



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

June 22, 2020

Ms. Christina Peusch
Executive Director
Maryland State Child Care Association
executivedirector@mscca.org

Dear Ms. Peusch,

We have received over 1,500 emails to Dr. Salmon and other state leaders as a result of your advocacy. While we cannot respond to each email, Dr. Salmon has asked me to respond to you on her behalf. Please share this with your members and the public with whom you engaged.

Thank you and the Maryland State Child Care Association for providing a way for so many child care providers and parents to easily communicate with various state agencies and their representatives. For many of these individuals, this may be the first time they have expressed their opinions publicly. This is the right and responsibility of every Marylander, and I applaud you for your leadership.

MSDE's June 10, 2020 press release addresses some of the issues you raise. You may access it here: <https://news.maryland.gov/msde/maryland-education-moves-forward-as-part-of-states-overall-stage-2-recovery/>. After consultation with leading public health experts, school systems are now able to bring small groups of students and staff into school buildings. These small groups would consist of 10-15 individuals maximum at a time in rooms within a school building.

Class sizes in child care centers are now expanded to a maximum of 15 individuals per classroom with a ratio of no more than one teacher to 14 children ages three and above, rather than the two teachers required in regulations for three- and four-year-olds. This is a temporary waiver of our regulations to help child care centers with their expenses. Programs serving children older than four-years-old are already able to meet regulations with one teacher for up to 15 students. Family child care and large family child care programs are limited to the number of children for which they are licensed at one time and may have no more than 15 persons total at one time including residents in the facility.

These capacity restrictions are in place to ensure appropriate social distancing, which is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Please note that all child care programs must continue to adhere to group size allowed for by age in licensing regulations. Staff/child ratios for infants is 1 to 3 with a maximum group size of six.

We are committed to ensuring the safety of children and staff in child care settings and follow the guidance of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) based on recommendations from the CDC.

Thank you again for helping to give voice to parents and providers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Steven R. Hicks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and "H".

Steven R. Hicks
Assistant State Superintendent