

Fall 2020 Family FAQ

Launch's Mission: Lead the charge to brilliant outcomes for the children of our community by ensuring equitable access to the highest quality learning and care.

1. Why are child care facilities open but not schools?

Many child care facilities and early learning programs face similar issues as schools during this pandemic. Unlike schools, the State of Washington considers child care to be an essential service. This is because child care gives parents or guardians who have to work a safe place for their children.

According to the Department of Health's child care guidance, families are encouraged to safely keep their children at home first to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If families are unable to keep their children home because they need to work, child care programs are a vital lifeline.

There are a number of factors that differentiate child care programs from schools. Child care centers usually have fewer children enrolled than schools. They also operate in smaller settings than schools, usually keeping children in the same groups, called "cohorts." This combination limits potential spread of COVID-19. This set up allows for:

- Easier management of symptom tracking and daily health monitoring of staff and students, in partnership with parents or guardians
- Reduced risk of broad disease transmission within the child care setting

Licensed child care centers are also required to meet Washington Administrative Code for cleaning and disinfecting practices. These child care settings have made cleaning and disinfecting a normal part of their daily activities.

In schools, there are many more students and staff interacting throughout the day. For older students, it is nearly impossible to keep them in the same group of students because of different class schedules and grade levels. This increases the risk of community spread.

At this time, child care and early learning programs are allowed to remain open regardless of whether K-12 schools are providing in-person or remote learning. Each individual child care program decides whether to remain open or not. (source:

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/schools-childcare/FAQ.aspx>)

2. My family does not currently need all-day, full-time care. If Seattle Public Schools goes back into hybrid or full-time in person instruction, can we be assured of our slot/placement at our site?

At this time, Launch anticipates that Seattle Public Schools will be in full distance-learning for at least the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year, through the end of January 2021. If the model changes during the year, Launch will reassess our program offerings to meet the needs of our families. If Launch changes its program offerings to support Seattle Public School instruction, families will receive a survey to help inform our next steps.

Launch will place any family who has indicated that they may need care in the future, based on Seattle Public Schools instructional model and changes to schedule, on a list and will retain the registration documents on file. If the full-day, full-time model shifts, Launch will make every attempt to enroll students from this list. This will be site specific.

3. We are waiting to hear if we have a placement. When will we know?

At this time, preliminary offers have been made at most school-age locations for the first 26 slots (the first two micro-groups). These groups are banded by age range and similar grade level to better support distance learning and to ensure developmentally appropriate enrichment activities. As we continue to increase staffing, receive additional guidance from Seattle Public Schools regarding access to space, and work with our partner agencies, we anticipate that many locations will begin offering the next micro-group of 13 slots within the month of September.

Some locations will have a mid-September start date, so we can prepare for the school year and ensure we will continue to offer the high-quality programs Launch is known for. This includes recruitment and professional development for staff, negotiating with Seattle Public School about space and support, and prioritizing enrollment for students of essential workers and students furthest from educational justice.

4. How is Launch supporting distance learning for Kindergarten-5th graders?

We have a number of plans in place to support distance learning for all students. The first is to ensure that students are grouped by age and similar grade level. Not only is this developmentally appropriate, it will also allow Launch staff to better support distance-learning and age-appropriate enrichment activities. Launch will tailor our enrichment opportunities to support distance-learning throughout the day.

Launch School-Age teachers are responsible for facilitating distance learning for the K-5 children assigned to their classroom. Working with site management and Seattle Public Schools staff, School-Age teachers will reinforce the student's learning schedule and act in a support capacity around areas of technology, connection, and communication. Launch School-Age teachers are not a substitute for the child's SPS teacher or parent; all parties (parent, teacher, enrichment teacher) share ownership of student's success.

Launch staff are not public school classroom teachers, nor are we a tutoring program. We are mission-driven to be able to provide the essential service of childcare to our communities, through what we do best: enriching the lives of children in our care. We will be in close contact with families, teachers, building administration and district-level administrators as we support students in their distance-learning. Our social, emotional and academic support help launch young lives on a trajectory of success by supporting skills development through enrichment programming and hands-on learning. We partner with schools, families and other organizations to close the opportunity gap, providing the highest-quality care and learning in a safe, fun and enriching environment that honors the whole child.

At this time, Seattle Public Schools has not finalized the schedules for Kindergarten-5th grade. You can find the suggested schedules linked here, and we look forward to learning more in the coming weeks.

For reference, the district released the following, "On August 26, the School Board approved Sept. 4 as the first day of school for 1-12 students. Sept. 8 is the first day for preschool and kindergarten. They also approved changed bell times. Elementary and K-8: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

(Mon-Tue, Thur-Fri), 8:30 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. (Wed) Sept. 4-11 are considered “Strong Start” days for fall of 2020. Staff will be focused on supporting students’ social and emotional well-being, culturally responsive community building, family connections, and making sure students know how to use their technology tools to access learning. "Strong Start" Sept 4-11: Two hours per day of instructional support. Supplemental learning resources will be provided for the remaining school hours.” [See news release](#)

a. How will Launch differentiate between “enrichment” and “distance-learning”?

Launch is learning more about the district’s Distance-Learning plan on a daily basis. At this time, SPS is focusing the first 5 days of instruction on a “Strong Start”. The district has defined this as outlined above. Launch is preparing multiple weeks of enrichment activities to be integrated throughout the day to encourage socialization, reflection, mindfulness, youth voice/choice for big projects and hands-on tangible creativity that enriches children’s lives. As students settle into their routines, Launch will be innovating creative ways to extend students learning, with a specific focus on hands-on, project-based learning.

Launch staff will work with students, teachers and families to assist students in navigating distance-learning. As our community adjusts to robust distance-learning, Launch will engage in cycles of reflection to best adapt our programs to meet student needs. Launch School-Age teachers are not certificated K-5 classroom teachers, and as such will not be a replacement for your child’s primary elementary school educator. We will continue to live our mission to provide brilliant outcomes for all students.

5. What will my student be doing when not engaging with distance-learning? How is Launch planning to provide dynamic enrichment opportunities for students?

Launch will continue to provide high-quality enrichment programming when students are not engaged in distance learning. Although the schedules may look different this fall, Launch is ready to support students in exploring their interests and expanding on their basic education. Launch has been operating all-day programming for students since March 26th, and has been highly successful in incorporating enrichment opportunities into students’ daily routines through virtual field-trips, new vendor collaboration, and hands-on learning.

Launch has partnerships with a number of local and national programs that we plan to continue into fall 2020 and beyond.

6. Will my student be moved?

At this time, Launch is prioritizing enrollment of students at their school-of-origin or school they would attend in “normal” times. However, we are limited to the number of slots we can offer, and may not be able to accommodate all students who have registered for a specific site. If we are able to offer alternative locations, we will be in direct communication with families to discuss their options.

7. How will Launch protect children, families and staff from COVID-19?

We are working closely with Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Department of Children, Youth and Families, and Seattle-King County Public Health to ensure that we are taking every precaution to avoid exposing children, families and staff to COVID-19.

The following criteria will be required for all staff, parents, and children:

- Provide a facemask for your child to use. Site staff will provide one if your child(ren)'s mask becomes soiled or breaks. ALL children ages 5-12 will be asked and encouraged to wear a facemask while indoors at all times and when unable to social/physical distance while outdoors. Children 3-5 years old will be encouraged to the best of their ability to keep the masks on throughout the day. Accommodations will be made for any children for whom this is not feasible. If your child(ren) has any health or medical needs that present similar symptoms to COVID-19, inform your Program Site Manager immediately and next steps will be provided to you to ensure that accommodations can be met appropriately and immediately.
- Keep your child(ren) home if they exhibit symptoms of illness, including but not limited to, a fever (100.4°F or higher), cough, flu-like symptoms, sore throat, signs of respiratory illness, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or they develop other symptoms that are associated with COVID-19.
- If any family or other member in the household is currently sick and they exhibit symptoms of illness, including but not limited to, a fever (100.4°F or higher), cough, flu-like symptoms, sore throat, signs of respiratory illness, or shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or they develop other symptoms that are associated with COVID-19 you will be required to keep your child(ren) home. Do NOT bring your child(ren) in if you or someone else is sick. Alert Launch immediately if your child(ren) or member of the household shows symptoms of an illness at home or are confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Drop-off and pick-up your child(ren) at designated drop-off locations near the program entrance. Families will not be permitted to enter the building.
- Label all belongings including your child(ren) masks as no family members will be allowed to enter any of our facilities
- Wait 6-10 feet from program staff while Morning Health Check is performed and the child(ren) have been cleared to enter the program. Failure to wait could result in removal from program.
- Provide up-to-date contacts and phone numbers to be reached immediately if your child(ren) become ill.
- Ensure that a family member or authorized contact can immediately pick up your child(ren). Failure to provide contacts and updated information could result in removal from the program.
- At the end of your child(ren)'s scheduled care for the week, a staff member will require a signature on the Attendance Form for that week. Staff members will come to your car window wearing gloves when handing the clipboard to families; families will not need to touch the clipboard; and all pens used will be thoroughly sanitized and disinfected after each use.

8. Why the cost increase? What will it go to?

Due to COVID19, we have had to increase our health and safety expenses, as well as staffing (due to complying with state mandated child-teacher ratios). When breaking down the cost for full day care for school age and 4 hours per day for Pre-K, the cost increase is only \$2-3 per hour over our summer program's hourly rate. We do not anticipate increasing our rates any further at this point.

9. What are my options if we can't afford the \$1400 tuition, but we need care?

We understand that the cost increase will have an adverse effect on many families we serve. Launch does provide tuition assistance with the support of our donors and funders. Additionally, some assistance may be available through the below sources:

- [Childcare Resources](#)
- [City of Seattle Childcare Assistance Program](#)
- [Washington State Working Connections Child Care Subsidy](#)
- [Launch Scholarship Application](#)

10. Will I need to give my child a lunch?

To begin the school year, Launch will be working with Seattle Public Schools to receive breakfast and lunch support for our programs. Some Launch programs are located at SPS Meal Sites ([see list](#)), and meals will be delivered daily via SPS bus routes to all Launch locations (including non-SPS locations). If your student has specific dietary restrictions, please work with your Program Site Manager to determine if SPS provided meals will be adequate. Launch will provide healthy, nutritious morning and afternoon snacks to all students.

11. My child doesn't have technology. What technology will Launch provide?

Seattle Public School students should be provided with a device. Please find this information [here](#).

"In order to receive a device, students and families must complete the Parent Student Agreement Form and review the following informational materials: Student Responsibilities and Expectations, Parent Device Usage and Safety, and Student Device Usage and Safety. All of these documents can be found [here](#), including translated documents. The forms can be reviewed and filled out in advance, or can be received when students/families come to pick up devices at their school. For more information on the student 1:1 laptop program, visit our website. https://www.seattleschools.org/student_portal/technology_supports_for_families"

Students will be asked to bring their Seattle Public School's devices with them daily, so Launch can support Distance Learning. Launch does not have the technology resources to provide technology to individual students.

12. Will I be reimbursed if my site has to close?

If a site closes due to COVID19, families will receive a pro-rated credit to their account for the amount of time the site was closed to use for future care.