



To: AVANCE-Houston Parents & Participants

From: Antionette Montgomery, Chief Administrator of Early Head Start/Head Start Programs

CC: Luz Flores, Executive Director
Chief Leadership Team

Date: April 24, 2020

Subject: Temporary Closure of Site Based Operations/Virtual Learning Resources

Dear Parents & Participants

In response to a new executive order by Gov. Abbott to continue safety measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 and that all public and private schools should not reopen for the current school year, AVANCE Houston will continue offering remote learning and support services for all of its children and families for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Please note the following updates regarding service delivery format for AVANCE programs:

- **Parent-Child Education Program**-Will continue to be provided virtually each week through June 15, 2020
- **Head Start**- Sites will remain closed for the remainder of the school year 2019-2020. Virtual services will continue until May 29th. Select centers will continue until June 5th, depending on the operation schedule
- **Early Head Start**- Sites will remain closed until determined safe to return. Virtual services will continue until further notice
- **Healthy Marriage: *Strong Families, Strong Communities***- Will continue to be provided virtually until further notice
- **Building Futures-Youth Program**-Will continue to be provided virtually until further notice
- **Adult Education**-Will continue to be provided virtually through May 30, 2020

Updates will continue to be provided based on new developments and announcements by federal, state and city officials.

During this time, AVANCE has placed online learning material and resources on our website:

www.avancehouston.org. The “**Parents**” tab on the main menu provides you with different educational activities to choose from.

The following page of this notice describes our support plan. As we progress with our plans, we will continue to provide you updates. During this time, we hope that you are doing well. If you have any questions, please contact your program director or center administrator.

AVANCE Houston's Support Plan

Communication:

- AVANCE-Houston management team is working daily from home to support program staff at all levels to provide remote services for children and families.
- Family follow up phone calls are being made by staff
- Conference calls/video software is being utilized for meetings
- Information Technology department has ordered needed laptops, printers, and telephone applications to continue remote operations
- Human Resources has implemented new federal laws Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act
- Communication to parents has increased, from center staff, including classroom teachers
- A COVID-19 Task Force established to plan safe reopening for all locations, when feasible

Service Delivery:

- Staff will continue to work from home until further notice. We are working on a transition plan for employees that can return to work onsite when it is determined that it is prudent to do so
- Staff is following up with families regarding well-being checks, personal needs, and community referrals
- Needs assessments are being conducted for families and staff
- AVANCE Website: New "**PARENTS**" tab is now available on the home page featuring the following (content updates on-going):
 - Online Learning/Support Activities:
 - Parenting Tips
 - Community Resources -Internet services, food, diapers
 - Providing virtual therapy to identified children and families
 - Videos, including link to HISD Live TV Instruction
 - Parent and Youth Workshops
 - Updates for Parents- new web tab for parent notices is now available
 - Online program enrollment for Head Start and Early Head Start is now available. See "**Enroll Now**" on the web home page.
- In process: Hard copy take-home activities for families without technology will be provided
- Additional supports planned: Strategies to connect families to other referral sources for basic needs and increased volunteer opportunities.

Facilities & Safety Upon Reopening:

- The facilities department is in communication with our custodial service for needed disinfectant of locations and planned deep clean prior to reopening. The company will also provide bio hazard cleaning for cases of potential or confirmed exposure reported to AVANCE.
- Safety protocols will be implemented upon return: monitoring of temperatures and COVID-19 symptoms, no touch thermometers, masks, gloves, and screening questionnaire, and exclusion and readmittance policies, etc.

We are working diligently taking steps towards regular operations, and look forward to having the children and participants back in our classrooms when it is safe to do so.