

Town Hall Meeting with Parents

(to be translated into Spanish and Portuguese)

- Karen Ennis, Triumph's Executive Director hosted a Town Hall Meeting for parents on Friday May 8, 2020 via zoom conference to provide information and updates regarding the COVID-19 pandemic
- What has been happening at Triumph since the shutdown began on March 13th
 - **Home Based Program** = Two-way communication between you and your Home Visitor or Playgroup Facilitator at least once per week should be taking place. Triumph wants to ensure that families have what they need, the children are actively engaged with us, and that families are safe. If you need assistance, please contact (Christine Pilotte) cpilloatte@triumphinc.org
 - **Early Head Start/Head Start Center Based** = Online system called ClassDojo is active for most of our EHS and HS families. Some of our classrooms are also on YouTube. This ensures that the children are still engaged in distance learning. Please contact (Melinda Cabral) mcabral@triumphinc.org for assistance. Two-way communication between you and your Family Engagement Specialist at least once per week should be taking place. Please contact (Lisa DeMelo) ldemelo@triumphinc.org for assistance
 - **Facebook** = Triumph has a very active Facebook page. We encourage families to like our page @triumphinc.org on Facebook. In addition, our CFCE program page @triumphcfcetaunton is offering many free activities like children's yoga, parenting classes and a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group
 - **The Board and Policy Council** are still meeting virtually and are still working on figuring out the budget, hiring, and programming for next year
 - Unfortunately, the **Spring Fling end of year outdoor family event has been cancelled** for this year
- **If Technology is Not Available:**
 - Please contact your Family Engagement Specialist or Home Visitor if you don't have any means of connecting to virtual learning. We will work with families on an individual basis to try and connect you to technology
- **Vouchers Payments/Emergency Childcare:**
 - We receive updates and changes quite often, but, as of right now, Governor Baker has given an executive order that all childcare centers must remain closed until June 29, 2020. This includes all Triumph, Inc. programs, playgroups and home visits
 - If any families need to return to work and Triumph isn't open yet, families may attend emergency childcare centers. The list of emergency childcare centers can be found on https://eeclead.force.com/EEC_ExemptEmergencyChildCare Families will NOT lose their spots with Triumph if they use state-licensed emergency care centers while we are closed
 - The state is paying the Full Day/voucher families' copays during this time and they are holding those slots for families. There won't be any back-payment of copays due

- For those in the 6-hour program for EHS and HS, the management team has worked on creating a slow roll out plan for those children to return in **mid-July 2020** as long as the Department of Health says that it is ok to do so
- For now, everything will be virtual until June 29, 2020, including for playgroups and home visiting
- **Transition Plans and Kindergarten Information:**
 - Our Education Manager has been working with Taunton Public Schools on transition planning. Taunton Public Schools is aware of the children going to kindergarten in the fall. Parents should have already registered their children for Kindergarten
 - We are working on Stepping Up/Graduation Ceremonies for families. Either via your FES or ClassDojo, we will let you know how these ceremonies will be conducted, so please be on the lookout for that information
 - The transition for those moving from EHS to HS is still being figured out at this time as we are working from home to make everything as seamless as possible for families for when we do return to the centers
- **Annual Parent Surveys:**
 - These will be a bit different this year. In addition to the regular survey, we will be adding questions regarding COVID-19 to ask how Triumph supported you during this time
 - We hope to send out these surveys by the end of May 2020
- **Center re-opening and Summer 2020 Programming Tentative Information:**
 - The health and safety of staff and families is most important to us. We **will not open centers** until we have guidance from state and federal governing agencies on how to keep everyone safe, and until we have the right protocols in place. We will go above and beyond what the state and federal government require around safety (such as for Personal Protective Equipment, gloves, masks, social distancing, etc.):
 - Please keep in mind that all of the plans, particularly for the summer program, **are all tentative** as we need to follow guidance from the state and federal governments:
 - The federal government asked programs to run a summer program for children transitioning to Kindergarten and for children who have IEPs who are in the Part Day, Part Year program who normally leave in June and don't return until September. If after we offer this program to those children and there's still room for more, we can open the program up to 3-year-old children. This is so we can transition back to Center Based learning, so children can reconnect socially and emotionally with staff again and go back to a routine
 - After June 29th, the plan is for staff to return to centers on a limited basis during the first 2 weeks of July to prepare for families' return
 - For the following 2 weeks in July 2020, full-day children (HS/EHS) will be allowed back into the centers, most likely at a reduced class sizes. This may be frustrating for families who need to return to work, but we aren't sure how many children will be allowed in a room, how to set up daily routines, etc. in line with new safety protocols. As we know more, we will notify you. We'll also offer parent groups for those who can attend so parents can connect with other adults and reconnect with staff

- In August 2020, the summer program for the children transitioning to Kindergarten and the children with IEPs will begin. (Once again, 3-year-old children will be allowed in this program if there is space.) Those children usually aren't here in the summer, so this is something extra for them, which will be a mix of Home Visiting and Center Based play. We don't know how many children will be in this program, but we wanted to let you know the least we are doing, and we can always add hours if we are allowed to

- **Questions and Answers from Parents:**

- *What if families don't feel safe sending their children back once we open?*
 - **For EHS Center Based children**, that is a year-round program. Triumph has 30 days to fill a slot if children don't return to the centers, which means that families have 29 days before they need to decide if they want their children to return. However, please be in contact with your FES if you decide to wait before returning to Triumph so that we are aware of what is happening
 - **For HS children who are 3-5 years** old and normally aren't at Triumph in the summertime, families have no obligation to send their children in for the summer, though it would benefit their children if they do decide to have their children return. For the Autumn program, our tentative first day of school will be September 9, 2020 or so, though that isn't known for sure.
 - **For Full Day children who have a voucher slot** of any type, Triumph hasn't received any guidance for how long that slot will be held for. We know that those slots will definitely be held until June 29, 2020 at this point, but we aren't sure if the state will hold them after we do open if parents don't feel it's safe to return their children to school. We will do all we can so parents can drop off their children with confidence as we hope that by July 13, 2020 the teachers will be trained in new safety procedures
- *Will there be medical screenings for returning children and for parents who are dropping off their children?*
 - Yes. We are working to get each family a thermometer so parents can check themselves and their children before returning their children to school. We are purchasing no-contact thermometers for the buses and for each building so each child and staff will have a temperature screening before they enter the building as will each parent that enters the building. Triumph's Nurse Manager is currently getting guidance on what temperatures are allowed into the buildings. We have heard it recommended thus far that it's better to have a car drop off or to only allow 1 parent in the building at a time, but we are still working on this. We won't open until we have all the answers to these questions
- *Will the children need to wear masks when they return to school?*
 - We aren't sure at this time, though we're assuming staff will need to. We understand if a child is required to wear a mask, it's going to be difficult to keep social distancing—hugging, holding hands, playing, etc. If they do have to wear masks, we may possibly send fabric masks and fabric markers home so children can decorate their own masks. The teachers will also do a *Let's Find Out About It* to explain to the children why they need to wear a mask and how it should be worn. An idea was to possibly make masks that have clear panels so that our

children can see us smile as we have children with disabilities who look at our mouths for communication

- *Will there be new enrollments, especially for children on the waitlist?*
 - Triumph has a large waitlist as many people need us. However, we believe our ratios will be low –although this is speculation—no official word--possibly having 3 children in the infant rooms, 4 children in the toddler rooms, and 10 children in the preschool classrooms. Since we most likely won't have all our rooms at full ratios, we need to prioritize returning children first. It's unlikely we can add children as new enrollments from the waitlist at this time. Those on the waitlist aren't guaranteed a spot anyway, but it will be even harder now
- *Will the summer program for the children who are transitioning to Kindergarten and for those with IEPs be virtual?*
 - No. The program will only be funded if we have in-person learning
- *How can parents receive updates if they don't have a Facebook account?*
 - It is possible to see Triumph's Facebook posts without having a Facebook account by searching on Google "Triumph Facebook" or you can click this link to access the page: <https://www.facebook.com/triumphinc.org/> Other options include creating a fake name without a picture so that you can have a private account and you can allow only Triumph to it so that it isn't open to everyone
- *Resources for Explaining COVID-19 to Children and Access to Our Mental Health Consultant:*
 - Unfortunately, the shutdown happened so suddenly that we weren't able to properly prepare the children for this and we weren't able to say goodbye. Some children may be feeling very confused during this time, especially if they are unable to see family members who live in other states
 - We encourage families to utilize the resources on the internet about how to explain COVID-19 to children
 - Triumph's Mental Health Consultant, Jennie Newkirk, is also available for any parent or child (even if you have teenagers) who are worried, having difficulties, or need support during this time. Please contact Lisa DeMelo at ldemelo@triumphinc.org and she will confidentially refer you to Jennie