



BROOKLYN FRIENDS SCHOOL

March 26, 2020

Dear Family Center Families,

First and most important, I am hoping that in these uncertain and challenging times you are all doing at least OK. We need new words to check in with each other - “how are you?” does not seem to be enough. I want to recognize that we are faced with days that are very different from anything we have ever experienced. After this unusual Spring Break, as we resume Family Center through virtual points of connection, we will be heading into uncharted territory. I think about you every day and think about how to stay connected and sustain the community of children and families we value and appreciate. Although this presents newness, I am certain that our meaningful connections will continue.

We have a lot to share with you, and we thank you in advance for reading this long email. Please be sure to read it all to learn how the Family Center will resume next week. The teachers and I have been working together (virtually) to prepare for our start. The very foundation of Early Childhood education as your children experience it in the Family Center would seem to be at odds with the idea of remote learning. Our children learn through open-ended, experiential, hands-on play. They learn when they have the opportunity to be part of a physical classroom community, which is something that is not possible for now. Yet, we are committed to finding the best ways to stay socially connected with your children who we deeply care about. As we stretch and explore new possibilities, we are learning with grace and patience

Methods for Connections:

Our connections will be through zoom gatherings, large and small, through pre-recorded shared videos, and other ways that we believe will help us stay in touch and spend time together. This does mean more screen time than we might typically recommend; however, these screens now allow for important social connections that are essential at this time. Most important will be for the children to have lots of time for open-ended play. Enjoy sitting back and just watching them - there is so much to learn and be inspired by when we just watch our youngest as they blossom and grow.

Plans for our First Week Back:

Although we have detailed the first several days, it is important to note that as we move forward, there will be adjustments and changes as we see what works best for our youngest and the adults who lovingly care for them.

- *Monday March 30 and Tuesday March 31* will be days for the teachers to have individual scheduled times with each child and family. You will be hearing (or have heard) from the teachers to schedule the meeting.
- Wednesday, April 1 to Friday, April 3, we will begin the day with a Zoom Circle time with all of the teachers and children from 9:30am to 10:00am.
- In addition, we will also start sharing videos from the teachers singing a song, reading a story, sharing a suggested activity for the children that you can use and fit into your schedules as works best for you.

Throughout the entirety of our time physically apart, our goal is to connect home and school in the best and most developmentally-appropriate ways possible. The teachers have been immersed in meaningful conversations and shared learning as they consider what is possible and best.

Your Presence and Guidance:

We recognize that all of these points of contact require an adult to be part of the experience with the child. Understandably, this will add to your busy days balancing daily home life and work. It is important for us to all find a balance that is manageable and not overwhelming. Thus, if you can't join one of our zoom times, or you don't use the videos sent right away that is fine. We will be making every effort to record those times so that you can reference them at another time.

If your child does not want to sit for the entire Circle time, let them wander away and come back when ready. If they just need to watch and not participate, that is fine too. Just being "together" in the same virtual space will make an impact and be meaningful. What is happening is unprecedented, and we are all trying to find the healthiest way to get through. We need to remember to be kind to ourselves. To find further helpful resources for you to access, feel free to go to the Virtual BFS site as well as access our COVID-19 Resources.

Additional Key Details:

- We will be using zoom (zoom.us) for our live Circle Times and other activities. Please be sure you have that on your computer and are familiar with how to use it. Let me know if you need more information about this program.
- I will be sending you a short survey by Friday with some questions that will help guide us as we design doable activities for your children.

I will be in touch with you by email often to share ideas, suggestions, and just say hi. I want to hear from you as often as you need. Share stories, pictures, videos. Let me know what is and what isn't working. Ask as many questions as needed in order for me and the entire Family Center team to support you. All of the teachers will also be connecting by email once a week and sending videos from time to time for the children to watch.

That is enough for now. I take comfort in knowing that we are all in this together. Our Family Center community and connections, even as they look different, are fully present. **WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!**

In Friendship and With Gratitude,
Sara