September 17, 2020

Dear Einstein Colleagues:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our employees, research fellows, and their families have been challenged by having to balance job responsibilities with family obligations. The start of the new school year now poses particular challenges for many of you, as school districts have implemented distance learning (full or hybrid) for this academic year and the uncertainty of these plans has made your own planning difficult.

We also understand finding childcare or dependent care during these times may be hard to do or financially unfeasible. We remain committed to helping to meet our employees’ needs, and those of the College of Medicine, when employees find themselves challenged or unable to work due to family care needs related to COVID-19.

With these issues in mind, we have instituted a provisional plan beginning now through December 31, 2020, which allows you to use a portion of your accrued sick hours for reasons other than your own illness or injury, such as to care for a dependent child or family member residing in your household. We hope this will help our employees and research fellows to be more productive at work or at home.

**Access to Alternative Paid Time Off**

**For the period beginning September 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020**, you can request family care leave if you need to take time off for childcare or for family care related to individuals residing in your household, for reasons related to COVID-19. Under this family care leave, you can use up to 50% of your total accrued sick hours to cover your family care needs and receive your regular rate of pay. Alternatively, you may request to use accrued vacation hours or unpaid time off for family care leave related reasons. Click here for instructions on how to request and/or manage your timecard with family leave hours.

During the special election period **beginning now through October 30, 2020**, you must decide how much of your accrued and available sick hours (as of September 1) that you want to designate as “family care leave hours.” Please note, you must leave or “bank” the equivalent of at least five days of sick hours to use for your own injury or illness. Any unused family care leave hours remaining as of January 1, 2021, will be converted back to regular sick hours.

By allowing you to use a portion of your accrued and available sick hours for reasons other than your own illness or injury, we are giving you more flexibility to manage your time away from work. You should notify your supervisor in advance when you need to take time off for family care and approval will be contingent on the operational needs of the department. If your need to take family care is due to an unplanned situation (e.g. an unexpected emergency), you should follow your usual absence reporting protocols. If this is not possible, you should notify your supervisor as soon as possible.
Flexible Work Arrangements

As a reminder, we will also continue to offer additional flexible work arrangements to assist employees who may face challenges related to childcare and remote/distance learning for their children, or for the care of other family members residing in their households. Employees may use the following flexible work arrangements:

- **Flextime** allows employees to start and end work during some range of hours outside the regularly scheduled workday. Flextime arrangements do not reduce the normal workload obligation.
- **Compressed work schedules** allow employees to work all their hours in fewer than five days per week. Common examples of this are schedules allowing employees to work 37.5 hours in four days per week for an extra day off per week, or 75 hours in nine days every two weeks for an extra day off every two weeks.
- **Reduced scheduling or furlough** allows an employee to reduce the number of hours they work in a week in order to have extra time to take care of personal or family needs.
- **Alternating days and staggered work times** can be used alone or in combination with the strategies above to reduce workplace density.
- **Telecommuting** means working from home or other remote location one or more full days per week on an ongoing basis.
- **Furlough can be substituted for unpaid leave, permitting the continuation of health insurance.**

We recognize that such flexible scheduling may not be possible for all work areas because of the specific requirements of each workplace, and that supervisors may not be able to approve a flexible work arrangement in response to an employee’s request. We are providing direction to help departments plan accordingly, but also expect our supervisors to fully consider employees’ special requests in helping to determine an alternative and reasonable arrangement.

Child Care Resources

In addition to making temporary plan modifications to help accommodate the special needs of our employees and trainees, we also continue to look for ways to remind you of resources available to you that may help to balance work and family obligations. We continue to work with colleagues in our community to share information and invite you to submit suggestions or ideas when you find a child care solution that works for you. We make periodic updates to our [website](#). When we have significant updates, we will send an e-blast as well.

The following local child care centers have confirmed their intent to continue operating and have available spaces in September.

- Amazing Kidz
- Brilliant Futures
- Epic Bright Stars (re-opening later this month)
- Gan Atid
- Shining Stars
**Assistance Through Einstein Cares Volunteers**

If you are an Einstein, Montefiore associate, or trainee in need of a helping hand with the children in your life, we are pleased to let you know that **Einstein Cares for the Frontline** team continues to be here for you!

This group of Einstein student volunteers offers a variety of virtual services to the children, grandchildren, and other younger members of our dedicated staff’s households. **These services include but are not limited to homework help, tutoring, reading practice, and virtual playtime.** They can help your children and alleviate some of the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. You can request services using [this Google sign-up sheet](#).

If you have any questions please contact students Kathryn Segal ([kathryn.segal@einsteinmed.org](mailto:kathryn.segal@einsteinmed.org)) or Julia Holber ([julia.holber@einsteinmed.org](mailto:julia.holber@einsteinmed.org)).

**Carebridge Support**

If you need help with decisions about schooling and childcare, Carebridge, Einstein’s Employee Assistance Program provider, can help. Carebridge’s childcare specialists can work with you to find options in your community and can help you define or set your priorities and then help you find solutions that best meet your family’s needs and your financial budget.

Carebridge services are available at no cost and are confidential. You can contact Carebridge, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 800.437.0911, or at clientservice@carebridge.com. You can also visit [myliferesource.com](http://myliferesource.com) for additional information.

**Other Online Resources**

Several other online programs may serve to supplement the learning experience for your children when their schooling is either 100% remote or they are participating in a hybrid program. Most of the online programs charge a fee, although some do not. Fees can vary and may include drop-in, per class, or monthly fee. Classes typically meet for an hour per session. Parents select the session frequency.

While not all programs are located in New York, they all are offered remotely. They include:

1. New York Society of Play – game studio that runs events and workshops to inform social skills through physical and strategic play. [https://nyplays.org/](https://nyplays.org/)

2. Open Window Studio – online art classes. [https://www.openwindowstudio.org/](https://www.openwindowstudio.org/)


5. *Kahn Academy* – offers free online courses for children, from preschool age through high school
6. Penguin Coding School – online computing coding instruction.  
   https://www.penguincodingschool.com/

7. Homebuddies – online personalized mentoring program (art, movement, sports)  
   https://www.homebuddiesmentoring.com/

8. New York Magazine List of Online Classes for Kids  
   https://nymag.com/strategist/article/the-best-online-classes-for-kids.html

**Important Things to Consider**

New York State requires background checks and fingerprinting for most roles that function within a daycare, public or private school, or after school program.

Any program outside of a licensed school environment (local music, dance or martial arts program) are not required by law to run background checks and fingerprinting of their employees. However, at the discretion of the owner of the business, they may conduct pre-employment screening that includes background check and fingerprinting. Online programs are not presently required to screen employees unless, of course, the program is an extension of a licensed school or childcare. When considering childcare support or enrichment programs, remember to ask about how the providers/employees are screened.

I hope you find this information helpful and look forward to hearing from you about other ideas we may be able to share with our employees and research fellows, to help support families within our community.

Sincerely,

Yvonne M. Ramirez  
Vice President, Human Resources