

- Preliminary acceptance to operate as essential worker care for EI, CH and YCC.
- Built 5 extra teacher weeks & 3 extra student weeks into the school year so we can potentially make up some distance weeks:
  - Teachers start 2 weeks early (one week of student-family one on ones)
  - Children start one week early
  - Flex week: Spring break (April 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>)
  - Flex week: June 10 - June 17
- For 3 weeks of home learning, children will be given project-based learning and have access to our Home Learning Website (may not be 3 weeks straight- just have up to 3 weeks built in).
- Teacher led distance-learning may begin immediately or after a period of days/weeks depending on ages/needs.
- If we have no distance learning, children just get a bonus week.
- No class Friday for first 4 weeks for cleaning, professional development, distance learning facilitation. After 4 weeks, add Friday am (not pm).



# Evidence of Community Connection

- 106 families enrolled for Fall (as of March 15).
- 4 spaces left empty once we knew about SIP
- June 1 was first payment for 2020-2021 including 20 full year payments.
- 95 children currently returning in person.
- 4 moved out of area as a result of SIP.
- 4-6 children (3-4 families) signed up for distance cohort.
- 1 new YCC child decided to withdraw.
- 2 families switched from full year to monthly payments.
- Even four families who are choosing distance cohort have paid full tuition (with no indication of what we can offer...)

# Summer open at half capacity



Test run & parent/teacher confidence



Opened June 17 with YCC first (5 children)



Opened June 22 with 3 cohorts (2 CH of 10 and 1 EI of 10)



Morning only so no transition times



Children bring own snack & we eat outside



Lots of outdoor time



Sink in each classroom / no sharing bathroom between cohorts

# Licensing pre-opening tele-visit

- Checklist for licensing visit
- Note on Group Size (ok to go over 10 now)
- Applied for waivers:
  - Face shields instead of masks for teachers APPROVED (with conditions)
  - Verbal/Visual sign in instead of signature WAITING
  - Comingling “Toddler Option” and “Preschool” cohort in case of severe staff short ages APPROVED
  - Two entry points instead of one central one during drop off so each cohort enters building separately APPROVED
  - Outdoor pop-up tent for child isolation APPROVED (with conditions)





# Car line drop off

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- Staggered by 15 minutes (2 cohorts per 15 mins at separate entrances)
  - Walkers wait on sidewalk near posted signs
  - Admin only exposed to parents
    - Gloved (& hand sanitizer between cars)
    - Masked
    - First encounter is without mask from distance or through car window
  - Drop off:
    - Parents stay in car
    - Admin asks CoVID screening questions
    - Takes Temp
    - Marks on checklist that it is done
    - Parent signs in on ipad
    - ipad disinfected
- 



# Car line pick up

- Admin only exposed to parents
  - Gloved
  - Masked
- Child temp taken before leaving class
- Parent leaves car when child arrives & buckles child in
- No other child is on street while parent is out of car
- Walkers wait off premises until motioned forward

[illegible]

# Prevention



Washing hands



Not touching face



Distance or mask





Social distancing grace  
and courtesy.

Mathematical Mind  
easily sees 6 ft distance

Creative hugs!



Not ready shelf

Outdoor classroom





# Health & Safety Guidelines

Student may not attend with symptoms of infection (runny nose, cough, fever, stomach upset, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.)

Students must be home 48 hours symptom free (May be updated: awaiting guidelines on COVID waiting periods)

Centennial will follow district health and safety guidelines on exclusion and for returning to school for individual student and staff.

Parents are prohibited from using a fever reducer for an enrolled child within 12 hours of attending school. Evidence of usage may result in discontinued enrollment.

Children will be screened with contact & health questions, temperature check and wellness check upon entry. Temperature check may be repeated at lunch and upon leaving.

Students may not attend if family members are sick with Covid-like symptoms



# Social distancing procedures

Education about why we chose 6 feet and why it is important

Increase community activities to promote unity given 6-foot distance

Grace and Courtesy lessons around asking for space, notifying people etc.

Largely dependent on procedures- not student impulses

Outdoor games which encourage social distancing

Stadium seating for groups with spacing indicators

Assigned rugs placed 6 feet apart for children

Assigned tables or dirty table chip indicator

6-foot squares indicated by taping

6-foot measuring devices

# There is no expectation of uniform 100% compliance to 6 feet among children and staff.

We are expecting to mitigate risk, not make it "safe". Parents must understand that children & teacher will come within 6 feet of each other. The inability to keep social distance is mitigated by the small group size.

In addition to the obvious concerns due to age and impulse control, teachers may make a decision to be within 6 feet:

- To offer comfort
- To address injuries
- To give a lesson or help a child when that cannot be accomplished at a distance
- To accept affection
- To allow children to work together (masked)

When appropriate, we will follow up with more Grace and Courtesy lessons at another time to remind children of how to keep distance, but we try to never make a child feel they have done something wrong by being close or offering appropriate physical contact/comfort.

# Cohort Grouping

## Number: 10-12

- in separate areas with outdoor rotation
- direct access to bathrooms and entries
- limit sharing of bathrooms/play yards to extent possible

## Deliberate grouping

- siblings
- buddies
- staff children
- nanny shares

## Expectations w/ families (We don't want to be the hub of spread!)

- Playdates (when allowed) within cohorts
- Notification in case of a positive case
- Notification if there has been a playdate with a cohort that was then quarantined
- Adherence to health policies
- Adherence to dressing policies
- No participation in additional childcare facilities

# Cohort Arrangement

YCC: 2 separate classes of six and ten in separate classrooms.

Children's House: 4 lead teachers each with a "bubble" of ten to twelve children. 4 separate physical spaces.

Elementary: 2 lead teachers with 2 assistants, each lead with 2 bubbles of twelve children. 4 groups of 12 in separate spaces.

Siblings in same cohort where possible.

Please fill out cohort preference form on Transparent Classroom.



# Restriction of Visitors



No parents or visitors on campus (if one person tests positive- the school closes for cleaning)



Tours will all be virtual or (for final applicants) on the weekend at the end of the process.



Maintenance/cleaning personnel will come at the end of the day after children and staff have left



Parent nights will be virtual

# Physical Changes to Implement Distancing

Additions: sinks

Partitions

Outdoor shade structures

Outdoor Mud Rooms

Montessori kits to minimize shared material

Ventilation

HVAC system review

# Cleaning & Hygiene Procedures

## Children & Families:

- Hand washing before leaving home and after arriving at school
- Refrain from eating in the car
- Likely use of tread socks instead of inside shoes
- Lunches and water bottles from home only
- No other items brought from home
- Dressing & undressing before and after school (YCC Uniform)
- Frequent handwashing (we have a list of times & activities)
- Masks? (age, outdoor/inside)
- Possible use of marks on hands to monitor hand washing



# Cleaning & Hygiene Procedures

## Teachers

- Same procedures as children
- Washing hands
  - As needed
  - before and after each lesson
  - between touching children
  - at each transition
- Materials disinfected between use
- Will use stamp for children and teachers (our el is checking out stamps for us)

# Cleaning & Hygiene Procedures

## Facility Level

- Nightly cleaning according to COVID disinfection standards
  - Emist handheld with hypochlorous acid
  - Disinfection Supply Atomizer & Generator with hypochlorous acid solution for outdoor surfaces
  - Bleach solution spray and wipe
- Teachers clean materials and high touch points before and after class
- Bathroom touch points cleaned between use (full clean between cohorts with emist).
- Admin or floater cleans at lunch
- Sink installed in each class
- Hand sanitizer in each class
- Touchless faucets

# Cleaning & Hygiene Procedures

## Materials

- Individual materials (paper, colored pencils, aprons- Staff will go through each activity to see what can be personalized.)
- Material procedure (clean/dirty shelf) so cleaned between use
- Admin sweeps hourly to help
- Cleaned with hypochlorous acid, Force of Nature (YCC), Lysol wipes, or UV wand



# Health and Safety Regarding Cleaning Agents



We welcome input on cleaning agents (they must be on the CDC N list and EPA approved).



We welcome input on procedures to minimize children's exposure.



Immune system development vs. virus disinfection

# Masks:

Teachers will wear face shields or masks when distanced & add masks (clear when possible) when close

Students over 4 will wear masks for lessons or when needed to be within 6 feet and indoor (i.e. for group work)

Elementary students or children over 10 may need to wear masks.

If you prefer a masked cohort, please indicate on your preference form.

# Recommendations

- Accept that this is where we are right now, and we are uniquely equipped to remove obstacles and guide children and families through this.
- Communicate: confident, honest, transparent, direct, preemptive
- Listen to parent preferences, give choices, but remain the guide.
- Do not commit to anything that cannot be sustained x 100!
- Connect & support: teachers, admin, parents, children, nannies
- Do 2 trial runs: one with 5 -10 kids, one with 1/3-1/2 population.
- Include one day of distance learning per week if you can – there will be lots of teacher training/support needed.
- Connect with your licensing analyst.
- Balance fears, regulations, recommendations with science, child development & Montessori essentials