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March 1, 2022

Dear 0-5 Head Start Families:

On February 25, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released new recommendations on [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) which will help individuals and communities make choices on what precautions they may want to take, based on the level of disease burden in their community. COVID-19 Community Levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.

In conjunction with the updated COVID-19 Community Levels, the CDC recommends that people should wear masks depending on the level of COVID-19 in their community. The new CDC mask recommendations differ from the masking requirement in the Interim Final Rule with Comment Period (IFC), [Vaccine and Mask Requirements to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 in Head Start Programs](#). At this time, the IFC remains the applicable regulation for the EightCAP, Inc. Head Start program.

However, while the Office of Head Start (OHS) is reviewing the new CDC recommendations, they announced that they will not evaluate compliance with the mask requirement in its program monitoring. This pause on monitoring for compliance will apply to all programs, including ours. Before resuming monitoring for compliance with the mask requirement, OHS will provide at least two weeks' notice prior to implementing any changes.

Effective March 2, 2022, and while OHS is conducting its review, the EightCAP, Inc. 0-5 Head Start program will not require universal masking. In the interim, individuals are encouraged to determine what prevention measures are needed based on COVID-19 Community Levels, as well as any individual risk factors.

EightCAP, Inc. 0-5 Head Start will continue to require masking on days 6-10 for individuals ages 2 and older that are a close contact to a positive individual or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days. Children that are under age 2 or are unable or unwilling to wear a mask may not return to school until after day 10.

As we continue to move forward out of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your patience and flexibility over the past seven months. We are truly grateful for your continued support of the EightCAP, Inc. 0-5 Head Start program.

I will continue to pass along updates from OHS as they become available.

Sincerely,

Janel Boulis

Head Start/Early Head Start Director

Lori Johnson - President