

June 9, 2020

To:
Persis Drell
Stanford University Provost

Cc:
Russell Furr
Associate Vice Provost for Environmental Health and Safety

Phyllis Stewart Pires
Assistant Vice President, WorkLife Strategy

Re: Reopening of Stanford Childcare Centers

Dear Provost Drell,

We are parents of children enrolled at Stanford's childcare centers.

We appreciate your hard work and leadership during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. We all recognize that this has been an unprecedentedly challenging and demanding time and are extremely grateful for the financial support Stanford has provided its non-profit daycare centers.

We are writing this letter to highlight the mounting difficulties we are experiencing as working parents and to implore you to revisit the university's policy on reopening daycare centers, in a manner that will provide immediate relief to all affected children and parents. Specifically, we request that you consider (1) reopening childcare facilities as soon as possible and independent of other campus facilities' reopening schedule and (2) making childcare available to all parents.

For the last three months, we and our children have been sheltering-in-place while continuing to meet the requirements of our full time Stanford jobs with utmost commitment. The cumulative burden of staying at home has taken a significant toll on our children's development and mental health, as well as our own, and has increasingly undermined our ability to meet our work obligations. We do not have the resources to perform our jobs while taking care of our young children full time. **We are all desperately awaiting the reopening of childcare facilities and plan to utilize these services immediately once offered.**

Recently, we were informed that Stanford daycare centers will not be reopened before July, and that they will initially be made available only to parents who are "invited" to campus. This would mean that most of us will likely not have access to daycare before the end of summer. This news is especially disappointing given Santa Clara Department of Public Health's revised

shelter in place order issued on June 1, 2020, allowing childcare facilities to reopen as of June 5, 2020.

We understand why it is natural for the university to plan reopening childcare centers on a schedule that is in line with the academic year. However, our job responsibilities are not on hold until students repopulate campus. Moreover, we are expected to meet these responsibilities irrespective of whether we work from home or on campus. The current plan, as we understand it, will severely disadvantage many parents and will continue to impose significant financial and emotional costs on them.

A phased reopening will also necessarily require reassigning children to childcare centers and teachers they are unfamiliar with. This disruption will generate significant emotional distress, and will undermine the potential relief gained by providing childcare.

We therefore implore you to redesign Stanford's childcare center reopening strategy such that placement will be made available as soon as possible to all parents who feel comfortable using it, in compliance with health regulations.

We recognize that the public health limitations imposed by the county's and state's requirements will mean that services by Stanford childcare centers will be dramatically curtailed. However, even reduced service will provide significant and eagerly awaited relief. We therefore ask that you consider providing limited access to all children, rather than extensive access to a select few. Such an approach will also minimize the need to transfer children between centers and will substantially limit the emotional distress a phased reopening will necessarily induce.

Our sense of disappointment is mounting because we see childcare services being made available elsewhere without having a timeline for when we will have access to our essential childcare services again. **This policy is particularly affecting the most vulnerable in our community: parents with limited economic resources and women who carry a disproportionate share of invisible childcare work.**

In closing, we would like to thank you for your consideration and attentiveness. We know that you are operating under impossible constraints and great urgency and are committed to our and our children's wellbeing. Our intention was to highlight the difficulties we are experiencing with the hope that you will be able to reassess your policy and provide relief.

Sincerely,

Amir Goldberg, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior, The Graduate School of Business (CCSC)

Gil-li Vardi, Lecturer, The History Department and IR Program (CCSC)

Nofar Hemed, Postdoctoral fellow, Department of Materials Science and Engineering (CCSC)

Roi Rutenberg, Postdoctoral fellow, Department of Chemistry (CCSC)

Leeya Engel, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Chemical Engineering (Madera)
 Yonatan Gur, Associate Professor of Operations, Information & Technology, Graduate School of Business (CCSC)
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 Itay Ravid, Lecturer in Law and Teaching Fellow, Stanford Law School (CCSC)
 Josef Parvizi, Professor, Department of Neurology (CCSC)
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 John Duchi, Assistant Professor, Departments of Statistics and Electrical Engineering (CCSC)
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