March 16, 2020

Dear Parents:

We want to keep you informed as to what has transpired over the past few hours. We have been in touch with the Pulaski County Health Department, the Ft. Leonard Wood School Liaison, and our Missouri State Representative. After sharing information, all three individuals recommended for WCA to keep doing what we are doing. We want you to know that if we are advised to close our doors we will do so. Should that happen we will have our elementary students take their books and any class worksheets home with them. We would ask that they do one lesson a day for each subject. When classes resume, our teachers will go back and review any lessons that need to be covered again.

We know we are doing things that the public schools are not doing and because of that it makes it real easy to second guess what we are doing. We feel that the Lord has placed people and entities in authority over us that have more knowledge about the situation than we do. We will pray and put our trust in the Lord that He has our best interest in mind. We are including the latest email that we received from the Missouri Health Department. Please take time to read this.

We also want you to know that we have families at WCA that are keeping their children home in self quarantine because they have traveled around the United States or have been on a cruise. WCA wants to thank these families for being responsible in this manner. We would like for members of these families to contact us so that we may get books and materials to you.

Please pray for WCA and especially for our national, state, and local leaders that are having to make very tough decisions.

David Hartley Bobbie Martin Principal, WCA Preschool Director, WCA

Good morning!

The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Section for Child Care Regulation (SCCR) recognizes there is growing concern about COVID-19 and how we can all prepare and protect ourselves and those we care for.  The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a wealth of valuable information on their website about how to prepare at home, in schools and child care facilities, at work, etc.  Learn more at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fpreparing-individuals-communities.html>

**Resources for Child Care Providers**

Please review the information from the CDC and take the recommended steps to keep yourself and those you care for healthy.  These are things we all know and have been practicing for years, good handwashing, covering sneezes and coughs, staying home when sick, and avoiding close contact with people who are sick.  Specific resources for schools and child care programs can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

The resources provided by the CDC offer child care programs:

·        recommendations on cleaning and disinfecting;

·        checklists to help you plan and prepare if an outbreak occurs in your community;

·        suggestions for how to talk to children about Coronavirus;  and

·        guidance and frequently asked questions for administrators of child care programs.

**School Closings**

The DHSS-SCCR has received questions from providers about what will happen if schools close in their area and whether they will be able to care for school-age children.  The CDC is not recommending that schools or child care facilities close unless COVID-19 has been identified in their area.  However, we recognize owners of child care facilities will be making the decisions about whether to close or remain open (unless they are directed by their local health officials).  Child care is a critical part of our nation’s infrastructure and will be vital to those who work in health care and law enforcement.

If a school closes in an area due to COVID-19, SCCR will consider this an emergency school closing.  Licensing rules 19 CSR 30-61. 19 CSR 30-61.165 and 19 CSR 30-62.172 address emergency school closings and allow licensed programs to accommodate enrolled school-age children who need care.  During the period of time the school is closed, the provider will be permitted to exceed the licensed capacity of the facility by 1/3.  This 1/3 excess attendance for emergency school closings is not in addition to the 1/3 excess attendance that is allowed for overlap.  So the total number of children in care should not be more than 1/3 above the license capacity at any point in the day.

Facilities that care for additional school-age children during an emergency school closing are required to maintain staff/child ratios during the time of the emergency school closing.  The provider is also required to maintain a written record including the dates of the emergency school closing, the reason for the closing (i.e.  school closed due to COVID 19), and the number of children in care on each day of the emergency school closing.

**Stay Up-to-date**

As this is a rapidly changing situation, we want to ensure you receive the most up-to-date information. Feel free to visit the DHSS website for updates: <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/>. This site also includes the number for a 24-hour hotline should you have general questions about COVID-19.

Thank you for your work in protecting the health and safety of children and families in Missouri.

Sincerely,

Shelby Koetting

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David Hartley

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