

Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Council Members,

My name is Kate Webb. I am a resident of Montgomery Village and a working mother of two young children, ages seven and three. Like so many other families who regularly use child care in order to work full time, the closure of childcare centers in the spring was extremely challenging to my family. This fall, after much research and discussion, my husband and I decided to send both our children to full time child care. My three year old is in a preschool program and my seven year old attends his MCPS virtual classes from the childcare center. It has made all the difference to us. We are both able to work full time again and perform fully in our jobs, our mental health as parents has improved, and our children are able to socialize with other children their age in a safe and regulated environment, which has improved their mental health as well.

I saw the press release from Monday announcing that the County Council will be considering an amendment to Executive Order 122-20, COVID-19 Local Order, which would reduce the capacity of childcare centers in Montgomery County to 50%. This regulation is not based on science and would have a significant and potentially devastating impact on the local economy. I think we have all learned first-hand since March how critical childcare is to the functioning of our economy. Two recent articles, one in the New York Times and one in the Wall Street Journal, cited a recent large study by Yale University, and published in the journal Pediatrics, that found “keeping child-care centers open doesn’t contribute to transmission of the disease caused by the new coronavirus, as long as they hew to sanitary guidelines like hand washing, small group sizes and staff wearing face coverings” (quote from the WSJ article). I have provided links to both articles at the end of my written testimony. The safety measures stipulated in the study are already required by Maryland state law.

I understand that not everyone in Montgomery County can afford childcare – that is a different topic for a different day – but for those who can, it is a safe option that will contribute to the recovery of our local economy and the mental health of parents and children. Approving this amendment would be a step backwards in our economy’s recovery and would be a devastating blow to the families who rely on childcare centers, including our essential workers. There is no evidence that reducing childcare capacity to 50% will reduce the spread of the coronavirus in our community – in fact, evidence shows that it will have no impact at all on the virus’s spread.

In summary, there is no evidence that a reduction in childcare capacity will reduce the spread of the virus, but it will negatively impact working families and our local economy. I encourage the members of the County Council to vote against the proposed amendment to Executive Order 122-120, COVID-19 Local Order.

Best regards,

Katherine Webb  
Montgomery Village, Maryland

**Links to articles referenced in testimony:**

*From the New York Times:* According to the largest study of its kind, published in the journal Pediatrics, researchers from Yale and Columbia surveyed more than 57,000 child care providers across 50 states plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico between May and June. They found no relationship between working in day cares and contracting or being hospitalized for Covid-19, regardless of race, ethnicity or other factors.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/parenting/day-care-safe-covid.html?searchResultPosition=2>

*From the Wall Street Journal:* Children in day-care programs present virtually no risk of transmitting Covid-19 to adults, according to a new Yale University study of more than 57,000 U.S. child-care providers. The study, believed to be the largest of its kind, indicated that keeping child-care centers open doesn't contribute to transmission of the disease caused by the new coronavirus, as long as they hew to sanitary guidelines like hand washing, small group sizes and staff wearing face coverings.

[https://www.wsj.com/articles/daycare-centers-are-very-low-risk-for-covid-19-transmission-study-says-11602699914?st=1061rpcheysiso7&reflink=article\\_email\\_share](https://www.wsj.com/articles/daycare-centers-are-very-low-risk-for-covid-19-transmission-study-says-11602699914?st=1061rpcheysiso7&reflink=article_email_share)