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Subject: Governor and Lt. Governor's COVID-19 update to child care providers

For interested parties, the Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Development Services unit, through its Child Care Services Division, is sharing this important communication from the Governor and Lt. Governor to Minnesota's child care providers sent today. Please share this email with other individuals and/or organizations you feel may be interested. We value your assistance in widely publicizing this information



Child Care Update

Dear Child Care Providers:

During this unprecedented time, our goal is to continue to share updates about the COVID-19 pandemic and considerations related to the essential service you provide our state – caring for and educating Minnesota's children and providing stability for our state's workforce. We have heard your desire to stay open and serve children, families and your communities. Thank you.

Over the weekend, the **Governor presented a proposal** to the legislature for emergency grants to child care providers. Our hope is the legislature will act quickly and that this funding, **approximately \$30 million total, would support providers in keeping their doors open in the coming months** and continuing to care for the children of health care and other critical workers. If passed, the funding would go to licensed family and center-based child care providers throughout the state playing a key role in enabling emergency and essential personnel to go to work and know children are well cared for and safe. Additionally, the Governor and our team are connected with private organizations and working to share updates on additional resources for you in the coming days as well.

This weekend the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) authorized some flexibilities that relate to your services (<https://mn.gov/dhs/waivers-and-modifications/>). This includes modifying rules for Child Care Assistance Program payments for absent days, allowing flexibility for medical documentation and to allow some programs that close because of the pandemic to continue billing child care assistance for up to one month, as

well as extending registration deadlines for any provider who was due to renew in the next three months. For Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) questions about payment policy changes and absent days, or other CCAP specific policies, call 1-651-431-4848.

Minnesota Department of Human Services also announced that it is suspending certain licensing requirements and monitoring activities to allow greater flexibility in these challenging times. For example, DHS suspended the issuance of fix-it tickets and correction orders; suspended all non-critical licensing visits in order to provide enhanced technical assistance to providers; clarified that any training, re-licensing or documentation requirements set to expire are extended, and automatically extended for three months family child care licenses that are set to expire during March, April, or May 2020. County licensing agencies are expected to comply with these changes as well. These licensing changes are in effect until at least May 1, 2020. These actions were taken in order to give providers the necessary regulatory flexibility to comply with recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by modifying certain licensing requirements and ensuring the best interests of your clients and communities are met.

Thank you to those of you who completed the survey and shared your desire to stay open. We heard from 1,368 providers (424 centers and 923 family child care providers) who are available to provide care to children of emergency and critical workers during this time. To add your program to this list, please complete this [survey](#). We estimate that we will need to use these slots and additional slots in the coming months. We have heard many of you would be interested in caring for school age children as well. The Governor will highlight your willingness to serve this week in his press briefing and direct people to the parent hotline at Child Care Aware, which will refer parents based on the information you provided in our survey.

There is also a website with materials to support you: mn.gov/childcare. The site includes:

- Updated guidance on [public health practices](#) and [screening](#) considerations related to child care settings
- Compiled resources from the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others
- Information on testing prioritization
- Map of childcare providers willing to be open for emergency workers (as well as the [survey](#) to update your status at any time); emergency workers with young children ages 0-5 who call 1-888-291-9811 will be directed to these providers.

There is a **child care provider hotline at 1-888-234-1268** available for your questions and concerns.

The health and the well-being of children and their families, as well as you personally, your staff members, and your families are the top priority. *If child care providers determine they cannot maintain public health guidance and safely meet the needs of children and staff, they should close.* We have asked providers to remain open if possible, to serve emergency workers, but this is not a requirement. We understand that each provider must and will make the best decision for themselves and their business.

We want to continue to express our gratitude for the efforts you and your staff are undertaking by opening your centers and homes to continue to serve children and families and protect the health, safety, and well-being of children and staff. We know the fluctuating enrollment, temporary closures in response to public health guidance, and additional expenses due to COVID-19 are adding incredible strain. This is a difficult time. We care about you and your work and want to be in touch.

Thank you for all you do to support your communities, serve children and families, and help Minnesota respond to COVID-19. You are heroes.

Sincerely,

Erin Bailey
Executive Director of the Governor's Children's Cabinet

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