

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing to express opposition to Executive Order 122-20 that limits capacity limits for child care facilities under the phase two guidelines. The Montgomery County Council should increase the capacity limit for child care facilities so that child care operators can continue to operate as they are an essential service for all residents with children. If child care operators are forced to operate at a limited capacity (as they have been since June 2020) some operators may decide to cease operations as it is no longer a profitable business or operators may decide that in order to maintain operations they will have to raise tuition rates on the limited number of families that are permitted to attend under the phase two guidelines. The former would have devastating impacts on the social and emotional well-being of our children, working parents, and the local economy as parents will have to scramble to determine some other child care option or attempt to work at home with their children (to the extent any parent is working from home). The latter would put further pressure on household budgets that have been stretched to the limit as a result of the impacts of the pandemic.

If appropriate safety measures are instituted at all child care centers I do not believe that there is any reason why child care centers should not be permitted to reopen at a capacity greater than the phase 2 limits. My childrens' daycare center has put many safeguards in place to keep all of the children and their families safe. These safeguards include, temperature checks prior to the children being admitted into the building, prohibiting anyone other than the children going into the day care center (through an app on our phone we alert the daycare when we arrive and our children's teacher meets us at the door to receive the child after a temperature check), all employees of the daycare center are required to wear masks and PPE, there is hand sanitizer throughout, and children wash their hands several times a day. Additionally, any child that has a fever or is sick is not permitted into the daycare. These measures have ensured the health and safety of children, families, and the daycare employees. My daycare center has shown that it can operate safely and responsibly with these measures in place. I urge the council to oppose the Executive Order and raise the capacity limits so that child care centers can operate effectively and not place additional burdens on Montgomery County residents who are already facing the financial and emotional toll of this pandemic.

Sincerely,
Andrew Mirisis