

April 19, 2019

Dear Prospective ELFC Families,

We are sorry to inform you that the Barrington Wee Care Early Learning and Family Center (ELFC) will not be opening as planned. Instead, due to recent, unforeseen obstacles, work at the Maple Avenue facility has been discontinued, and ELFC will be dissolved.

In January 2017, Barrington Baptist Church announced its plans to eliminate Wee Care as an outreach ministry of the Church after more than 34 years. At that time, the pastor announced this unilateral decision in the following text:

In recognition that Wee Care is a mature organization, the Church Council agrees that it is time for Wee Care to leave the nest and fly on its own. Since Wee Care has been operating with its own board, budget, and bylaws, it is now time for the daycare to exercise its own authority and seek to build upon the excellence for which they have been known. After careful evaluation, conversation, and prayer, the Church Council has asked Wee Care to incorporate as a separate organization and to relocate to another location.

While the church is within its rights to “prune”¹ its ministries, the mandate for Wee Care to “leave the nest and fly on its own” was an unwelcome, unsolicited surprise. On a practical level, it created many protracted challenges. Until now, ELFC has been able to overcome these challenges and felt confident that our newly incorporated organization would be able to open for the former families of Wee Care. However, recent developments have created a *perfect storm* that ELFC cannot weather:

- In the winter, our contractor was diagnosed with, and began treatments for, a life-threatening illness. His frequent, necessary hospital stays significantly slowed the work pace at the new location.
- Because of the slow work pace, our investor refused to provide his promised share of the funds for the project.
- Unanticipated structural repairs and additional stringent requirements by the State Fire Marshall forced us to fund costly change orders.
- Until two weeks ago, we thought we would be able to secure an alternate contractor who could complete the project quickly. However, his estimate for doing so nearly doubled the original budgeted amount.
- After granting us two extensions, the Church Council obliged ELFC to endorse a Memorandum of Understanding including the following mandate: *Wee Care will terminate on June 29, 2019. No service of Wee Care, nor property or representative of the ELFC, may function on BBC property after that date.* We are bound by that agreement.
- Consequently, it would be impossible for us to obtain financing to complete the project at the ELFC location by that deadline.
- Even if ELFC could procure additional financing quickly, it would create the need for substantial increases in program tuition.
- As recently as last week, we explored an alternate location that we could occupy quickly, but that was deemed impossible.

The confluence of these complications forces us to accept the cruel reality that this is an untenable and unsustainable situation. Hence, we have made the heartbreaking decision that ELFC cannot open or provide services as planned.

We are grateful to Barrington Baptist Church for the years they did sponsor the Wee Care ministry and for granting ELFC extensions as we tried to regenerate the largest comprehensive Christian daycare and preschool in the area. We wish Barrington Baptist Church well as they “reclaim, ... reimagine, ... and restore”¹ the space occupied by Wee Care so they can pursue their vision to have a “greater impact on children, youth & families” and create “a place for our neighbors to connect”.¹

Sincerely,

The Barrington Early Learning and Family Center Board

¹From the Pastor’s *Big Steps Forward Multiplying Our Impact* PowerPoint presentation