



November 1, 2023

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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid, Coalition for the Homeless Call on Adams Administration to Abandon its Plan to Shelter Families with Children at Floyd Bennett Field

Demand Comes After Legal Aid and the Coalition Toured the Facility Yesterday

In a Communication to the City, Legal Aid Details Multiple Reasons Why Floyd Bennett Field Would Place Families with Children in Harm's Way

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless**, following a tour of Floyd Bennett Field yesterday, called on the Adams Administration to [abandon its plan](#) to shelter families with children in a semi-congregate setting at the facility.

Late last night, in a communication with the City, Legal Aid and the Coalition detailed multiple reasons as to why sheltering families with children at Floyd Bennett Field would place these new arrivals in harm's way.

“Placing families with children at Floyd Bennett Field is a recipe for disaster, and the facility falls woefully short of providing the accommodations that this vulnerable population needs and deserves,” said **Adriene Holder, Chief Attorney of the Civil Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “The City must abandon its misguided effort to use Floyd Bennett Field as an option to shelter families with children, and we fear the worst should City Hall continue with this fraught, cruel and patently dangerous plan.”

“Enormous tents filled with tiny cubicles in what feels like the middle of nowhere is not in any way an appropriate setting for families with kids. It's really unimaginable that anyone thought this was a good idea,” said **Dave Giffen, Executive Director of Coalition for the Homeless**. “Putting the health and wellbeing of children, pregnant individuals, and families at risk is not okay, and we hope the Mayor and Governor pursue more sensible solutions.”

Issues that Legal Aid and the Coalition communicated to the City include:

- **Unsafe restroom setup**

- Children, parents and pregnant people will experience major sleep disruptions in trying to access the bathroom overnight. In single parent households, parents will either have to leave their children alone while they attempt to use the restroom that is far away or they will have to wake up all their children and take them to the restroom with them.
- Not only are the bathroom trailers far from the sleeping areas (very far, depending on the location of the sleeping area), but the walk requires navigating weather conditions including cold, rain, wind, dark, snow, and ice due to restrooms being outside and largely exposed to the elements.
- The shelter facility at Floyd Bennett Field lacks a sufficient number of bathroom trailers that comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

- **Egress issues and lack of sanitary facilities for children**

- The layout of the sleeping areas is extremely cramped, such that access to parts of the space would require climbing over at least one cot. This layout makes them inaccessible for clients with mobility needs, especially anyone with a mobility device.
- There is no storage space in the pods to store clothing, or children's school supplies, bottles, diapers, and other basic necessities.
- There is no place to change diapers and dispose of them in a sanitary manner, and pods lack space for trash disposal; there is also currently no communal trash solution.
- Children under the age of two will not have all vaccinations and will be exposed to a variety of pathogens due to the lack of enclosed private sleeping and living space.
- The lack of space will create tripping, egress and fire hazards and make movement within the sleeping areas extremely difficult, particularly at night.

- **Hazardous environment**

- The outside areas present many hazards, including largely uneven surfaces with potholes, wide open spaces where children could run off/get lost, lack of sufficient lighting or signage, equipment and protruding objects not yet fenced or covered.
- The area where families will be walking with small children involves multiple tripping hazards and uneven pavement. In order to access the cafeteria after dark, small children will be especially at risk of a fall onto asphalt.
- In the case of an emergency, evacuation from sleeping tents would be very difficult given the long narrow passageways and lack of visible signage.
- In general, there are numerous access barriers that would make this site unsuitable for clients with mobility needs, vision disabilities, hearing disabilities, or medical conditions increasing risk related to contagious disease.

- **Lack of a healthy sleep environment**
 - Sleeping areas cannot be darkened for daytime sleep as required for children under the age of 3 or at baby and toddler bedtimes (between 6-8pm).
 - Sleeping areas will not be quiet during nap and evening hours for proper sleep.
 - Parents will be unable to sleep because they do not feel safe given the lack of privacy and security in their sleeping space. Other families with adjacent cubicles will be able to see into neighboring spaces through gaps in the walls.
 - Lack of sleep can have long term health consequences for adults and children and will impact children's performance in school.

- **Isolation and education difficulties**
 - Children will have long commutes to school. Parents cannot reliably get their children to school or pick them up as needed due to the shuttle running only every 90 minutes.
 - Children cannot participate in after school activities due to lack of transportation.
 - There is no private space in which to do homework.
 - There is no ready access to computers to do homework or ready access to public spaces with computer access (such as neighborhood libraries).
 - It will be difficult to travel to doctors and other appointments (young children and high-risk pregnant people need to visit their medical providers frequently for vaccinations and prenatal screening, respectively etc.).

- **Privacy and safety concerns**
 - Walls are not high enough to protect against guests climbing over the sides to access spaces to which they should not have access.
 - Even within the sleeping areas, there are gaps that allow airborne disease, noise, and objects to pass between sleeping areas and eliminates privacy.
 - The lack of an enclosed private space risks the spread of contagious diseases. This risk is especially acute for infants under one, pregnant people and medically vulnerable children.
 - Families are provided only one key to their cubicle. For a family of six, either people will leave doors open or the adult with the key will need to be present for every bathroom trip or trip back to the cubicle during the day.

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