

From: <earlysuccess@groups.io> on behalf of Bill Jaeger <bill@coloradokids.org>
Date: Friday, March 20, 2020 at 11:30 AM
To: "earlysuccess@groups.io" <earlysuccess@groups.io>
Cc: Albert Wat <awat@earlysuccess.org>
Subject: [earlysuccess] Child Care & Emergency Response

Hi all,

Albert and Stinson, I know you're updating the Alliance website, but thought I would share where things stand in Colorado:

- Advocates sent a letter with guidance (attached) to the Governor and relevant state agency leaders on Tuesday outlining strategies we should pursue at the state level
- The next day, the Colorado Department of Human Services sent guidance to counties highlighting flexibility in our child care subsidy program to support providers (also attached) including increased absence payments, waiving parent fees, and other supportive strategies. We are getting updates but several counties have moved to payment of up to 10 and 31 absences per month (given that providers are in different scenarios given the county variability in impact so far). CDHS will continue to work with counties to ramp up strategies to support providers as closures spread.
- Also the next day, the Governor issued an Executive Order (linked here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ecMEQj3F3qeEI3qNMtLkAlk3ya3FbVH3/view>) that speaks to a few child care issues:
 - It notes the vital role that child care plays in the response as well as the challenges providers are facing right now due to low enrollment and participation in the subsidy program.
 - Directs local public health agencies to work with child care providers and preschools not operated by P-12 schools to determine whether it is safe to continue operations. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a student, parent of a student, or staff member at the child care or preschool facility, directs the facility to close for no less than 72 hours.
 - Directs school districts to allow use of school facilities for the provision of child care for the essential workforce to respond to COVID-19. Directs school districts and CDHS and Department of Education to identify use of public school buildings for child care for essential and emergency workers.
 - Directs CDHS to access CCDF funds to reimburse counties that pay providers via our state child care subsidy program (CCCAP) for absences or closures as a result of COVID-19 for the next 8 weeks with possibility of extension. Encourages counties to continue to fund CCCAP despite low attendance or temporary closure to ensure consistency and protect the vital role they play for children and families.
 - Directs CDHS with CDE to work with local communities to maximize the use of public and private spaces licensed for child care consistent with increased social distancing. Authorizes CDHS to waive regulations in order to increase the supply of child care for essential and emergency workers, if waiving such regulations will not endanger the public health, welfare, or safety.

- Led by Gary Community Investments, CDHS, private partners, the Children’s Campaign, and other non profits, we have developed a process of identifying demand and supply for emergency child care. This includes options for essential workers may range from:
 - Placement of vetted personnel in families’ homes to provide care
 - Placement of children in licensed centers and homes that have remained open and that have additional capacity
 - Placement of children in licensed programs that may have closed, but are reopening for this purpose
 - Placement of children in settings that will be licensed (such as schools)

- To date, there have not been any waiving of licensing requirements statewide or emergency licensing rules. Rather, CDHS is prepared to issue waivers if needed, but we are trying to work within the existing licensed framework and with the existing supply of providers and only bringing on new licensed capacity should the demand exceed supply or if closures of existing sites that won’t reopen for this work become obstacles.
- The creation of the demand side and supply side outreach has been a partnership between a local tech company, Nanno, CDHS, and other community groups that are doing outreach to providers.
 - In three days, demand for child care has reached about 1,500 requests (more than half for school-age care, 20 percent for preschool, 20% for toddlers, 7% for infants). On the supply side, more than hundreds of providers have expressed interest with capacity to serve thousands of children, including big efforts by our YMCAs. The outreach also includes solicitation of interest from individuals who may be qualified to provide care in an essential worker’s own home or who could be hired by a licensed program to respond to capacity constraints.
 - Nanno’s backend technology is helping do the demand – supply connection to identify likely placements for people who have requested care. Volunteers will then help facilitate the parent – provider connection. This is literally being built and implemented within the last three days and is just about to go live on the matching end. I know many communities would benefit from this, but we haven’t even implemented it here yet so will need a minute to figure out what can be scaled. The company is very small (just a couple of employees) so there isn’t a great deal of capacity to expand quite yet.
 - Licensing is engaged from CDHS to help troubleshoot obstacles to enrollment and to license providers (should we need capacity beyond existing licensed providers)

- We haven’t finalized financing and payment rates, but have worked with high quality providers and a cost modeling expert, Andrew Brodsky, to develop a higher pay/lower ratio cost model to estimate the per child per week payment rates we would ideally like to see. This is being vetted by finance folks at CDHS who live within the constraints of limited funds (looking at CCDBG, TANF transfers, and emergency funds).
 - Quite honestly, this will be the biggest hiccup. We are having trouble identifying funds to cover this care and the logistics of payment to providers who don’t already accept child care subsidy are not worked out and we want to get people placed Monday. Additionally, there isn’t enough money left in CCDF, TANF, and emergency funds to respond to the likely demand and duration of the crisis. **As such, we need the federal stimulus to 1) keep existing providers whole and 2) make sure we**

can provide care to essential workers for the duration of the crisis and not just a couple of weeks.

- Finally, we have run into obstacles with Head Start and Early Head Start that possibly our national partners can help with. For Head Start providers that have closed but are willing to reopen to provide care to essential workers for the response, they are being told that they cannot have their current Head Start employees provide the care. Since Head Start is still paying salaries during the closure, there seem to be expectations around how these teachers are spending their time and this could be perceived as “double-dipping.” This is providing a substantial constraint on the prospect of using existing licensed capacity to respond to the crisis. We need flexibility from Head Start ASAP to respond to this crisis with our existing high quality licensed providers. Lacking that, people will turn to unlicensed or provisionally licensed care in suboptimal settings and we will waste the capacity of the Head Start system to respond to the crisis. **Any help on this front with Head Start is appreciated.**

As with all of you, this is a shifting landscape and a lot more to do. We need that federal money ASAP, flexibility from Head Start, and a deep well of appreciation for the heroes who are stepping up to provide care during these times.

Thanks,
Bill

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[Colorado Emergency Support for Early Care & Education Requests v3.pdf](#)

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