

## President's Corner

Hello Montessori friends!

Dear Members

We know you are dealing with many issues, both personal and professional. In this newsletter, we have endeavored to give information which will be helpful. Stay well! Stay home! Have faith in our children and our future... and better times to come.

My hands to yours!

Heidi Gauger

### ***A note from the editor...***

This special edition of the MMS Newsletter will be devoted to providing you with information on reopening guidelines. Most of the information is available online, so we will pass along all the websites we know of to help you make your reopening as safe as possible. If you find that we have left something off the list, please send it along and we will pass it on.

We will also include some information from a few who have already opened including ways they have approached the requirements by thinking "outside the box." Finally, I've shared with you some of my own thoughts regarding my Zoom class experience. I'd like to believe that my zooming days are over, but we must be prepared for whatever happens.

Karen Lumsden

Remember...

The safety  
of all of us  
depends on  
each of us.

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## *Websites That May Answer Some of Your Questions*

[Michigan.gov/](https://www.michigan.gov/)

Oakland Co- MI Safe State Plan

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI\\_SAFE\\_START\\_PLAN\\_689875\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_SAFE_START_PLAN_689875_7.pdf)

LARA – Child Care Check list for Operating Safely

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/Reopening\\_Checklist\\_692632\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/Reopening_Checklist_692632_7.pdf)

MELBA- MI Early Learning Business Advantage- great webinars !

[https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=kC-](https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?__tn__=kC-)

[https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=kC-R&eid=ARA8XK6T0QAOrR6l1VCJh13rOi5X5iVTv0KXnZ6bJdoJjZQXM4Mz5lcMI1TUuxVtV2Cj8\\_TJHS2BSIJe&hc\\_ref=ARQR6vy3wcAJ\\_vJFB0p3R8HGpBSu0AnkNIZ5PQeFd4BkGwf-la\\_Xc6Ys-](https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?__tn__=kC-R&eid=ARA8XK6T0QAOrR6l1VCJh13rOi5X5iVTv0KXnZ6bJdoJjZQXM4Mz5lcMI1TUuxVtV2Cj8_TJHS2BSIJe&hc_ref=ARQR6vy3wcAJ_vJFB0p3R8HGpBSu0AnkNIZ5PQeFd4BkGwf-la_Xc6Ys-)

[https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=kC-R&eid=ARA8XK6T0QAOrR6l1VCJh13rOi5X5iVTv0KXnZ6bJdoJjZQXM4Mz5lcMI1TUuxVtV2Cj8\\_TJHS2BSIJe&hc\\_ref=ARQR6vy3wcAJ\\_vJFB0p3R8HGpBSu0AnkNIZ5PQeFd4BkGwf-la\\_Xc6Ys-sXHMExC57s&fref=nf&\\_\\_xts\\_\\_\[0\]=68.ARardwEHaBvTc9lpj\\_0EaE5aA3e7FtCX3se3dmVyGnNTKiJ82\\_VvdlQDSdNcCV7uN9q2hSKTNYdUjv5-sYnA4QiDLuLbxzNZ0GiH4QSJsTB5XEmrt-TJ5HZx9TnymoBxfA2JgvhSwNTfR-ZnggeNigd3SpUWwMxrgLf-MzGC\\_ZXOYg4QTFM8W-Uxrz441tbhBNZb\\_oJwWR7jDTS-](https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?__tn__=kC-R&eid=ARA8XK6T0QAOrR6l1VCJh13rOi5X5iVTv0KXnZ6bJdoJjZQXM4Mz5lcMI1TUuxVtV2Cj8_TJHS2BSIJe&hc_ref=ARQR6vy3wcAJ_vJFB0p3R8HGpBSu0AnkNIZ5PQeFd4BkGwf-la_Xc6Ys-sXHMExC57s&fref=nf&__xts__[0]=68.ARardwEHaBvTc9lpj_0EaE5aA3e7FtCX3se3dmVyGnNTKiJ82_VvdlQDSdNcCV7uN9q2hSKTNYdUjv5-sYnA4QiDLuLbxzNZ0GiH4QSJsTB5XEmrt-TJ5HZx9TnymoBxfA2JgvhSwNTfR-ZnggeNigd3SpUWwMxrgLf-MzGC_ZXOYg4QTFM8W-Uxrz441tbhBNZb_oJwWR7jDTS-)

[https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=kC-R&eid=ARA8XK6T0QAOrR6l1VCJh13rOi5X5iVTv0KXnZ6bJdoJjZQXM4Mz5lcMI1TUuxVtV2Cj8\\_TJHS2BSIJe&hc\\_ref=ARQR6vy3wcAJ\\_vJFB0p3R8HGpBSu0AnkNIZ5PQeFd4BkGwf-la\\_Xc6Ys-dNK5z8jMKBcN6H9a9r7B7jCMidla2cWRaAhvHW1AQNhcdvJE9JHTufexwDcQpKlxN2yYPG1cw3fWCXkbeq8R\\_qwjklNT5ek\\_nIUvbhh8NJLb-xAuSHwZCPnZv-qVTx4pDCWWW4](https://www.facebook.com/melbasave/?__tn__=kC-R&eid=ARA8XK6T0QAOrR6l1VCJh13rOi5X5iVTv0KXnZ6bJdoJjZQXM4Mz5lcMI1TUuxVtV2Cj8_TJHS2BSIJe&hc_ref=ARQR6vy3wcAJ_vJFB0p3R8HGpBSu0AnkNIZ5PQeFd4BkGwf-la_Xc6Ys-dNK5z8jMKBcN6H9a9r7B7jCMidla2cWRaAhvHW1AQNhcdvJE9JHTufexwDcQpKlxN2yYPG1cw3fWCXkbeq8R_qwjklNT5ek_nIUvbhh8NJLb-xAuSHwZCPnZv-qVTx4pDCWWW4)

FFCRA- Family First Covid Response Act- how small businesses can get help to pay for employees effected by COVID-19

[CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html). Considerations for schools

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/Child\\_Care\\_Re-Opening\\_5-21-20\\_-\\_FINAL\\_691941\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/Child_Care_Re-Opening_5-21-20_-_FINAL_691941_7.pdf)

[https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533\\_63534---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533_63534---,00.html)

<https://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/schoolnutrition/>

[https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-99891\\_99912---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-99891_99912---,00.html)

[https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance?fbclid=IwAR3ksg\\_kp8T5nPvhR7Sc7T410\\_IeokUXzNCMhp2sF6Dc3BgZTMRmg4QmDUM](https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance?fbclid=IwAR3ksg_kp8T5nPvhR7Sc7T410_IeokUXzNCMhp2sF6Dc3BgZTMRmg4QmDUM)



Child Care Professionals: Thank you to those who have continued to serve the essential workforce during these unprecedented times, and as many of you begin to re-open your doors, ECIC is grateful for all that you do to support Michigan's young children and their families. We will continue to be a resource to you and assist you in navigating this new normal.

*To all our partners working with child care providers, please share these critical resources widely with your networks. Thank you.*

## Looking for free resources to create your preparedness and re-opening plan?

### Build-A-Plan Tool

With the spread of COVID-19, child care providers are being asked to develop and implement new health and safety protocols to ensure children, families, and staff members are as safe as possible. Are you a child care provider working on your preparedness and response plan? Or do you work with child care providers who are creating their plans?

The "Build-A-Plan Tool", designed by the Policy Equity Group in partnership with [Hope Starts Here Detroit](#) to help your program meet new state requirements, will help you meet all these requirements in a way that makes sense for your individual program. All of the relevant requirements and recommendations from LARA as well as the CDC and other sources have been integrated into this tool to save you time and effort.

**BUILD YOUR PLAN**

## Re-opening Guidance from LARA

Child care providers across the state have always prioritized the health and safety of the children in their care. With the spread of COVID-19, new health and safety protocols are necessary to ensure children, families, and staff members are as safe as possible. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) has developed a [guidance document](#) and [checklist](#) to provide tools to help you make the best decisions possible to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to create safe spaces for children and staff members.

If you have questions about how and when to reopen, your licensing consultant is available to help you consider your options. LARA will be sharing relevant updates on the licensing listserv and you can also visit <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus> for up-to-date information about whether child care providers can open and which families you can serve.

LARA will also be hosting a Question and Answer phone call series regarding this re-opening guidance. To participate in the Question & Answer phone call series, sign-up by submitting your question(s) to [Riebels@Michigan.gov](mailto:Riebels@Michigan.gov) (include your name, region and questions). You will receive a confirmation email with your date and time from LARA.

- June 9th at 1–2 p.m. - Northern Michigan
- June 10th at 1–2 p.m. - West/Central Michigan
- June 11th at 1–2 p.m. - Southeast Michigan

## PPE Procurement Platform

Pure Michigan Business Connect is offering a [free procurement program](#) to assist businesses in accessing non-medical grade Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to keep their employees and customers safe as they begin resuming in-person operations, as is required by Executive Order 2020-91.

LOCATE PPE

## How are you letting families know whether your program is open or not?

### Child Care Relief Fund Grants - June Updates

The Child Care Relief Fund May application will be opening **Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 9 a.m.** The application for April 2020 is now closed.

- **What is it?** The Child Care Relief Fund is a grant program that helps child care providers cover costs during the COVID-19 state of emergency. The goal of the program is to help you stay in business and make child care more affordable for Michigan families. These grants are non-competitive and funds do not need to be repaid. An additional funding opportunity will be available in June.
- **Where can I apply?** Apply by visiting [www.michigan.gov/childcare](http://www.michigan.gov/childcare) on your computer or mobile device. The application takes less than 10 minutes to complete! See our website for more information on how to apply. **HINT:** Using the resources at the website will help ensure your application is complete and accurate, which will help avoid processing delays.
- **Where can I receive additional guidance?** An informational webinar will take place tomorrow, June 9, at 3:30 p.m. Join by clicking [here](#). Additional materials to help you with the application are also available at [www.michigan.gov/childcare](http://www.michigan.gov/childcare).

APPLY





**MPPI**  
Montessori Public  
Policy Initiative

*A joint collaboration of AMS and AMI/USA*

### **Advocacy Spotlight:**

If you've been to our conference or one of our workshops, you know we are always talking about collaborating with other education and advocacy organizations. One such group is the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), which is a collaboration of more than 20 national education organizations, including AMS and AMI/USA. During the past two months, MPPI has worked closely with our CAPE colleagues at the national level to advocate around federal guidance for PPP loans and the Education Stabilization Fund, speaking with representatives from the US Department of Education and sending letters to legislators to make sure the needs of private schools are considered. In addition, CAPE has a network of state groups, similar to MPPI, which we have also been plugged into. Participating in calls, often on a daily basis, has amplified our knowledge of how states are handling different issues, such as disbursement of ESSER funds. And recently, one of our MPPI state groups, the United Montessori Schools of Indiana (UMSI), connected with their state CAPE representative who worked alongside them and used his connections to help them get resolution to ongoing issues with their licensing division and Department of Education. We encourage you to connect with your state CAPE, state AEYC, and other organizations working on behalf of children to increase your reach and influence. You can amplify your voice, forge connections with policy makers, and you never know when those connections are going to bear fruit; this past winter, in MD, the head of the MD Family Child-Care Association proactively offered to submit a letter of support for the Montessori Schools of Maryland's (MSM) legislative efforts to create a pathway to licensure because MSM had established a relationship with her.

### **Website Updated with State Workforce Registry Information**

MPPI is working to add new resources and information to our website on an ongoing basis. Currently, we are adding specific state information for the early childhood workforce registry\*. What is the workforce registry? According to the National Workforce Registry Alliance, a workforce registry is intended to support early childhood educators by:

- Promoting and providing a framework for professional growth and development
  - Capturing data about early childhood and after-school practitioners in a variety of roles
  - Placing individuals on a career level based upon verified educational information
  - Recognizing and honoring professional achievements of the early childhood and after-school workforce
-

- Informing policy makers and partners

Participating in the workforce registry is another avenue for advocating for Montessori education. More specifically, the system of state workforce registries outline and establish the validity of educator certifications, education level, and trainings. This information is commonly found on a document referred to as a state "career ladder" or "career lattice". Advocating with your state workforce registry office to recognize the Montessori credential at the level of a bachelor's degree is critical for our advocacy work. As we continue to add state information, go to our [website](#) to check for your state's career lattice. As always, if you are interested in advocacy work around the workforce registry, contact your state representative or contact us at [info@montessoriadvocacy.org](mailto:info@montessoriadvocacy.org).

\*Please note that we are still adding information. If you do not see any workforce registry information for your state, please check back at a later date.

### **Opportunities to Expand Your Knowledge**

Join MPPI and our partners for a webinars this week on a range of important topics:

[Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator Training](#) - On **June 17th at 7:00 pm EST** MPPI will be hosting a webinar with attorney Janice Gregerson to train your Title IX and Section 504 coordinator(s). The same person can be the coordinator for both programs *or* you can have two separate coordinators. In our previous webinar\* discussing these and other applicable federal laws, the attorney recommended that someone other than the head of school serve as the coordinator, if possible. You can register 3 individuals per registration to allow for coordinator(s) and heads of school, if interested, to attend. The event will be recorded so if you cannot attend live, you can still register and will be given access to the recording afterwards. There is still time to register, you don't want to miss out!

[Building Partnerships: Head Start and Ideal Learning](#) - The Trust for Learning is offering this webinar, presented by Dr. Iheoma Iruka of HighScope Educational Research Foundation and Annie Frazer of Montessori Partnerships for Georgia, about creating access through partnerships and funding. This webinar will take place on **Thursday, June 18 from 12:00-1:15 pm EST**.

[Moving Toward Action: Strategies for State Advocates to Operationalize Racial Equity Principles](#) - Join Karen Howard, Senior Policy Director, at the Alliance for Early Success on **June 19th (Juneteenth) at 2:00 to 3:15 EST** to discuss intentional action items that center equity in your organization. The intended goals of the call (as advertised by Alliance for Early Success) include:

- Provide an overview of principles to pursue anti-racist and equitable policies to dismantle persistent inequities
-

- Examine concrete actions organizations can take to undo barriers created by systemic racism
- Offer examples and discuss opportunities in federal, state and local policy pursuits

### **Advocacy Work and Call To Action**

Like everyone in the Montessori universe, for the past few months MPPI has been heads down at work on finding solutions to the cascading problems caused by the Coronavirus crisis. We know that for months to come school administrators will have full plates adapting to new policies that will need to be implemented to keep children and staff safe at schools and child care. Still, we are acutely aware that many of you were starting or midstream on advocacy work for policy changes that would enable Montessori programs in your state to operate more freely and reach more children, and we want you to know that we are here to support that work. While we will continue to prioritize assisting Montessori programs in navigating the changing policy landscape in response to the health and financial crisis, we are also designating time to make sure we are available to support advocacy work specific to the needs of Montessori. We have seen in recent weeks that some states are looking at redesigning child care licensing and other systems that were not prepared to handle the current crisis so it is a great time to be watching out for changes and reaching out to be in the conversations. Please reach out if there is something you have been hoping to get to work on, or would like to get back to work with. We are here for you!

**Take Action** - Advocacy work is often collaborative work. Join the National Women's Law Center in supporting the Child-Care Essential Care Act to fund the child care sector during COVID-19. For more information and to take action, [click here](#).

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## *Thinking Outside the Box*

Welcoming children back into your school is going to be challenging. A few schools have begun or will soon begin to open their doors. Aside from the recommendations above, teachers have had to readjust their expectations of what a “normal” day might look like. Here are a few examples of how some have made adjustments.

- Using tape on the floor to outline proper distancing helps the children become aware of their boundaries. It also helps teachers quickly determine if children are moving too closely together.
- Creating a “mini Montessori” environment on each shelf and limiting a child to those materials for the day. Rug or table adjacent to the shelf.
- Setting up a “sanitizing station” where the children take the materials they’ve used to be sanitized immediately and set out to dry.
- Utilizing outdoor space for much of the day.
- Bringing some class materials outside.
- Removal of all materials that cannot be easily sanitized.
- Snacks prepared and placed in zip lock baggies for distribution at snack time.

# News from the "Front Lines"

Our school has decided to utilize two different classroom models to determine which will work better for the children and the staff. One of our rooms has "pods" for each child and one is set up as a traditional Montessori classroom, but with a "sanitation station." I was hesitant to share these options until I had some experience with them. As we started Aug. 3, we have had a few days under our belt and can report that the pods are working well. The sanitation station is also working out. We found a safe sanitizing spray that sanitizes in 30 seconds, disinfects in 10 minutes. Also, in that classroom, we installed plexiglass shields between children's work spaces that are less than 6 feet apart. With only a few days' experience, we are hesitant to recommend either model, but thus far, we are managing.

Our drop off / pick up routine has changed, but the taking temperature (using a high speed thermometer) and check in has not caused a back up in the morning, however, we have very few children. We also chose to purchase hats with face shields for our children. . The children have adjusted nicely to the hats and we feel that it adds another level of protection both from the sun and from potential virus transmission. Our teachers wear face shields, although some prefer to continue to wear masks.

While we are open now, we are making plans just in case we need to close again. Our experience with Zoom classes from March and through July has given us a lot of great ideas for continuing the children's educational experiences via Zoom lessons. While we hope to remain open, we know that our ability to remain open is in the hands of our parents and the government. We made clear to our parents that the health and safety of all of us depends on each of us. We must all work together to keep the coronavirus out of our schools.



The "pods" are populated with materials that are appropriate for differing interests and abilities.

Materials in the pods are added as needed during the week. The children may choose a different pod the following week. Since only one child is using the materials in each pod, the materials do not have to be sanitized every day.







In the other classroom, rug spaces have been outlined on the floor for children to maintain distance between them.

The sanitation station is located in the practical life area.



Tables where the children would be closer than 6 feet have plexiglass separating the children.

## *What I've Learned from Zooming!* by Karen Lumsden

As we approach September with the possibility of again welcoming children back into our buildings, we have so much on our minds: creating a safe environment, developing drop off/pick up protocols, how to clean, what to sanitize, how many kids can we safely enroll? While many of us have been closed since mid-March with plenty of time to plan, the Labor Day deadline looms large as many of us are still struggling to find the answers. Hopefully, the information contained in this newsletter will help.

However, while working out these issues, lately I have been pondering the lessons I've learned from providing zoom "lessons" with my children. Some of my teachers opted to offer demonstration lessons where they would present the materials to the children as the children watched from home. Being more "hands on" oriented, I chose to create paperwork for the children to use at home while I presented the lesson. While paper and pencil tasks are not my chosen teaching tools, I had no choice. So, I developed color matching activities, counting activities, word/picture match works, animal characteristics booklets, "fill in the blank" writing activities, measurement, shapes, comprehension, bingo games, and on and on. Some lessons were flops, but the vast majority reached my kids and gave us both opportunities to connect.

So now that school may be close to opening, in addition to the unending "how am I going to manage this," my thoughts have turned to the lessons I've learned from zooming and the value of online contact with kids. Needless to say, this school year will not be like any we have ever experienced. Some classroom opportunities for learning may be limited. Materials that are not easily sanitized may not be available for the children to explore. While paperwork is not something I utilize broadly in the classroom, several of the materials I developed for the children to use at home may be reworked for classroom use. These activities would not require sanitizing as they are consumables and would go home with the child.

I have also begun to think of ways to support the children's class experiences with activities that can be done at home. Can I develop support materials for parents to help them engage positively with their children? With the population I serve, parents are eager to push the children to learn more, develop skills, keep busy with educational endeavors. I encourage them to read to their kids, play games, engage in conversation, but their focus is always goal oriented. I feel like there's an opportunity here to reset the interactions between parent and child. Provide guidance by creating activities that will encourage positive parent / child interaction.

This summer's online experiences forced me to rethink so many beliefs I've held onto for years. At this point in my career, I was not quite ready to reexamine my philosophical foundations, but here we are. I encourage all of you to take advantage of this "down time" we've been given (and reluctantly have had to accept) to discover new ways to reach our children (and parents) to help them navigate these unstable times. It's a conversation I've been having with myself for several days now. If anyone would like to brainstorm with me, please feel free to give me a call.

MMS

MICHIGAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY