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**Mission**

Empower children and families to develop positive skills to meet life's challenges.

**Core Services**

Parent Education  
Early Childhood Education  
Physical, Dental & Mental Health  
Social Services

**About Poverty**

55% of our families live on less than \$10,000 a year  
94% live on less than \$26,200 a year

August 24, 2020

Dear Riverbend Head Start Family, Friends and Community:

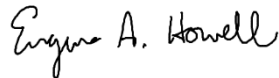
As with many other agencies, businesses and enterprises across the nation when news of the Coronavirus hit back in March, our agency closed our doors and began the journey of "working from home". While our outward appearance may have been that of being closed, inside the agency, processes and services were still very much flowing. Our staff made a very quick transition to virtual communications, virtual meetings and virtual services.

During the entire summer our program teachers and family support staff worked very hard to connect with our families and ensure that they remained engaged. Though differently than our in-person services we continued to provide child development services, family support services and simply being available to work through any issues our families may have been experiencing. Over the summer we even implemented an "unplanned" stretch of programming that focused heavily on our oldest learners to do everything we could to ensure that our Head Start students were prepared for kindergarten. We have always held a value that our Head Start parents are their child's first and foremost teacher. This summer that belief grew feet and took off as our parents braved the new world of virtual learning and together we worked through glitches and found our way forward as our Head Start parents truly became their child's teacher. For our youngest learners, we continued home visits in a virtual format. We also provided food delivery over the summer as well as school supplies families would need to implement the activities at home.

Through this journey we have learned many lessons, but none more meaningful than the power of team work. As we enter into our fall session still unable to host in-person learning we have purchased iPads to be used with a virtual learning curriculum. When possible our environments and staff stand ready to personally greet our young learners and again engage our families in home visits. We thank our parents, our staff and our community for supporting us through this most challenging period.

To review a summarized outline of our agency's re-unification and pandemic plan, please review the following page.

Thank you,



Eugene A. Howell, MPA  
President & CEO

## **Riverbend Head Start and Family Services' Re-Unification and Pandemic Plan**

### **To provide the safest environments for our staff currently we:**

- Conduct a pre-service wellness checklist to screen for symptoms. This includes all visitors and vendors who may come on site.
- The pre-service wellness screen also includes a temperature check to ensure that no one has a temp of 100.4 degrees or higher.
- Each day our staff conduct a midday screening to check for possible elevated temperature.
- Staff members reporting exposure to any person testing positive report to our HR Dept for contact tracing.
- When a staff member has been confirmed to have had contact with anyone testing positive, all staff in that location are sent home to work from home for 2 days while our cleaning crews conduct a deep cleaning to ensure the working environments are COVID free.
- All frequently touched surfaces and high traffic areas are sanitized periodically throughout the day.
- All staff wear a mask when in common areas or within six feet of their co-workers or clients. All visitors are required to wear a mask.
- Certain high traffic areas known as common sources of virus transmission have been “closed”. These include use of the refrigerator, coffee maker, conference rooms and break rooms.

### **When we are ready to welcome back our young learners:**

- All staff will conduct a pre-service screening as discussed above and all bullet points apply as well.
- All vendors (child food delivery, mail carriers, supply deliveries) must be prescreened before entering building.
- Parents must have temperature taken at screening area and wait for child to be brought to them or taken to room.
- Children will be pre-screened daily before boarding the busses along with a temperature check. Temps will again be checked prior to entry into the site.
- Children will wear masks as tolerated.
- Children will remain in “groups” from the bus ride, into the classroom and throughout the day until the bus transports home. Children are loaded one at a time off and onto the bus to ensure social distancing.
- Teachers will remain with their group of children only and will not be used in multiple rooms.
- Class groups will not intermix throughout the day in places such as common/multipurpose rooms and playground. Children will only be in their classroom or outside, no other rooms will be used; playground will be sanitized between each classroom use.
- Cots and sheets / blankets will be washed and sanitized daily. Cots must be 6 feet apart.
- Class group size will be limited to 10 until our regulatory bodies allow groups to grow and we remain COVID free. Actually, DCFS allows 15, we are starting with 10 and then slowly increasing to 15.
- Home visits will be conducted by staff wearing appropriate PPE. These items will be properly discarded and new PPE donned before the next visit. Any family participating in home visits will complete a prescreen questionnaire and everyone in the home will have their temperature taken upon arrival and wear PPE during visit.
- Children will be screened at midday for elevated temperature or other symptoms.
- Sites will be sanitized periodically throughout the day.
- Porters have been hired to routinely sanitize building; extra staff in classroom will sanitize throughout day to prevent exposure from other staff entering the room.
- Certain toys will be removed from classrooms to prevent sharing and possible spreading of virus or other germs.
- All soft toys are removed; classroom chairs have been removed to promote social distancing; educational personal items are assigned to children (markers, scissors, glue etc.).
- All sensory toys have been removed (playdough, sand, water play).
- Drinking water will be available in pitchers and sanitized to avoid use of water fountains.
- Food will be delivered with extreme measure to prevent any contact and a system has been developed to ensure there is no cross contamination during delivery to children.
- Handwashing will be encouraged for all children and staff as normal.