



Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

## Fwd: Primary Focus License Process

1 message

**Benjamin McDougal** <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:42 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
Code Enforcement Officer  
Town of Cape Elizabeth  
[320 Ocean House Road](#)  
P.O. Box 6260  
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107  
(207) 799-1619  
[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Monica Eguren** <[monica2512@hotmail.com](mailto:monica2512@hotmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 12:05 PM  
Subject: Primary Focus License Process  
To: [benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org) <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>  
Cc: Mary Casey <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>

Dear Mr. McDougal,

I am writing to voice support for Primary Focus school. Currently Mrs Mary Casey is in the process of getting her school licensed. The goal is to keep this great school open. I cannot say enough great things about Mrs. Casey.

My son Mateo has been attending her school for 1 year. My husband and I have complete peace of mind every day Mateo is there, which exceeds all of our hopes for what a preschool could be. We love the way the children are allowed to be themselves. Mary is kind, thoughtful, energetic and truly loving towards our son. My son loves going to school and adores Mary. She provides a nurturing and educational learning environment, which results on a successful academic performance.

Mary brought to our attention that during this process you will be reviewing three different issues. The first one related to the property values, since Mary's school is a home school, only six kids per day, there's no need for signs or a big playground that would visually disturb the neighbors. Mary's house has a really nice front yard and back yard that I'm sure she will keep that way.

The second concern is about traffic on Channel View Rd. I'm sure we can find the way for that not to be an issue and avoid congestion at drop off and pick up times. Again, it is a small school with a maximum of six kids attending.

And finally, I already said but I will repeat it, I have always considered Mary's school a safe and happy place. But Mary has already mentioned that she will be implementing new strategies in the future to help increase the safety of the children.

Thank for your time and I hope you can help us keep the school open to my son and many other kids this year and the years that follow.

Best regards,

Monica Eguren

Sent from my iPhone



Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

## Fwd: Primary Focus Letter of Support

1 message

Benjamin McDougal <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:42 AM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Liz Tully, Camp Ketcha <[ltully@campketcha.org](mailto:ltully@campketcha.org)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 3:27 PM  
Subject: Primary Focus Letter of Support  
To: <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>  
Cc: Mary Casey <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>, Jeff Tully <[jftully2@gmail.com](mailto:jftully2@gmail.com)>

Benjamin,

I am writing this letter of support for Mary Casey's preschool program Primary Focus. Mary made us aware of the challenges she is facing with the Zoning Board.

All three of my children attended Primary Focus beginning with my oldest in the fall of 2013. Our son had been attending a Montessori preschool and although turning five that summer we did not feel he was academically ready for kindergarten. Cooper had never showed much interest in reading or anything academic, he much preferred sports or playing outside. My cousin told me about this fabulous program her son had attended and we were directed to Mary.

Upon meeting Mary I knew instantly how passionate she was about teaching. Her school and home is a wonderful intimate setting that offers group learning and one-on-one time as needed. Prior to enrolling our son we naturally asked around as he was our first child and we were nervous parents. Everyone in the Cape Elizabeth and South Portland communities knew of her and had wonderful things to say.

After attending Primary Focus for just a few short weeks our son's interest in reading and math blossomed. Cooper had a wonderful year at Primary Focus. He made fantastic friends, grew academically and became a reader! His confidence grew surrounding academics and it helped him tremendously in kindergarten.

Because of our amazing experience we enrolled both of our daughters when they were old enough. Both of whom had equally wonderful experiences. Mary has such a natural way of working with children of all learning styles. She makes every aspect of the day fun and meaningful. Both my husband and I attempted (and failed) to teach our children to read. Mary made it look so easy and we were amazed and how quickly all of our children became readers.

Words cannot express how grateful we were to have found Mary's wonderful program. We felt confident each and every day that our children were safe, cared for and growing as individuals and community members while in her care. Our children still talk about Mary's preschool and get excited when they run into friends that they made while there. We appreciate them being able to make friends outside of their community as they were the only students from South Portland when they attended.

We are happy to offer support to Mary in any way that we can.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Jeff & Liz Tully

Liz Tully  
Director of Operations  
Camp Ketcha  
336 Black Point Road  
Scarborough, ME 04074  
O: 207-883-8977 x103  
F: 207-885-0944



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[www.portlandgearhub.org](http://www.portlandgearhub.org)



Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

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## Fwd: Primary Focus

1 message

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Benjamin McDougal <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:42 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
Code Enforcement Officer  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Eileen <[eyeball26@gmail.com](mailto:eyeball26@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 4:24 PM  
Subject: Primary Focus  
To: <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>  
Cc: Mary Casey <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>

Dear Code Officer McDougal,

We are writing to you in support of Mary Casey and her school, Primary Focus. In our house and many others, Primary Focus is also affectionately known as "Mary's School."

We have known Mary as a teacher and also as a neighbor. As Cape Elizabeth residents in the Broad Cove neighborhood, we are concerned with protecting the property value of both our neighborhood and our home. Over our 11 years in Cape, we have never thought of Mary's School as detracting from the neighborhood and, to the contrary, have recommended to many families that they enroll their kids at Primary Focus.

In years past, we had enrolled two of our children in Mary's School; our oldest child was past the age of enrollment when we move to Cape Elizabeth. With both kids we would routinely walk or ride bikes to school in the morning and back home in the afternoon. On the days when we drove, the drop off process was quick and seamless.

The curriculum at Mary's School is both fun and educational. The phonics-based lessons are coupled with hands-on experiences to enhance the learning process. As an example, I recall the kids learning the sound of "hard C" by baking cupcakes and taking a walking field trip to visit with the neighborhood Maine Coon cats!

Now that our kids are further grown and in the Cape school system, their learning at Mary's School has prepared them by providing a solid foundation of skills that touches upon every subject, in almost every grade. Last year, our 5th grader came home and stated that "they taught today what I learned at Mary's."

In closing, we urge you to approve the application for Primary Focus to be licensed in the Town of Cape Elizabeth. By doing so it is in the best interest of our local families and our school system as a whole.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Regards,  
Eileen & Joe Hetrick  
[10 Running Tide Rd](#)  
(207) 799-0343



Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

## Fwd: Application of Mary June Casey, 9 Channel View Road

1 message

Benjamin McDougal <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:43 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
Code Enforcement Officer  
Town of Cape Elizabeth  
[320 Ocean House Road](https://www.townofcapeelizabeth.org/320-Ocean-House-Road)  
P.O. Box 6260  
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(207) 799-1619  
[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Thibodeau** <[jthibod3@maine.rr.com](mailto:jthibod3@maine.rr.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 5:12 PM  
Subject: Application of Mary June Casey, 9 Channel View Road  
To: <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>

Ben,

Please forward my e-mail to the ZBA as part of the above application to be heard Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

My residence on the corner of Channel View and Salt Spray Lane and I received a notice of the applicants application before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

I am neither in support of nor against the application of the applicant but wish to share some observations of Ms. Casey's home day care operation over the years as well as my views of the applicable section of the CE Zoning ordinances.

First, as of the date of this e-mail I do not see the application or any supporting materials on the towns web site so some of my observation and questions may be answered via the application. The Casey's; have operated the day care for many years at their residence. However, I only recently became aware Ms. Casey may not have had a home day care license via the state of Maine nor prior approval from the town and its ZBA to operate the business. As such, are the Casey's seeking a waiver under 19-5-5 or submitting an application? If only the former then I believe they would be in violation of 19-5-5 since the application seeks after the fact approval.

Generally speaking, Ms. Casey has operated her Day care business largely in accordance with section 19-8-8 of the ordinance. I have not observed an outdoor fenced in area of the scale required under 19-8-8. C, 2. The Casey's have generally had between 4-8 kids under their care. Presumably they would rectify this were the ZBA to grant their petition.

Ms. Casey is a pleasant and respectful person and has occasionally asked my permission for the kids to play on our lawn while they await the bus for afternoon kindergarten.

However, were the permit to be approved I would ask that written permission of each applicable neighbor be added to the conditional use given the potential liability issues of a child being injured on a residence property. I think they are generally in compliance with the other provisions of 19-8-8, C.

Finally, and while I think this falls outside the scope of the ZBA, it's a bit disconcerting the Casey's did not apply for a license with the State of Maine given the many years it has operated their home day care. How was this finally discovered? Have they been reporting the income earned? In fairness, I don't think they were trying to hide its operation from the neighbors. We see cars coming and going during the school year and kids in the yard during the day.

Other than a restriction around use of neighbors yards I will respect the decision of the ZBA in this matter.

John C. Thibodeau

21 Salt Spray Lane

Cape Elizabeth



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**Fwd: Mary Casey / Primary Focus**

1 message

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**Benjamin McDougal** <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:44 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
Code Enforcement Officer  
Town of Cape Elizabeth  
320 Ocean House Road  
P.O. Box 6260  
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107  
(207) 799-1619  
[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mara DeGeorge** <[mara.degeorge@gmail.com](mailto:mara.degeorge@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 6:32 PM  
Subject: Mary Casey / Primary Focus  
To: <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>  
Cc: Mary Casey <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>

Dear Ben,

It is with frustration that it is even necessary for me to write this letter to you, meaning someone has complained about a good thing, causing everyone to put time and energy into something that shouldn't require either. However, it is with great pleasure that I can write and say amazing things about Mary Casey and her incredibly well-run educational program, Primary Focus.

All three of my girls attended Mary's program over the years and we were unequivocally pleased with their participation, Mary's teaching, and the environment in which they were learning.

As I understand it from Mary's correspondence, there are three items on the table for the Zoning Board with respect to Primary Focus:

1. Will operation of Primary Focus bring down property values; *I have kept the exterior characteristics of my home unchanged to minimize any visual disturbance to my neighbors – no signs, no playground equipment, no fences, etc.*
2. Will operation of Primary Focus cause parking or traffic problems in the Broad Cove neighborhood or on Channel View Road; *Many of the parents have chosen to walk, bike and/or carpool to and from the school. The maximum number of students attending Primary Focus will always been six children. I now carpool nearly all of the children home at the end of the day. Beginning this September, I am staggering start times to avoid any parking problems. In the future, I will be more diligent that parents park in the driveway, and if ever necessary in the cul-de-sac.*
3. Will the school be operated in a way that guarantees safety of the children. *I will be implementing new strategies in the future to help increase the safety of the children, but I hope that you have always considered this school to be a safe place.*

Mary always shows great respect to her students, their parents, the environment, and the learning atmosphere. As a parent having had children in the program, I always found parking to be safe and non-intrusive to neighbors. Mary's offer to drive students home and staggering start times shows a great effort in appeasing whatever concerns any neighbors may have.

Any learning activities that are brought outside are non-permanent and in no way disruptive to the quiet charm of the neighborhood. Any children playing and learning are just that. Volume is in check, equipment is in check, and never even close to what a birthday party might attract.

It is sad to me that anyone may take issue with Mary's amazing program. Many Cape Elizabeth children will surely miss out on a strong, fun, foundational education program if Primary Focus ceases to exist.

Respectfully,  
Mara DeGeorge





Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

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**Fwd: Primary Focus**

1 message

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**Benjamin McDougal** <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:44 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
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From: **Karen** <[kazememery@yahoo.com](mailto:kazememery@yahoo.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 8:55 PM  
Subject: Primary Focus  
To: <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>

Dear Benjamin

We wanted to write you a letter in support of Primary Focus. Unfortunately, we are away this week and will be unable to attend the zoning board meeting on Tuesday.

Primary Focus is a wonderful preschool that offers so much to our community. Three of our children attended the school. Mary's focus is different from other preschool and offers a wonderful academic base that leads to a successful transition to kindergarten.

We have always felt our children were safe in this small learning environment. Drop off time and pick up time always went smoothly and quickly. There is parking in the driveway and if there was snow it would always be plowed.

The impact of this small school seems minimal to the neighborhood but monumental to the working parents of our community.

We support Primary Focus and hope you will too.

Sincerely, Karen and Peter Emery

Sent from KKE's iPhone





Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

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## Fwd: Primary Focus

1 message

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**Benjamin McDougal** <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:44 AM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Annah Sawyer** <[annah.kinsler@gmail.com](mailto:annah.kinsler@gmail.com)>

Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 9:36 PM

Subject: Primary Focus

To: Mary Casey <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>, [benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org) <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>

Good Evening Mr. McDougal,

My husband Greg and I write to you on behalf of Mary Casey and the Primary Focus Program. We feel that the discontinuation of Mary's program would be a great disservice to not only our 4 year old son Jude, but also to the entire community of Cape Elizabeth. After careful consideration of more than 9 local preschool programs we opted to send our son to Mary Casey. One of my greatest parenting regrets is not having discovered this program for our daughter when she began her education several years ago. There is a plethora of amazing educational programs for pre-K children; however, we truly believe that Mary's is a notch above the rest. We value the ratio of merely 6 students to one teacher, the cleanliness of the grounds and Mary's home (not an easy feat with 6 young children!), the convenience of her location and ease of drop off and pick up (we seldom overlap with other parents and have even found friends to carpool with), the variety of learning tools and opportunities provided, and the genuine care and concern provided for our sons emotional and educational needs. Mary is truly a gift to our family. We hope you can come to appreciate the value that she has to many families in this community and continue to allow her to operate her program and enrich the lives of so many children.

Sincerely,

Annah and Greg Sawyer



Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

## Fwd: In Support of Mary Casey and Primary Focus License

1 message

Benjamin McDougal <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:45 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
Code Enforcement Officer  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Melinda Nudd <[melindanudd@gmail.com](mailto:melindanudd@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 9:46 PM  
Subject: In Support of Mary Casey and Primary Focus License  
To: <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>  
Cc: Mary Casey <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>, Tim Nudd <[timnudd@gmail.com](mailto:timnudd@gmail.com)>

Dear Mr. McDougal,

My name is Melinda Nudd and I am a current resident of Cape Elizabeth. It has come to my attention that Mary Casey, owner and lead teacher at Primary Focus Preschool, is applying to be licensed by the town of Cape Elizabeth. I am writing on behalf of Mary and in support of granting her this license.

I have known Mary for almost ten years and all three of my children, two currently at Pond Cove and one at CMS, attended her preschool. Early education is such a critical developmental period in a child's life. Mary is a gifted and compassionate early childhood educator with the highest standards in regards to the children she teaches and the school that she runs. She is completely invested in each child's growth and school readiness. Having a resource like Mary in this town is truly a gift for the families that she works with and also for the community at large.

The school that Mary runs inside her home is a lovely safe space for children to grow, learn and explore. She does not advertise her school outside, there are no fences or sandboxes, and she does not have a play set or playground in her yard. Driving by her home, you would never know that there is a lovely little school inside. One of the things that our family loves so much is that Mary's school is truly a home away from home - it is not institutional in any way. Because the school is so small, Mary often takes the children to parks or beaches to explore Cape's natural outdoor resources.

When my children attended Mary's school she only accepted a total of six children - I believe that this is still the case. This means that Mary is able to provide the children direct attention and instruction for the duration of the school day. She shares her home with them and offers a comfortable learning environment to grow and thrive. Mary also provided transportation home from school, so parents only needed to drop children off at the start of school. If you consider that drop offs are typically no more than 5 minutes in the morning, the small number of families dropping off their children for the school day is really non intrusive to neighbors and a small price to pay for such a wonderful resource. Mary has always been flexible and agreeable to any solutions that will benefit the greater good and I expect she will continue to do so.

Having our children attend Primary Focus was such a gift for our family and continues to be a period of time that we look back on fondly. They continue to thrive in school and I believe their love for education started with Mary! We loved having our young children in a beautiful and safe home where they loved learning and also developed positively both socially and emotionally. Mary is committed to early education and she has such a special gift to share with the children, families and neighbors in Cape Elizabeth.

As a local public school educator and resident of Cape Elizabeth, I fully support Mary in her endeavor to secure a license for Primary Focus. I wholeheartedly and without hesitation recommend that the town of Cape Elizabeth approve this license. I would be happy to discuss this matter further should you wish.

Thank you for your time and attention.

All the best,

Melinda Nudd  
3 Rocky Hill Road  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine  
207.400.9635



Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

## Fwd: Letter of support for Mary Casey and Primary Focus

1 message

Benjamin McDougal <benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: Aniko Varadi <aniko.varadi@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 10:45 AM

Benjamin McDougal  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Robin Holmgren** <[nurserobinh@hotmail.com](mailto:nurserobinh@hotmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 10:40 PM  
Subject: Letter of support for Mary Casey and Primary Focus  
To: [benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org) <[benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:benjamin.mcdougal@capeelizabeth.org)>  
Cc: [mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com) <[mcasey@spaceworksinc.com](mailto:mcasey@spaceworksinc.com)>

Ben McDougal,

Our children have been attending Primary Focus (or Mary's school) for the past three years. Our oldest son (now entering 3rd grade) attended during the year prior to kindergarten. He absolutely loved it and he thrived there. He entered kindergarten reading and I fully credit Mary for that due to her ability to engage children, hold their attention and continuously inspire their curiosity. Mary is also an incredibly loving, warm, and kindhearted person-the children truly enjoy being there!

Our second son just finished up his second year with Mary and we were equally as thrilled as we were with our oldest. We have another little boy and we certainly hope to send him there one day as well!

I could go on endlessly about Mary's wonderful qualities and the fabulous experience we've had-but I also want to touch on the issues at hand.

In regards to Primary Focus potentially affecting property taxes in Broadcove (or specifically the particular street in question) -I have to be honest- I literally had no idea the school there the first time I drove there. There is no signage, no playground, no evidence of the incredibly special place that resides inside.

Mary often takes the children on field trips-Fort Williams, Kettle Cove, Robinson woods etc. She takes them to play on playgrounds, hike, and explore! She takes them there to let them run and play! She doesn't typically utilize her yard for these needs but brings them on adventures! I can't imagine there would be any impact to property values considering how discreet the school is.

To touch on the parking issue-I have never noted a parking concern or problem. I would however be willing to accommodate any potential issue to ensure the neighbors in the area are also satisfied. For example, I'd be willing to park further along the street in the cul de sac. For the afternoon dismissal, there is no parking concern as Mary provides transportation home for the kids!

The third potential concern-safety of the home and children-has never been a concern whatsoever for my husband and I. When our oldest child first started attending Primary Focus we were given a very thorough tour of the different spaces Mary uses for her teaching. Her home is very neat, clean, tidy and organized. It is clear the children's needs are sufficiently met throughout the day. Her home feels safe, warm, friendly and welcoming.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts of support for Mary Casey and her school-Primary Focus. It would truly be a loss for the families and children attending (and future attendees) if the school were to close. Mary is incredibly accommodating and I know will do whatever it takes for this to be an agreeable situation for all! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robin Austin  
[28 Rocky Hill Rd.](#)  
Cape Elizabeth