



**Dear Providers,**

We continue to be in admiration of your valiant work on the front line. We know it is not easy and respect your efforts to safely serve children and families.

Since the pandemic began, the commitment of ELC staff to supporting our provider partners has been steadfast. We have been “in this together”. We’ve provided support, supplies and grant funding. We’ve been advocates, thought partners and confidants. We have worked tirelessly to support the safety and solvency of our provider partners.

So, I am deeply saddened to hear that many instructors are refusing to wear masks while ELC staff are conducting site visits and CLASS assessments. With COVID cases on the rise, among children and adults, it is crucial that we take every precaution to protect each other. We can’t let our guard down, the consequences are too grave.

In response to an increase in COVID-19 cases, ELC is working towards balancing public health concerns as well as business needs. For the protection of our staff and constituents, ELC has implemented a mask mandate. ELC staff are required to wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status. While certainly, the use of masks is highly recommended by the CDC, I realize there is not a mandate. **Still, we are asking that all providers wear a mask in the presence of ELC staff, if not all the time.**

For additional information on how you can protect your staff and children visit [HERE](#).

**Respectfully,**

**Lindsay Carson**  
Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County CEO



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