

Fall 2020 Guidance - Priorities for Full-Time In-Person Learning for Extended Day/Year (EarlyLearn) NYCEECs

Please see this document if you are a School-Day/Year NYCEEC

- **All contracted programs will be expected to provide services, in some form, to all children and families enrolled in their DOE-funded classes this fall.** For the purposes of this document, “enrolled children and families” are those who have accepted an offer to your program through MySchools, either through an initial or waitlist offer, and meet the eligibility requirements of your program.
- If more families have requested full-time, in-person learning than you currently have staff and space to provide, this document provides guidance on how to prioritize families for full-time, in-person services.
 - **Head Start Programs:** Once you’ve reviewed this document and made assignments accordingly, you may notify families as soon as possible. **Please notify families of their assigned learning model, including their blended learning schedules if applicable, no later than August 28th.**
 - **Child Care and Dual Programs:** For families enrolled in Child Care-funded slots who request in-person learning, please proceed in assigning those families to a schedule. For families in Child Care-funded slots who request fully remote learning, please hold on confirming their assignment, pending further guidance. Once you’ve reviewed this document and made assignments accordingly, you may notify Child Care families assigned to in-person learning and any Head Start families of their assigned learning model as soon as possible. **Please notify these families of their learning model, including their blended learning schedules if applicable, no later than August 28th.**
 - Additional guidance about sharing this information with families is below.
- Programs will be able to serve enrolled children and families through three potential learning models this fall:
 - Full-time in-person learning
 - Full-time remote learning
 - Blended learning (a combination of in-person learning and remote learning, see [here](#) for DECE’s considerations for blended learning with children ages 0-5)

Infants and toddlers: Due to limited capacity and funding constraints, we are not able to continue services for infants and toddlers enrolled in Child Care services whose families do not wish to return to in-person learning (would opt for full-time remote learning). Families of infants and toddlers should be made aware of this limitation and be given an opportunity to revise their preference. In cases where families opt out of care, the program should seek to fill that vacancy.

- **In order to continue to receive payment from the DOE for contracted services, all programs must provide some level of in-person learning services in their DOE-funded classrooms in the fall.** EarlyLearn programs are able to provide remote learning until 8/31 and still receive payment from the DOE. After that date, EarlyLearn programs must provide some level of in-person learning services in order to continue to receive payment. Any requests for exemptions from this policy must be submitted through [this survey](#).
- **In planning for learning models, programs are expected to provide enrolled children with as many in-person learning opportunities as possible.** We expect that many programs will not need to offer all three learning models listed above. Specifically, it may be possible to serve all enrolled children through full-time in-person services and/or full-time remote services (if requested by families).

- **Programs should provide at least in-person services to any enrolled family who requests them.** In situations where family preference for in-person care exceeds the program’s capacity based on reduced staffing and group sizes, the program will need to offer blended learning services through a cohort model, as described in [the Fall 2020 NYCEEC Staffing Readiness Planning Tool and Survey](#). **Families who have children in one of the prioritization categories should receive full-time, in-person services for those children. All other families who have requested in-person services (who are enrolled in blended learning) should receive an equal amount of in-person learning days.**
 - **For Child Care and Dual Programs:** Programs should provide full-time, in-person services for as many families as possible, prioritizing families using the criteria specified here. Programs that provide both Head Start and Child Care services should use a common set of criteria to prioritize families that get in-person services, that has been approved by the Delegate Agency Policy Committee and Governing Board. If more families request full-time, in-person care than you have space to accommodate we will work to offer the families alternate placement.
 - **For Head Start Programs:** Programs should use their Selection Criteria to prioritize families for in-person care. Programs may, with approval from their Delegate Agency Policy Committee and Governing Board, revise their selection criteria to account for needs of families during this pandemic. Programs are encouraged to consider adding the criteria below if they revise their Selection Criteria.
- In the event that it is not possible to provide full-time, in-person services to every enrolled family who requests them, **programs should prioritize in-person services to the following priority groups. Head Start programs should follow their Selection Criteria to prioritize in-person care,** and may consider adapting their selection criteria, with approval from the Delegate Agency Policy Committee and Board, to account for the following priority groups. Child Care programs should use the following criteria to prioritize full-time, in-person care:
 - *[Programs that provide services to infants and toddlers only]* If there are not enough full-time in-person slots to meet all enrolled families’ needs, programs should prioritize providing full-time slots to infants and toddlers (before 3- and 4-year-olds).
 - Children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), programs may prioritize siblings of children with IFSPs/IEPs if it space allows and it aligns to the families’ preference
 - Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs) - children whose home language is not English
 - Families in transitional housing, foster care, and/or families experiencing domestic violence, where a family's status is known

Randomized Selection: *If you meet the needs of all families who have children in the above categories (or if you do not have any families with children in these categories) and still have space in a full-time, in-person cohort, you should randomly select additional children for the full-time, in-person cohort. If you have more families who meet the above criteria than you can accommodate for full-time, in-person services, you must randomly select families from within the priority categories for full-time, in-person services. When selecting families randomly, every family enrolled who expressed a preference for full-time, in-person care, (both newly enrolled and previously enrolled) must have an equal opportunity to be selected. No other preferences or prioritization may be used.*

- To maximize in-person learning opportunities for currently-enrolled children:
 - All programs may request approval from the DECE to provide in-person and remote services to 3-K and pre-K children in mixed-age groups, as long as they continue to comply with applicable City and State regulations.
 - Programs that typically provide 10 hours of care per day may request flexibility **in their operating hours for in-person services in DOE-funded classrooms, including providing 8 hours of service instead of 10.** EarlyLearn programs must plan to provide at least 8 hours of service per day for in-person services.
 - DOE is not able to allow learning models that include half-days of in-person instruction for early childhood programs that are currently contracted to provide full day services.

- **What changes can be made throughout the year?**
 - Families can choose full-time remote learning at any time, for any reason, using the [Learning Preference](#) online form. You can access up-to-date responses from families through VIA. If you haven't already, complete [this survey](#) to set up user accounts to access this platform. Families who choose full-time remote learning will be able to reevaluate their choice during certain set time periods to change their preference and request that their child receive in-person learning services instead.
 - These set time periods will be communicated to programs and families at the beginning of the school year.
 - When families request to switch their child to in-person learning services, programs will be expected to make every effort to accommodate these requests based on programming and space capacity.
 - The window will close at least two weeks prior to when the child would switch to in-person learning services to allow programs and families sufficient time to prepare.
 - As always, families can engage with their program leadership if they face unforeseen circumstances or challenges in their learning and can coordinate with their program to make adjustments outside of these set time periods, if possible based on the available staffing and space availability.
 - Programs will have access to real-time reports indicating students who have chosen full-time remote learning that can be accessed through VIA. If you haven't already, complete [this survey](#) to set up user accounts to access this platform.
 - Because families can choose full-time remote learning at any time, schools should review these reports on a regular basis.
 - In these same reports, programs will be able to see which families who have chosen full-time remote learning are requesting to opt back into in-person learning services for the next set time period.
 - In addition, if a family who is assigned full time in-person services opts to go to remote services at some point throughout the year (i.e., due to health concerns or change in employment circumstances), programs may move another child into that spot based on the above prioritization guidance.

- **Families have responded to multiple surveys.** Earlier this summer, we asked you to ask families about their preference for learning models by administering a version of [this survey](#). The survey you administered included an option for families to indicate a preference for full-time, in-person care. However, the [Learning Preference](#) survey administered by the DOE does not have that option. You should continue to use the results of the survey you administered and your ongoing conversations with families as your primary source of information about family preference. However, the DOE Learning Preference survey may be a helpful tool for families to communicate changes about their preferences throughout the year. You can access up-to-date family

preference information about this survey through VIA. If you haven't already, complete [this survey](#) to set up user accounts to access this platform.

- **Communicate openly and honestly with families about the prioritization process for full-time in-person learning.** Consider incorporating the following in your communications with families:
 - Share with families your commitment to ensuring the health and safety of children, families and staff during this time, and to complying with all local, state, and federal guidance.
 - Be transparent about the considerations and expectations you are working under to ensure health and safety, including reduced class size and staffing limitations.
 - Emphasize your commitment to meeting the needs of as many families as possible during this time.
 - Share the priority categories listed above so parents understand why some families are prioritized over others. Ensure individual families' and children's privacy is respected.
 - Encourage families to review the guidance listed above regarding flexibilities throughout the year, so they can plan accordingly.
 - Consider how you communicate blended-learning schedules to families, and ensure the information is clear and easy for families to understand so they know when to bring their child to your program.
 - Let families know that enrollment in in-person learning is subject to change, based on changes in local, state and federal policy, should there be changes in public health indicators.

- **Support families eligible for child care assistance to find the in-person services they are eligible for and request.** Programs can direct currently-enrolled families to DOE's Outreach team if they are not able to provide as much in-person services as a family requests and is eligible to receive. DOE's Outreach team will work with the family to see if there are any other program options available. Families can contact DOE Outreach by emailing OutreachTeam@schools.nyc.gov.