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August 20, 2021

Dear Parents,

This letter serves as a notice that we are experiencing a very significant staffing shortage. I am sure this is not a surprise! 😊 Candace and I are planning on forging through this crazy time, and working extremely hard to keep your children safe and loved each day. However, we do have a few things to share and ask of you.

We will have to change how we do things, to make it through this year.

Immediate Ways to Assist:

We are asking parents to email us in advance when you know your child will be absent. If we know we are going to be low on specific dates we can try to staff at the lower. We thank you in advance.

We are asking parents to continue to bring their kiddos each day that you need care, because you pay for this service and we want to do our very best to provide this service for you. However, for families that tend to have their children here for 9+ hours a day, when possible, consider shortening your child's day. I promise that we are not trying to take away a service that you pay for. We are in fact trying to ensure that your child has teachers when you need them most. Reducing the amount of time that kiddos are here even by a bit may seem minimal, however, it will add up to a lot to alleviate stress from our teachers, and to keep teachers fresh and willing to be here each day.

We are asking each parent to have a plan in place, should we need children to be picked up for the day due to lack of staffing. Candace and I really hope this day doesn't come, but to be honest, I would be shocked if it didn't. We will work hard to try to avoid it, however, everyone should be prepared. When we find a day where we simply do not have enough staff to care for your kiddos, we will first send out a text and an email asking for volunteers to pick up children. After a 1.5 hour window of parents picking up their child voluntarily, we will start calling families and asking them to come get their child. When this happens, please be kind, because this will only happen when we have literally exhausted every resource we have.

Please continue to read below (on the back of this document) to other ways that parents can help us keep everything operating.

The last year has been quite a challenge, and this is just another part of that challenge. However, we are determined to do whatever we can within our power, to provide these kiddos with a safe, loving and educational environment each day. At the end of the day, it is all about what resources we have available to us.

Every volunteer that works in this building will have a background screening processed, just like our teachers have.

Thank you for your consideration of any of the above requests. Any suggestions, questions or concerns regarding this topic should be directed to Candace or Christa.

Thank you for CHOOSING Courtyard.

Sincerely,  
Christa & Candace

### Other Ways to Assist:

We are asking parents to share, share, and share some more how we need teachers. This is a all hands on deck situation. We need every loving person that we can find, to help us through this next year. We advertise and advertise for applicants, and it is like hitting a dry well my friends. There just aren't any applicants. We are looking for full time teachers, and part time teachers to work side by side with our awesome experienced teachers. If you have any contacts at local colleges, please visit with me so that we can try to share our job opportunities with those colleges. If you have a job, church, or local business that allows job postings, please ask me for fliers to be posted so we can further get the word out. One teacher can provide care for up to 10 kids, so every solid new hire helps.

We will be putting together a volunteer program for parents, grandparents, and anyone else that you know would love on these kids and give our teachers a break. We will be setting up a sign up genius, with specific times and tasks that are available for volunteers. These tasks can be giving teachers breaks during nap time, doing an activity with the kiddos during our lesson times, playing with the kids during center time, or doing story time/playground time with the kiddos. These slots will be for ages 18+ as these volunteers will be counted in ratio. We would appreciate your consideration in volunteering to assist us during these slotted times.

We have put together a Volunteen program, and would love for you to share this program with family and friends. This program is specific to teens ages 16 – 18. They are not allowed to "teach" in a classroom, as teachers must be over the age of 18. However, having a loving and child friendly helper in the classroom for an hour or two to play with, read a book, or do a project with the kiddos could be helpful. We are also looking for volunteers to help us with general cleaning and maintenance around the center, so that our teachers can focus more on the children in their care. This is an addition to our program that may be a positive that we need. More information regarding this program can be found on our website. Interested Volunteens can stop by to apply anytime.

We are also implementing an "Adopt a Teacher" program, because friends, even more than normal, we need to treat these teachers like they gold they are. Please consider giving some extra love to the awesome teachers we have. More will be shared regarding this program at a later date.

We are hiring for up to six afternoon 3:30 – 5:30 part time teachers. These teachers are a huge help at the end of our day to help us clean the center and PLAY with the kids so they have awesome afternoons. Please pass the word along, this is a great opportunity for high school students over the age of 18.

We are hiring for up to six afternoon 3:30 – 5:30 part time Center Assistants. These Center Assistants will assist us with cleaning classrooms, cleaning other areas of the center, doing laundry, running errands, and other chores that we can allow those under the age of 18 to do. Please pass the word along, this is a great opportunity for high school students that have a driver's license.

We have begun to build an emergency "on call" substitute teacher list. We will pay for background screenings for those on this list, so that we can call them as needed to ensure the safe care of these children. If you or someone you know would be willing to be on this list, please contact Candace or Christa. These substitute teachers will be paid for their hours of work.

We will continue to work on other ways to make things smoother. Stay tuned.