

Hello. My name is Claire Lanham and I am providing you with feedback in regards to executive 122-20, specifically regarding the recommendation to adjust the childcare capacity to 50% in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. My husband Bryan and I are lifelong residents of Montgomery county Maryland and are proud to live here with our 2-year-old daughter. We are also both very proud Montgomery County Public Schools teachers. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Bryan and I have been very covid cautious and aware of our decisions in regards to potential for exposure and transmission, with our top priority being the health and safety of our daughter. In March, when schools were closed, we kept our daughter home with us. We stayed home, stayed healthy, and stayed safe. We were excited to get back to work teaching remotely and hoped to keep our daughter home with us, but we quickly realized it was unsafe and unrealistic to do our jobs properly while being home with our daughter. Together with our pediatrician and with a close eye on all available data we sent our daughter back to daycare which we qualified for as essential employees. We continued to stay home and limited exposure and minimized her time in daycare when possible. Since that time our daughter has been extremely healthy and her daycare has been able to remain open with student's and their families remaining healthy. Our childcare is following all available recommendations from the health department and State Department of Education to reduce potential exposure and transmission of Covid-19, and those efforts have been successful.

In October 2020 The American Academy of Pediatrics released a study looking at children and adults in childcare settings, regarding transmission of Covid-19. The American Academy of Pediatrics concluded through analysis of that data that child care centers do not excessively contribute to transmission of Covid-19. I urge the County Council to look at available Covid metrics and available contact tracing information to determine if a reduced capacity in childcare settings is warranted at this time. To make a decision not in conjunction with recommendations from the experts in this field is irresponsible. I urge the County Council to look at mankind sure childcare centers have access to materials and information to reduce transmission through modified drop off and pick up procedures, mask wearing, hand washing and sanitation instead of arbitrary capacity limits with grave implications. To reduce capacity in childcare centers is predatory to working families. In addition, this will have grand impact on childcare providers, many small business owners and their employees, and have lasting impact on availability of quality childcare in our county. Childcare is not optional. Childcare is not a luxury. Childcare is an essential service and the top priority should be ensuring that hardworking citizens have access to this essential service now and in the future. Thank you for your consideration.