

Monday, May 25th update

We have made some changes, based on best practice ideas from CCL, the CDC, and a dash of the Canadian recommendations, but I can hear you asking, what does that look like.

Here's a summary of what we have done & are doing, to comply with the new COVID rules and recommendations:

* Everyone is required to wash their hands on arrival at the center, before leaving and when entering the classrooms. Hand sanitizer is available at entrances and exits.

In the classrooms

* we FINALLY have our new sinks in the Busy Bee bathroom (but also accessible to Wobblies). There are two child sized handwashing sink, and an adult height utility sink!

* we have removed some tables and furniture to make play areas bigger and give children more options to play further apart

* food is now plated by one person in each classroom and served by that same teacher.

* Children are no longer serving themselves, but they are still cleaning up after themselves.

* children are seated in smaller groups, and further apart for meals, snacks and table activities

* children's extra clothes are now stored in individual backpack style bags, with their names on them. We have lots of extras if needed. (the same that busy bees was doing)

* kids cubbies are now outside of the classroom (except for babies) and if their boxes are still inside, they have lids

* more toys and materials are in closed storage, outside of the classroom, so that toys on the shelves and in kids reach can be more easily swapped out and sanitized,

* The library and puzzle storage has also been expanded so that more of it is kept out of the classrooms

On the playground

* there is a portable sink, for outdoor hand washing for adults and children

* hand sanitizer is in a few places on the playground, but out of reach of the children

* we have portable partitions that can be used, if needed to separate the groups a bit more, particularly if babies and bigger kids are outside at the same time

* more outdoor storage has been added so that toys can be brought out for a specific group of children, instead of all the balls/hoops/cars, being accessible to everyone

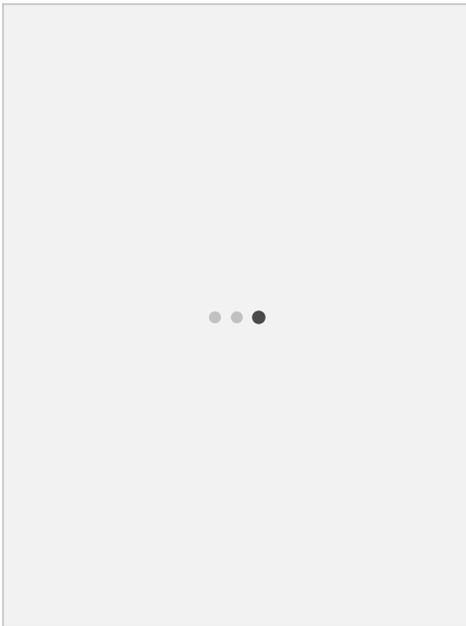
* we now have an outdoor water dispenser and paper cups, as well as individual labeled kid water bottles,

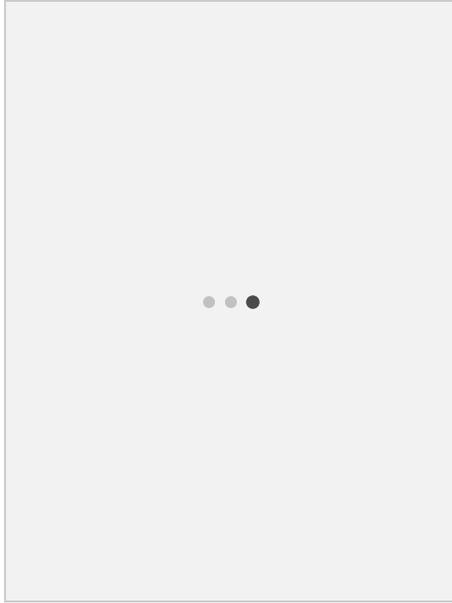
Group sizes and staffing

* each group is 12 or fewer kids for the majority of the time (its possible that during a transition week there could be 13)

* groups are no longer mixed, at any point in the day, you drop off and pick up from the same classroom

- * each group has the same primary teachers (at least two for each group, 3 for babies)
- * while the group sizes are smaller, and the groups can not be mixed, ***we have reduced our hours to 8-5:30***. As families return and the CCL/CDC rules change, we will hopefully be able to add back the additional time, but at this time, we cannot predict when that might be able to happen without raising tuition. We will adjust bills for families who have a longer day usually scheduled.
- * we have set up a temporary preschool/summer care space upstairs in the Sproul room- for the next few weeks it will give us more flexibility while the floors are replaced, and in June/July it will give us more options for spreading out kids more, and possibly providing a summer camp like program for big kids and alumni, as we've mentioned before. Access to Sproul will still be through our space, you would sanitize your hands, then sign your child in on the clipboard that is on the bookshelf beside the garage door, then go down the hall towards the office... but take the second gray door upstairs to the main floor. Coming out of the stair well you would turn left, then turn left again at the big staircase, and the Sproul room will be on your left - basically over our garage door. We will post signs pointing you in the right direction.
- * if needed, we can move the youngest babies upstairs to the Ark, over the summer





Asks & changes for parents

* Parents must now sign in, in the hallway, rather than in the classroom. Starting next week, the sign in & pens, will be on the bookshelf adjacent to the garage door.

* Parents are asked to sanitize or wash their hands, and their child's before entering their child's classroom, as well as on your way home.

* It is ok to enter your child's classroom to drop off or pick up, but parents are asked to please not interact physically with other children (no group story times, no snuggling on the couch, no building magnet houses with groups of kids, no games of tag on the playground) and to limit their interactions with other parents. If you want to have a long conversation with another parent, please step into the hall, or chat with them before or after dropping off/picking up children.

* Masks/face coverings are recommended at drop off and pick up if there are a lot of parents there at the same time. Please try to maintain social distance protocols at drop off and pick up, or wear your mask (or both) if time and space permits.

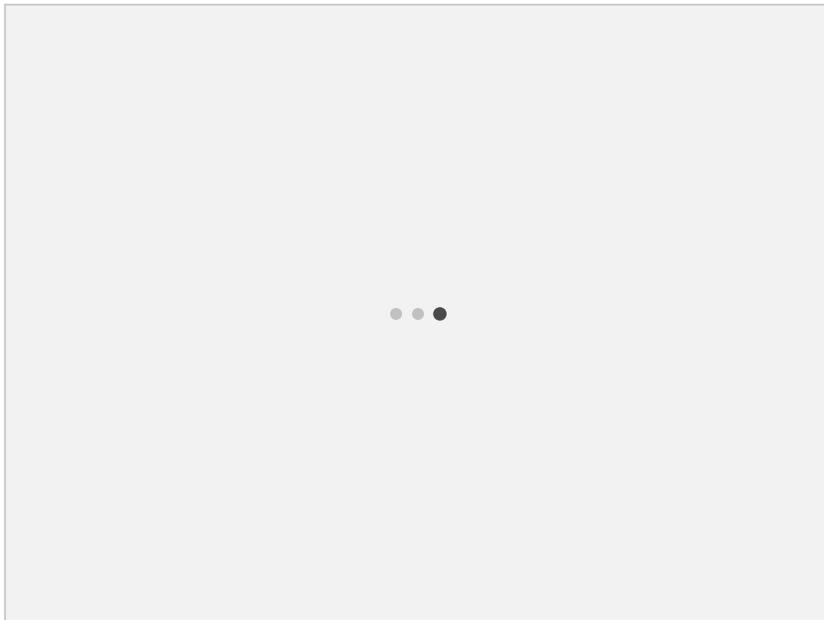
* We still ask that you not bring anyone extra to the center, and don't have other parents pick up or drop off your child.

Most importantly, if you, your child or anyone else in your household is feeling unwell, has a fever, or shows signs of illness, PLEASE keep your child home, and call or email us to keep us updated. We all need to work together to keep everyone healthy, and keep the center open.

May 10, 2020

Hi SJCC Families,

I hope you're all enjoying the sunny weather & getting some walks and adventures in your neighborhood. The kids who are at the center have been delighted to have some visits with other SJCC kids from the ramp and the sidewalk! If you haven't already seen it, there's some great chalk art from our staff big kids & the SJCC kids who are attending, up at the top of the ramp.



Toys, books & other resources

We have revised and revamped the "lending library" we have lots of things that can be borrowed and returned (and more in storage if you're looking for something specific, but we now also have an expanded **free toy/ball/random classroom finds section**... please take anything from the "free" table home, and don't bring it back!

We moved parent reference books and craft/activity books to a bookshelf near the garage door - and inside the cabinet will be adult fiction & knitting books, to borrow, lend & share. Please feel free to add or take books from this small library - there are more parent resource books in the main office.

Returning to the center.

Families who have essential jobs, or have special circumstances as outlined by Governor Newsom on April 10th, continue to be able to attend the center.

The amended Shelter in Place order that is effective on Monday, May 4th includes some additional categories of people who are able to return to work, and clarifies that you can access childcare if you fit into one of those categories, if you or your child has exceptional needs, or if you have an essential job.

At the moment we have 8-10 children attending each day, and we expect that over the next few weeks, as the shelter in place restrictions change, the number of kids attending will increase. We have had a steady stream of requests from families with essential jobs looking for childcare, but at this time we are not taking children outside of our immediate community, including siblings. It is possible over the next few weeks that we may extend that to include Monteverde & Maybeck families, or other families that are known to our community members - but we are not willing to open the floodgates to the broader community at this time, as we still are hopeful that we will get back to our regular set of families (with a few changes) sooner, rather than later. Once we know for sure who is returning, who is taking a leave of absence, and who is leaving entirely/moving, we will look at taking in new long term families.... but we're at least a few weeks away, if not a few months, away from that.

You should have received your May statement in your cubby, or by email today or yesterday, which shows a 75% Shelter In Place credit for April for families who did not attend. We will adjust May similarly, at the end of the month, when we know who did attend. If your statement needs changes or corrections, please let Celeste know.

When you are ready to have your child/children return to the center, please be sure we have at least two days notice, as we may need to make some substantial staffing or classroom adjustments.

Group size, classroom configurations & COVID related environmental changes

Community Care Licensing currently has set a maximum group size of 10, although the Governor is saying 12, with children remaining in their groups at all times, and not mixing with other groups of children. We are currently following these guidelines, and will continue to, making adjustments as needed, as families return to the center. There are 6-8 families who have requested a leave of absence, so we know that we have enough space for everyone who wants to return, to return. If needed, we will use the Ark for the babies who are under a year of age until the group size can be adjusted back to "regular".

At the same time that we are planning these group size changes, we have also made some physical changes, moving cubbies, changing classroom set ups and making sure that more things are out of reach of the children and accessible just to adults. You may have noticed a

flurry of boxes of new furniture and various levels of construction and repairs underway, we're trying to get things set up to work better and follow more CCL rules before more kids are back.

CCL has also requested that children do not bring toys or other "special" things from home, and that parents not linger in classrooms and participate in activities. So for the short term, please, no reading stories to a gaggle of excited preschoolers, and no playing on the playground at the end of the day. We are also supposed to remind you to please keep social distancing guidelines in mind while talking to staff and other parents!

Closing thought, thanks to everyone who contributed to our Go Fund Me, or passed it on!

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/stjohns2020tuition>

We got a \$500 match directly from Go Fund me! (which was my original incentive to put up the site) But more excitingly, current and alumni parents, staff and kids have contributed over \$12,000 the "oldest" alumni kid who's parents contributed was born in 1999! (after you take out the contributions that were actually tuition being paid in a creative manner!) and we've received another \$3,500 in direct donations, for over \$15,000 to help with keeping our senior staff home, tuition assistance and Covid related renovation and furniture changes. Thank you all SO much.

As always, send your questions and updates about your plans, we hope to see you all soon!

Celeste, Laure & the SJCC staff

UPDATE: *An email from the Board and SJCC staff, sent to all families April 10th,*

At SJCC, we hope that you and your families are all adjusting to our new normal as we try to pivot and rebalance to meet our new reality and work together to stop the spread of Covid-19. We miss you all!

We want to assure you that we're trying to find the right balance between staying open for families with essential jobs, paying our teachers, and recognizing that everyone has financial challenges right now that didn't exist at this time last month.

With the overall goal of staying open for kids whose parents have essential jobs and making it easiest for families to return to the center when the shelter in place is over, we are asking everyone to answer the questions below so that we can figure out funding our core operating costs and options with and without outside funding. The options we are offering parents at this time are to pay full tuition if you are able and willing to help ensure that we have our St. John's community to return to when shelter in place lifts, to pay a 25% continuity fee so long as shelter in place lasts, or to take a leave of absence through at least May 31st., which would mean paying a \$500 deposit to be applied toward your first month back.

There are still a lot of moving parts (more on that below) but we are looking into sources of alternate funding that would allow any tuition payments made by families who are not using the Center to be credited toward future tuition (or refunded if you move out of the area or your child leaves for kindergarten or TK). If the Center does not secure alternate funding, any payment

above the 25% continuity fee may be considered tax deductible (you may wish to confirm with a qualified tax preparer for your specific situation).

We've heard through the parent survey that not all families realize how we spend your tuition. Celeste can send an excel worksheet to anyone who'd like LOTS more financial details.

In round numbers:

- 85% of our income goes to staff salaries, taxes and benefits (including medical insurance),
- 10% goes to groceries, diapers, toys, staff training, telephone, photocopying and other classroom needs like repairs and maintenance,
- 5% goes to rent, which includes utilities and liability insurance.

We could reduce our staff costs by furloughing teachers, but we are hesitant to do that, as they may find jobs at other programs and because some of the funding that we are applying for requires that we keep the same staffing numbers that we had in March.

We are applying for all city, county, state and federal funding that we are eligible to apply for. To date we have not received any funding nor any rejections, but none of the other childcare programs that we are aware of have received notice from funding sources either. If we receive outside funding we will figure out how to use it in a way that supports both the center's and families' financial needs, which could include partial tuition credits for the time that your child was unable to attend due to shelter in place restrictions.

Please let us know your plans for your family by choosing one of the options below in each section. If your situation doesn't fit into one of them, just explain separately:

Attendance/Return Date

- 1) Our family has an essential worker, my child/children is already attending, and will continue to attend on their current schedule.
- 2) Our family has an essential worker, we need to increase/decrease our days of attendance and/or hours, starting _____
- 3) Our family has an essential worker and we expect our child may return to the Center before May 4, the current planned end of the Shelter-in-Place.

Expected return date: _____

- 4) Our family has an essential worker and we expect our child to return to the center starting _____ AND we may also want care for a sibling (3 months to 6 years of age), so that they can be cared for in the same place during the shelter in place and while other

schools are closed. (rates would be prorated, deposit and enrollment fee would be waived unless sibling stays enrolled after September, at which point deposit would be charged)

5) Our family has an essential worker, but our child will not return until the Shelter-in-Place has ended

6) Our family does not have an essential worker, and our child will return to the Center when the shelter-in-place ends (currently planned for May 4)

7) Our child will remain out until: _____ (specify date)

8) We would like to take a leave of absence until _____ (see Leave of absence below in tuition).

Tuition

1) Our child will continue attending, and we will continue paying full tuition.

2) Our family will continue paying full tuition, although our child is not attending, as this will enable the center to continue to pay staff and other fixed costs for the Center

3) If the center gets enough outside funding to make this possible, our family would like to pay a 25% continuity fee each month while my child is out, rather than full tuition. This fee would be used to fund essential operating expenses for the Center and enable us to continue offering health insurance for all staff, as well as to ensure that our child can return as soon as we want them to.

4) Our family would like to take a leave of absence until at least June 1st (specify date below)

We will fill out a leave of absence form, and will pay an additional deposit of \$500, (that will be applied to your tuition on your return).

Return date options:

June 1, June 15, July 1, Aug 1, Aug 15,
Sept 1

I understand that:

· If the Center secures alternate funding, part of my tuition payment may be credited toward future tuition (or refunded if you move out of the area or your child leaves for kindergarten or TK)

· If the Center does not secure alternate funding, my payment above the 25% continuity fee may be considered tax deductible, (you may wish to confirm with a qualified tax preparer for your specific situation)

· If my family is interested in paying tuition but not able to pay 100% of tuition during this time, I will talk with the directors about what we are able to contribute

Please send this back to us by Monday, or at least an email saying you're trying to figure it out. Please reach out with questions, either to Celeste & Laurie, or to Board Members directly.

Take care, and enjoy the sunny weekend.

St. John's Childcare Board & Staff

UPDATE; The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all families as of April 3rd, regarding the topic of Busy Bags

A parent just expressed concern about the Busy Bags, I just want to clarify that, OF COURSE I have taken into account not dropping off potentially contaminated items to families.

It is, of course, opt in- each bag is either new, or already belongs to the busy bee child (has their school belongings in it). Each bag has new items in it, or books & materials that have been in storage since 2019. they were packed with clean hands, and toys/materials are currently sitting, for at least a week, to be sure that if we somehow messed up somewhere in that process - they will be safe by the time they reach you.

Our main intention in telling families that they're on the way, is that they may wish to take further precautions - rather than just handing them to their children immediately, or you may prefer to hand out the items one at a time, as you need distractions. I worked in children's hospitals for many years as an infant development specialist in the NICU and as a child life specialist, I am very aware of the importance of new, clean, safe toys for potentially immune compromised children (and families). I actually got the idea from the busy bags I used to make for hospitalized kids and their siblings.

I would never put your kids at risk, but if any other families are concerned about the safety of the busy bags, just let me know and we'll take you off the drop off list. But also, as I said, if there's anything you'd like us to drop off or include with your bag, just let us know... we already have a request for an ice cream truck, hula hoops, more tiny cars and books on specific topics.

Take care,
Celeste

UPDATE; The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all families as of March 29th

Hi SJCC families,
Somehow the week has zoomed past, with lots of it ON Zoom, and its suddenly Sunday.

Last week we enjoyed having 16 different kids spend time at St. John's, some on their regular schedules, some on condensed schedules.... all who really enjoyed time with peers, teachers and exploring Monteverde's playground, as well as Zoom calls on Friday with their classmates who were at home. To my surprise, there weren't any questions about why their friends were at home, just lots of conversations about what stories to read next time. For this week, we have a few families who's needs have changed, both adding or subtracting days. If your needs have changed, just let us know - The list of essential jobs has had some changes, additions and clarifications, as the county ones had different things, and now the state version is clearer. The most up to date list of essential jobs is here, for those wanting clarification of what's included <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

If your childcare needs are different then they were last week, just let us know, we have room. Right now both the Wobbly room is running with between 6 and 8 kids, with a mix of Janine, Silvia, Nai and Kasima - on the days that we have a baby, Nai and Silvia are taking turns with them, so pretty much 1:1 care for babies. In Busy Bees we've also had 6-8 kids, with Janice, Juneko and Te'china. We are keeping the groups separate, with a maximum group size of 12, and different outside/playground times. For the most part, teachers have been working 4 days a week, and we're also slowly but steadily working through the list of professional development requirements and center projects that would normally get done on a spring work day.

Over the next two weeks, as we get more information about how long the shelter in place will last, and how many families have essential jobs, we'll adjust classrooms and staffing as needed. We can, if needed, use other space in the building to make sure our group sizes do not exceed 12.

Toys, books, outdoor equipment and parent resource books are still available to borrow. If you can't make it by the center, let us know and we can see if a teacher can drop things off on their way home one day.

Take care, send us your questions, we miss you all!

Celeste, Laurie and the SJCC staff

GO FUND ME:

Hi SJCC Families,

I set this small fundraiser up because I've found a small matching grant from gofundme.... if we raise \$500, they'll match it.

So a few small contributions, and off we go! This money will help us support our families and staff during the challenging times of the current pandemic.

But it also occurred to me that it would be a short term workaround for the families who would prefer to pay tuition by credit card and get points (or whatever your credit card offers). We can't afford to offer credit card payments under our current structure, but this would work for the short term. As well, we can write tax receipts for contributions through GoFundMe! I'll look for a more up to date photo... but this was handy. Can you name these, not so tiny kiddos?

Celeste

gofun



Celeste Low would like you to support Tuition assistance & core operating support by making a donation and spreading the word.

We need your help with funding to both support the families who need more care than they usually do so that they can be at work more hours, but also for the center, for operating support to help make up the funding gaps for families who are encountering financial challenges themselves. With some ad...

[View fundraiser](#)

UPDATE; *The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all SJCC families as of Tuesday, March 24th:*

Hello St. John's Families,

The week is speeding by, and despite my best intentions, I missed sending a weekend update.

As you know, during the shelter in place we are restricted to how many children we can serve in each classroom (only 12/kids/classroom), as well prioritizing providing care for parents with essential needs. So far we have a good match between parents who have essential jobs and need care, with the spaces that we have. And if there is more need, we have the option of using more space in the building so that we can keep the group sizes small.

When I surveyed you all late last week, and over the weekend, the results were:

- * About 1/4 to 1/3 are sending their kids now (12-16 kids attending this week, 20 kids attended last week, some just a few days,, average daily attendance 15)
- * About 1/4 will reevaluate at the end of the week and decide about next week (week of March 30th)
- * About 1/4 think they will wait until the school districts go back in
- * About 1/4 say they will wait for the shelter in place to be over

The tricky bit for us (St Johns) is that we're not sure when the shelter in place order will be lifted, when people who could access care but are not, will change their minds or even when the school districts will restart classes. We're looking at all the options, wondering what the spring will look like.

With so many variables, it becomes extra important that we all keep communicating, keep sharing information, keep sharing resources (books, toys, resources, Kleenex, diapers!) and keep adapting our plans so that we keep meeting the needs of our kids, our parents and our teachers, within our St John's community, during this unprecedented world event.

Let us know how we can help, let us know what your kids need, and keep washing your hands and stay away from groups !

Celeste, Laurie & the SJCC team

UPDATE; *The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all SJCC families as of Friday, March 20th:*

Hi SJCC Families,

The try out **Zoom calls** seemed to go well today. Thanks to Nathan & Lauren for organizing them ! It was SO nice to see everyone, and Paige and Alex and Irina have been chattering away about who had what, at each house, and the great story that Skye's mom read! Thanks Sarah!.

Due to a HUGE lack of demand, **we are not planning to open until 8:30 next week**..... if that causes a problem for a specific family we can look at changing it, but we've only had one child before 8:45 for four of the last five days! I'm chalking it up to the lack of traffic, but if your individual circumstances have changed let me know, *I know we have teachers who would be happy to be here at 8 if there are kids who need care.*

Which brings me to ----- **kids who need care next week & the following week.**

We've heard back from about 1/3 of you that you need care for next week and/or the week after, we've heard from about 1/3 that you DO NOT need care until the shelter in place order is lifted and/or elementary schools go back in.

.... which leaves about 1/3 of you that we have not heard from, since your original email that let us know you were not coming this week.

If you have not already, could you please send us an email that states your plans, for at least the next two weeks, with your child/children's name as the subject.

Something like:

Subject; Gabe

Gabe will stay at home until at least April 6th

OR Gabe will need care every day during the shelter in place, even though he usually attends two days/week

OR Gabe will need care next week, I'm not sure about the following week.

OR Although Gabe usually comes full time, we will only need care on Tuesdays and Fridays during the shelter in place.

Once we get all the details back from you, we'll send you an update about teachers & kids who will be in each classroom , so you can update your kids before Monday, if appropriate. We know that Juneko & Kasima will be back next week, while Hung, Huong and Violetta will continue to stay at home.

Right now we are only expecting about 12-15 kids, depending on the day, but we have room to accommodate individual needs - even if its different then your usual schedule. If your needs change, just let us know, but we're hoping to get a ballpark idea so we can figure out what else can get done around here in the quiet moments.

Tuition - is due on the 25th, several families have asked for tuition paying options again, rather than finding them buried in an old thread.

I have sent some bills and statements out as pdf's, which I can do for anyone who needs them - or if you need a specific format for dependent care spending or taxes, or just can't find the ones that came out in January, just let us know.

Here is the bank info:

Bank Name: Wells Fargo

Account number:129058368

Routing number: 121042882

or you can drop off a check to the center or mail us a check (but please mail it to Celeste's house, as mail in the building is wacky at the best of times, Celeste Low, 9 Samoset St, San Francisco, CA 94110) , or you can also pay directly at a Wells Fargo, by depositing into our account (as several families did over the holiday break).

Babysitting - some of our subs and work studies are still around and may be available to babysit. If you have specific needs please send an email and I'll try to match people up, or at least link them up to discuss options.

Info updates: Email & website

Gabe has added a Covid-19 page and link on our website.

<https://stjohnschildcareberkeley.com/>

If we need to close the center or have other important information to share, we will update there, as well as sending emails. I've sent this email cc, not bcc, so you can check if it should be going to anyone else in your family. Just let us know.

Toy, Book & Playground Library

During this time of lots of extra time at home, we'd like to offer families the option of "checking out/borrowing" books, puzzles, toys & playground equipment. We have a vast supply of items in the storage room and back hall that haven't been in a classroom in weeks, and won't be needed in the next few weeks, as well as lots of hula hoops, balls, trikes, scooters & riding toys that you can borrow. We think this will work best if you make your selections without your baby/toddler/preschooler "helping", so come by the office after drop off, before pick up, or just on your way to get groceries, if your kid is at home. With the libraries & playgrounds closed, we'll all need to be more creative & share more resources. We also have some activity/curriculum planning books that some of you might like to borrow too.

Paper towels? Kleenex? Diapers? Wipes?

If you're running low on any of the essentials, swing by the office & borrow some. We usually have a 4+ week supply for 45 kids, so we're happy to share if there's something you need that's not in the stores! Just like so many of you shared soap & hand sanitizer (thanks SO much!).

Thank you all for all the thoughtful emails and updates, we miss everyone that we haven't seen this week!

Celeste, Laurie and the SJCC team

UPDATE; *The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all SJCC families as of Wednesday, March 18th:*

Hi SJCC Families,

Today was our quietest day yet, with just 6 Wobblies and 8 Busy Bees, tomorrow we are currently expecting 18-21 total kids, but we know that number will likely change through the night or tomorrow.

The teachers that are at the center are getting lots of cleaning and organizing done, and also enjoying being able to spend much more 1:1 and small group time with each child who's here. To my surprise, our regular delivery of soap, kleenex and paper towels came yesterday, so we are well stocked, let us know if you're in need of a paper product that's hard to find at the moment. Our big kids have also been excited to play a bit at Monteverdes playground (if you're looking for the kids and they're not in Busy Bees, you can access it by walking past the Busy Bee door, go left down the hall & through the outside doors.... just be careful not to close the door behind you). If your needs have changed, just let us know, we're all just muddling along trying to figure out how best to manage this new reality.

Several more families came today & picked up outdoor riding toys, books & puzzles - we still have lots more and also hula hoops in different sizes, big bags of cardboard blocks for indoor play, and lots of sand toys if you want to make a makeshift sandbox or sensory table with an under the bed Rubbermaid type box (it works great!) Many people have been sending online resources for parents & centers, I've included some links below.

Take care,
Celeste, Laurie & the SJCC staff

While your're sheltered in place... some resource and activities

With the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone across the globe is in the process of figuring out how to adapt in order to curb the spread of this virus.

HiMama has compiled these resources with the feedback and support from the childcare community to help child care centers, teachers and families make the most of these uncertain times to continue providing great care for our kiddos.

<https://www.himama.com/resources/coronavirus-tips-daycare-closure>

Zero to three, has created and compiled resources that offer tips for families including age-appropriate responses to common questions, a guide to self-care, and activities for young children experiencing social distancing.

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

NAEYC (National Association for the education of young children)

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/covid-19>

UPDATE; *The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all SJCC families as of Tuesday, March 17th:*

Happy St Patrick's day!

Hi SJCC families, we had another quiet day, 17 kids total, with 10 staff. (A regular day is 45 kids and 18-20 staff) Teachers are using the quiet to deep clean toys, surfaces & funny corners of the play areas. Busy bees went to explore Monteverde's playground (since they're closed) and really enjoyed it. Tomorrow we're anticipating 18-24 kids.

Licensing update

On a statewide call this afternoon, CCL clarified some changes to their rules, during the Covid crisis. Some were relatively small things, like requiring everyone to wash their hands when entering & leaving a childcare space and allowing hand sanitizer to be used on kids (yeah!), others were bigger, much bigger:

- * group sizes are set at a max of 12, however overall capacity is flexible (so you can exceed your capacity in sets of 12 in each classroom)
- * ratios are now flexible , as long as you never exceed 1:10 in a mixed age group, or 1:12 with preschoolers
- * teacher qualifications (12 ece units)'are now no longer required to be alone with a group of kids.

The only one i really see affecting us is the group size - if we have more families choosing to attend, then we'll need to utilise other space in the building for the tiny babies, so we can keep group sizes at 12 or lower, or have some full time families come part time We'll do that if we need too, but we'll see how the week unfolds.

Tuition, payment options - with the shelter in place order, our mail delivery may be even more haphazard than usual. Of course dropping off a check to us will still work, or electronic payment of some sort will work but if you are mailing a regular check, please send it to me at home Celeste Low, 9 Samoset St, San Francisco, CA 94110

Impromptu Toy, book, playground library off to a great start. We had 6-7 families come by & pick up extra activities for the days ahead. We have a table of stuff set up near the stroller parking, including hula hoops & sets of cardboard blocks, and we also have parenting books & activity books to borrow, as well as the books & puzzles in the back hall. Come take a look to widen your play options.

Let us know if you have questions, or changes in your care needs.

Celeste, Laurie & the SJCC team

UPDATE; *The following is an Email from Celeste, sent to all SJCC families as of Monday, March 16th:*

Hi SJCC families,

We had a quiet day at the center, with two babies, nine Wobblies & 12 Busy Bees. Once we saw how quiet the day and week would be, we were able to send Hung, Huong & Juneko home. Violetta & Kasima were already at home. Thank you to all of the parents who have reached out to let us know their kids would or would not be attending. Thank you too for your understanding about our changes in hours & staffing .

Shelter in place order

The shelter in place order surprises us, but as childcare is categorised as an essential service for parents with essential jobs, we will still be open tomorrow. There are a few staffing & schedule adjustments to make to keep the group sizes below 12, and ensure that the groups don't mix, but we've figured out how to do that with our reduced staffing. Details for Alameda are [here](#)

<http://acphd.org/media/559658/health-officer-order-shelter-in-place-20200316.pdf>

The city of Berkeley has similar info on their website. There is a statewide CCL call tomorrow afternoon, which we expect will give more details about childcare rules during the next several weeks. I will update you if that makes any changes to our plans.

Info updates: Email & website

Speaking of websites, Gabe has added a Covid-19 page and link on our website.

<https://stjohnschildcareberkeley.com/>

If we need to close the center or have other important information to share, we will update there, as well as sending emails. I've sent this email cc, not bcc, so you can check if it should be going to anyone else in your family. Just let us know.

Toy, Book & Playground Library

During this time of lots of extra time at home, we'd like to offer families the option of "checking out/borrowing" books, puzzles, toys & playground equipment. We have a vast supply of items in the storage room and back hall that haven't been in a classroom in weeks, and won't be needed in the next few weeks, as well as lots of hula hoops, balls, trikes, scooters & riding toys that you can borrow. We think this will work best if you make your selections without your baby/toddler/preschooler "helping", so come by the office after drop off, before pick up, or just on your way to get groceries, if your kid is at home. With the libraries & playgrounds closed, we'll all need to be more creative & share more resources. We also have some activity/curriculum planning books that some of you might like to borrow too.

Paper towels? Kleenex? Diapers? Wipes?

If you're running low on any of the essentials, swing by the office & borrow some. We usually have a 4+ week supply for 45 kids, so we're happy to share if there's something you need that's not in the stores! Just like do many of you shared soap & hand sanitizer (thanks SO much!).

Celeste

UPDATE; *The following is an email from St Johns Board of Directors addressing the virus, Potential Closure, and Tuition and School Costs, sent on Saturday, March 14th:*

Dear St. John's Families:

The Board held an urgent meeting via telephone on Friday to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the school. As Celeste wrote Friday night, the Center is still planning to be open this coming Monday, and the Board and school directors have not determined a date St. John's will close. However, the health and well-being of our school and broader community are of utmost importance.

Potential for School Closure

Given current circumstances, a period of closure seems inevitable. We encourage parents and caregivers to start making preparations for this possibility. A government authority could require us to close; if not, the Board and school directors will work together to decide exactly when to close. As we all know by now, this is a rapidly changing situation. St. John's may close at any time if the directors believe that the current circumstances necessitate it.

As Celeste mentioned in her last email, some families may choose to keep their children away from the Center even while it remains open. For these families, please make sure to let Celeste and Laurie know so they can plan accordingly.

Tuition and Covering School Costs

We also want to talk to you about tuition and teacher/staff payment in the event of a COVID-19 related closure. The Board discussed scenarios for a 2-week closure (and the below applies to that; a longer closure could require further discussion).

We believe that teachers and staff should be paid their full salaries, or as close to them as possible, if the school has to close--both in the interest of fairness and because we don't want to lose the great teachers that we have. We also want to avoid teachers having to spend down all of their vacation or sick time, or leaving teachers who have limited paid time off balances in the

lurch. While government programs may become available to fill the gap, we don't yet know the details about eligibility or wait times. In the near term, the school's ability to pay teachers, as always, depends on tuition payments.

We believe that families should continue to pay full tuition in the event of a closure, so that the school can continue to pay salaries and other fixed costs. However, we recognize that that could present a significant financial hardship for some families. We urge those who would face significant financial hardship to talk to Celeste as soon as possible. The Board recognizes that all parents will experience some level of hardship from a school closure.

The situation we are facing is unprecedented, and we hope that we can all pull together as a community. Should your circumstances allow it, tax-deductible donations for tuition assistance are always welcome, and may be especially helpful as other parents' jobs are affected. Please let us know if you would like more information or clarity on the Board's decisions. You're welcome to email me or call me directly at 415-410-3631.

Kind regards,
The St. John's Child Care Center Board
Caroline Massad Francis, Interim Chair (mother of Jack, Busy Bees, and Raymond, alumnus now in kindergarten)
P.S. I know some of you may have questions about why we will be open on Monday.

Although public schools have closed in Berkeley and Oakland (and other districts), many preschools in the area are currently planning to be open, and neither Child Care Licensing, Berkeley Public Health Division, nor the state have called for closure. Closing without much warning would not be ideal--either for parents, who need time to prepare, or for children and teachers, who will want to say goodbye. A majority of Board Members felt comfortable enough with the measures the directors are taking to reduce the risk of transmission (splitting children up into smaller groups, spreading them out into different parts of the building, continuing to practicing good hygiene, and allowing teachers who are at higher risk to stay home) that we wanted to give parents the choice about whether to send their children to school. However, all of us can take action to reduce the spread of germs at school, too! If you are continuing to send your child to St. John's, we as fellow parents ask you to ensure that your family is washing your hands, limiting exposure to crowds, and taking other precautions as [recommended by the CDC](#).

--

Caroline Massad Francis
415.410.3631

Message from Celeste; Friday, March 13th:

Hi SJCC Families,

I'm sure that you are all following the news and the progression of Covid 19 across the world. At the center, we're still focusing on washing hands at transitions, with even our littlest babies, encouraging parents to assist children with handwashing when they enter and leave the center, and making sure that we continue to wash toys, tables and hard surfaces frequently throughout the day, as well as extra thoroughly at night (thanks to our great new janitor). Please make sure you look for the "need washing" bins in each room for toys that have been chewed on.

Currently, we are not closing. Lots of families have been asking! Just like with bad air days and bad weather days, we are committed to staying open as much as possible - however if we have a direct contact who contracts Corona Virus (parents, staff or child), we will follow the directions of the Public Health Department.

Right now different counties and cities are giving different advice, but we will follow their direction for our specific center. We would not close just because a school district decides to close, as we have siblings in many different schools and school districts. We will follow directions specific to our site, or childcare specific directions from Community Care Licensing, if applicable. So far, young children are the least impacted, so lets keep our fingers crossed that our parents and teachers stay healthy! Wash your hands too!

If you'd like to discuss the Corona Virus, our approach to cleaning and policy on closing in more detail, please come talk to Celeste in the mornings between 8:30 and 10, or send her an email.

We've also made some changes focused on keeping hands clean, and groups a little more separated, with consultation with licensing.

1) We've added a **hand sanitizer dispenser to the playground** (thanks to a generous family who was willing to share several bottles of "impossible to find" hand sanitizer). It is located on the wall of the shed. There is also a bottle on top of the shelf by the baby yard. We will be adding a dispenser on that shelf, and another near the back door, as soon as the dispensers are back in stock and delivered. Please remember that center staff cannot put hand sanitizer on children. Parents can choose to for their own children, but staff cannot put it on children's hands - please don't ask them to.

2) I've ordered a **foot pump operated sink for the playground**, to enable both adults and children to wash their hands after blowing noses etc. Washing hands is always better than hand

sanitizer, when its available. It'll also lessen the stampede to wash hands when transitioning back into the classrooms after playground time.

3) We've ordered **touchless soap dispensers** for both bathrooms for the adults, and will experiment again, with having the Busy Bees use them. In the past they've rarely worked for longer then 6 months, but at the moment we need them to work now.... so they may have a short life, but that's ok.

4) Starting on Monday, March 16th, we will only have everyone **drop off in Wobblies until 8 (not 8:30)** At 8, we will separate the kids into their classrooms, with the hopes that less time spent all together, will lessen sharing germs, just a little bit. At the moment we only have one baby who drops off before 8, so essentially, all babies will drop off in the baby room - unless you've booked an earlier then 8 drop off.

5) We ask/remind you to be sure that you **follow our sick policy** for both your kids AND yourselves. If you're not feeling 100%, please don't share your germs with the rest of the families if you can possibly avoid it. If you're feeling terrible and need to drop off/pick up, just call us and someone can come out to the garage to help. The main center number is 510-549-9342. and Celeste's cell is 415-215-0538, (7-7 only please!) We have, and will continue to remind the teachers to follow it as well. Please be especially aware of fevers and unexplained coughs. Those of you who have been coughing since January, do not have coughs that concern us.

6) **Maybeck (the high school upstairs) has closed**, but just due to caution. They do not have anyone in their school or community who is suspected to have Covid 19 at this time.

Finally, please know that our primary goal is keeping your children happy, healthy and well cared for. We have looked very seriously at whether staying open or closing will make a significant difference in everyone's health and well being. With the information that we have today, and with no one in our center community, or their extended families, testing positive, the best action still seems to be to stay open. We are working on contingency plans around alternate staffing options, around separating the children into smaller groups and utilizing other parts of the building and also around ensuring that we can pay our core costs (staffing & medical insurance) if we do need to close for any amount of time.

So what can we, as parents and community members, do to help?

- *Wash your hands, and your children's hands, when arriving or leaving the classrooms, before you arrive at the center, and before you head home. If that's not possible, use hand sanitizer. It helps the kids to establish good hand washing rituals, but it also REALLY lessens the germs that end up moving between home, school, the grocery store, etc. It only takes a minute, but can make a big difference.*
- *Follow the sick policy, especially if you or your child has a fever or a new cough*
- *We'll happily accept donations of hand sanitizer or liquid soap, as they're both getting exceedingly hard to find. We have enough of both to last us 3-4 weeks, but if you find a stocked shelf at Target or CVS, grab a little extra for the center.*

- *Make sure your tuition is paid, and if you're considering a multi-month payment, do it now rather than later. We expect that cash flow may be a bit of an issue if we do have to close for any period beyond a few days. Remember April tuition is due by March 25th. If you'd prefer to transition to paying electronically, or with a check through your bank, we can email you those details, or you can drop off a post dated check.*

Please let us know if you have additional questions or suggestions/strategies for managing this difficult situation. A big thank you to all of the parents who attended Tuesday's Board Meeting to help us problem solve this, as well as the other parents who have made suggestions, dropped off hand sanitizers and stayed to help during a hectic moment at the beginning or the end of the day.

Here are some specific details and resources shared with us recently by Berkeley Public Health

New School Guidance from CDPH:

The [California Department of Public Health](#) released [updated school guidance](#) on March 7th. Please review this document. School closure guidance provided in this document is consistent with our current approach in Berkeley—if there is a confirmed case of a teacher, staff, or student in your school, school closure and other mitigation decisions will be made in consultation with Berkeley Public Health.

Reliable Information and Resources:

- [City of Berkeley COVID-19 webpage](#): trustworthy information and the latest from the City of Berkeley
- [Alameda County Public Health Department COVID-19 webpage](#)
- [Guidance for Childcare Programs and K-12 schools](#) (released 3/6/2020)
- [California Department of Public Health COVID-19](#)
- [Updated Guidance for Schools](#) (last updated 3/7/2020)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19](#)
- [Interim Guidance for School Administrators of Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools](#) (last updated 2/16/2020)

Thank you for your support,

Celeste, Laurie, and the SJCC Staff