March 13, 2020

RE: MAAC Child Development Program School Closures March 16 – April 6

Dear MAAC Parents and Guardians,

Following guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization, and San Diego County Public Health officials, we are taking action to reduce the potential for exposure to the COVID-19 virus and ensure the safety and well-being of all children, families, and staff.

All MAAC Child Development Centers and Family Child Care homes will be closed beginning March 16 and anticipated to re-open on April 6, 2020. With guidance from the Office of Head Start, MAAC has decided to move our regularly scheduled Spring Break (formerly April 6 - 10). Spring Break will now take place from March 27 through April 3. During this time, MAAC will disseminate information to staff and parents on whether we will be returning to regular operations on April 6, 2020.

MAAC will be sending out future messages regarding school lunch programs in your area or resources for nutritional services.

We want to take this opportunity to draw attention to mental health, as news and misinformation surrounding the COVID-19 virus can spread fear. The National Association of School Psychologist’s guide for talking to kids about COVID-19 includes these recommendations:

- **Remain calm and reassuring.** Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions. If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine. Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy. Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

- **Make yourself available.** Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.

- **Avoid excessive blaming.** When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone. It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus. Bullying or negative comments made toward others should be stopped and reported to the school.

- **Limit television viewing or access to information on the internet and through social media.** Speak to your child about how stories about COVID-19 on the internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. Talking about factual information of this disease can help reduce anxiety. Constantly watching updates on the status of COVID-19 can increase anxiety—avoid this. Engage in games or other activities instead. Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young.
• Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.

• Be honest and accurate. In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality. Don’t ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.

We understand the impacts these closures have on you and your families. These are unprecedented circumstances; we appreciate your patience and understanding. Please be on the look-out for a message from us via blackboard, email, or through our website or Facebook page regarding any new developments.

Sincerely,

Arnulfo Manriquez
President and CEO