



November 5, 2020

Dear Building Bridges families,

Thanks to all of our collective efforts, BCECP programs have had a tremendously successful, safe fall. This has truly been a collective effort, and it has been hard-won: everyone's sacrifices and hard choices have come together to keep the childcare community thriving for our youngest learners. Our success keeping COVID-19 under control in our programs is due to a combination of community spirit, data-driven policy, and common sense.

As we approach the winter holidays, which are customarily a time of travel and gathering, we ask that each community member once more make decisions and plans with the health of our communities in mind. With case rates rising in our own state, and Covid-19 transmission increasing in the country, the safest decision this year is to celebrate at home with your immediate family. For the safety of our community, and the continuity of our programs, we ask that each of you give serious consideration to observing holidays that way this year.

Should you decide to travel, or to host or attend holiday gatherings with people outside your household, please keep in mind that family get-togethers are one of the major drivers of community spread. In order to limit the risk of transmission, please observe all the now-familiar guidelines: wear masks, practice frequent hand washing, observe distance, avoid contact with anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19.

In addition, we ask that families who have traveled, or who have been in close contact with travelers from other states, plan to complete a 14 day quarantine before returning to school. This has been New York State's recommendation for months, and a 14 day quarantine is the only safeguard that takes into account Covid-19's full incubation period. Completing the full period of isolation helps ensure that every member of the community returns to school Covid-free, and is the best way to safeguard the in-person program for all children and families.

We are aware that New York State's travel advisory guidelines have recently evolved to allow a negative test to replace a portion of the 14 day quarantine. However, that update did not extend to the screening questions that are required in order for a child to be allowed entrance into their school or program. At this time, therefore, we are asking that families stick with the older, more stringent guidelines as they make their plans. We will continue to look to the travel advisory and childcare guidelines, and keep abreast of new data to craft policies that are safe, fair, and community-minded, and that take into account the specific needs and realities of the childcare community.

We thank you for your cooperation, and wish you safe and happy holidays.

With kind regards,
Susan and Jennifer