



**DELAWARE HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

July 31, 2020

Dear DDDS Families,

Thanks to those of you who were able to attend the Family Town Hall on Saturday, 7/25. A recording of the event is available at:

[https://ddds.zoom.us/rec/play/6MZ4cu75qj43HIWX4wSDVPd5W9XrLPmshilbr\\_UlyUrjUnRQM1TwZuBAarMJwsWI7FdrYrcJoVhINdHh?startTime=1595684712000](https://ddds.zoom.us/rec/play/6MZ4cu75qj43HIWX4wSDVPd5W9XrLPmshilbr_UlyUrjUnRQM1TwZuBAarMJwsWI7FdrYrcJoVhINdHh?startTime=1595684712000)

The biggest focus of the Town Hall was around Stage One Re-Opening of day services, which is slated to begin on August 3<sup>rd</sup> for some providers. I'd like to use today's letter to clarify some key points as we move into this new arena, while COVID-19 is still very much present in the state.

- Stage One is for service recipients who: are medically least vulnerable; do not live with people who are medically vulnerable; can wear a facemask/face covering/face shield over their nose and mouth for durations of 30 minutes with minimal prompting; and can maintain social distancing requirements of six feet between themselves and others.
- Not all day providers will resume services on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Please do not plan for your service recipient to return to their day provider unless you have had a confirmation conversation with the day provider.** We strongly encourage you to reach out to your provider to develop a better understanding of their plans, which may include delayed re-opening, different locations or accommodations, altered timing of programs, and new pick-up and drop-off procedures.
- In order to attend day services, the service recipient must not live with anyone who is COVID-19 positive. If anyone in the household is COVID-19 positive, the service recipient must stay home until the entire household has been cleared. Testing sites are available all over Delaware and appointments can be made with Walgreens or via <https://delaware.curativeinc.com>
- If a provider believes a service recipient is not able to follow the rules for facemask wearing and social distancing, the provider can deny the service recipient admittance in Stage One. This will be a conversation between the provider, service recipient and team, but ultimately the provider is authorized to make this decision. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all participants.

As you can imagine, the move to Stage One is a huge undertaking for providers, who are committed to preserving the health and safety of all service recipients and their staff. They have: planned for, and educated their staff about, new sanitizing procedures; redesigned program space to ensure social distancing; purchased new supplies to reduce shared surfaces; and modified services to meet the needs of service recipients attending Stage One. This planning has been ongoing, but we will of course encounter bumps in the road as we operationalize these plans during Stage One. The Division, providers and you as families are all in this together and we need to be patient and flexible as this new stage begins. I thank you in advance for your cooperation as we move forward.

I will be monitoring the services delivered regularly and will remain in close communication with our providers to assess how it is going. If we start to see an increase in COVID-19 exposure or confirmed cases, I will do what is necessary to

reduce the contagion, even if it means suspending services again. Providers will also be monitoring progress during these early days to ensure adequate time for modifications and adaptations as necessary. Again, thank you for your flexibility as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters together.

If your loved one is not returning during Stage One, I still encourage them to work on getting used to wearing a facemask or face covering. Attached to this letter is a Social Story that has been created to help explain the need to wear face coverings, which may be helpful.

Please continue to practice social distancing, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and wearing your face covering in public. We really are all in this together and will get through COVID-19 together.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Support Coordinator, Community Navigator or the Family Resource Unit.

Thank you and be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP  
Director of Community Services