

To all parents of children in nursery or day care

27. April 2020

Information on the Gradual Reopening of Childcare Facilities in the State of Berlin

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Parents,

We are aware that you and our Children have had to accept severe restrictions on your everyday life for more than a month now. This is as a result of having to protect At-risk group as well as to control the spread of the pandemic, which would otherwise have devastating effects on our Health Care System. We are also aware of how difficult this is for the time being, either because of a small apartment, a lack of a garden, playgrounds that unfortunately remain closed, or missed friendships interaction and other deprivations. The challenge of harmoniously coordinating both and doing your best in both areas is not easy and takes a lot of energy.

We thank you for taking this difficult path with us so far and for making an important contribution to containing the pandemic.

Unfortunately, we are still in an exceptionally precarious situation due to the persistent corona pandemic. Many restrictions must therefore currently remain in place. Such being the case, children's care at home is precedential.

However, in order to keep these restrictions generally at a minimum, the Berlin senate is constantly examining whether appropriate adjustments to the containment measures are possible.

With this in mind, amendments to the regulations were adopted on 21st April 2020, which came into force the day before yesterday. The new rules now provide the possibility of a gradual reopening of Day Care Services under the conditions of emergency care. It is in our common interest to consider these steps so that the functioning of the Childcare System can be maintained.

From 27th April 2020, primarily the children of the following groups will be able to take advantage of childcare in Day Care Facilities.

- Parent who work in an occupation recognized as being of an essential service (according to the revised list of eligible occupations /see annex); the previous two-parent rule no longer applies.
- All single parents (defined here as mothers or fathers who are single, widowed, permanently separated or divorced and who are not living with another adult but with their child or children in one household).
- Parents whose children with disabilities have a significantly increased need for support (so called B -Status)

Further steps towards the opening are intended, for example for the children who will start school this year, and should be implemented as quickly as possible. However, this can only happen by continuously taking into consideration the epidemiological situation in the state of Berlin.

The process of reopening of a limited care service remains aligned to the goal of reducing social contacts. In order to be able to guarantee this, the facilities and day care staff are required to orient their limited care service to this goal. This means, for example, that there may be changed opening hours, care times that differ from the voucher, or irregular hourly or daily care.

Please be aware that with every additional contact outside of the family the risk of infection for your child and thus for you can increase again. With this in mind, please also check whether the possibility of private, or particularly neighbourly care assistance, which is permitted from 27 April onwards, could be an alternative for you.

When making your decision, please also consider the health and well-being of the employees in the day care facilities and the day care staff. With this in mind, if your child is being cared for, we ask you to enter the facility or day care center only at the entrance area when you pick up or drop off your child without staying there longer than necessary. If possible, the children should only be brought or picked up by a single guardian. Talk to your child in advance about the current peculiarities and try to make him or her understand the unfamiliar situation, the new procedures and the additional requirements involved.

If your child is currently being acclimated, it is possible for a parent to be present, thereby considering the rules of social distancing and the corresponding hygiene regulations.

Eligible parents who are using emergency care for the first time are requested to contact the day care center or childcare provider in advance, in order to enable them to plan accordingly. Please also let us know exactly when your child will need care.

Of course, if your child is ill or has unclear symptoms, you are not allowed to visit the nursery or day care center. In presence of reasonable doubts, a medical certificate may be requested.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please also contact your elected parents' representative or the State Parents' Committee at (info@leak-berlin.de) so that the latter can transmit the various family situations to the senate administration in a collective manner.

We will keep you informed about the further steps of the reopening of childcare. The protection of our health is a top priority for all of us. Please also contribute to this in the area of childcare.

Thank you very much!

Yours sincerely,

In behalf of Mrs Schulze