Child Care Update

Dear Family Child Care and Center-Based Child Care Providers:

This week, the Governor signed Executive Order 20-56 to Safely Reopen Minnesota’s Economy and Ensuring Safe Non-Work Activities during COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency. Over the next few weeks the Administration is slowly turning the dial. This includes:

- Allowing businesses and retail stores to reopen if they have a plan for keeping employees and customers safe and operate at 50 percent capacity.

- Allow people to gather in groups of 10 or less, as long as they maintain distance.

- Encouraging Minnesotans who can work from home to continue to do so.

- Wear masks when outside of the home, travel only when necessary, stay six feet apart, get tested if they don’t feel well, and stay home when sick.

These guidelines will help Minnesota Stay Safe. As we transition to this next phase, here are a few updates and resources that can support your work. Child care providers continue to be Critical Sectors and allowed to be open so long as they follow public health guidance.

Public Health Guidance Mandatory

The executive order last night made following the Guidance for Child Care Programs mandatory. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, it is critical that child care programs are implementing public health strategies. As testing continues to ramp up in Minnesota, we are identifying more cases among child care staff and children, and providers with these key practices in place are more likely to prevent exposure. Child care providers should take time to review and reinforce their COVID-19 prevention measures including:

- Pay close attention to maintaining closed classroom groups that include the same children and staff each day and, whenever possible, ensure classroom groups do not mix.
• Staff should also be mindful not to congregate outside of assigned classrooms to prevent the risk of transmission between groups.

• Providers should also remain alert to any potential symptoms of illness, even those that appear very mild, among staff and children.

• It is critical that exclusion policies for ill individuals are strictly enforced and communicated with families.

Updated guidance from the MDH and CDC, including exclusionary guidance and masking social stories are below.

• [CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#)

• [Minnesota’s Department of Health’s COVID-19 Child Care Exclusion Guidance](#)

• [Mask Social Story](#)

• [Masks and Gloves Social Story](#)

For specific health questions regarding your care settings, reach out to the MDH school and childcare team at [health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us](mailto:health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us).

Financial Supports

We continue to prioritize child care and maximize financial supports available to support your work. We’re working to ensure families have access to care and your child care businesses have support. The state recently received $48.1 million in additional Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding from the federal CARES Act. Engagement and input from child care providers, advocates and families informed the priorities for these funds. As such the Governor [announced](#) yesterday how he hopes to use the funds to:

• Provide increased access to supports to reduce child care costs for low-income families, most of whom are essential workers. Some of these proposals may require additional actions.

• Increase funding for Peacetime Emergency Child Care grants to expand critical relief and supports for providers remaining open to care for children of essential workers.

• Provide flexibilities for center and family child care providers who are reimbursed by the Child Care Assistance Program to continue to fund absent days, pay for temporarily closed and second providers and other flexibilities needed to support this critical industry.
Increasing Child Care Assistance provider reimbursement rates and achieving federal compliance with these rates remains a top priority. Child Care Assistance is a bipartisan program and national strategy to address a nationwide child care crisis and ensure access to child care for working families. Legislative action is necessary to increase the rates and the Administration will continue to prioritize a rate increase.

Share Your Status

As businesses re-open we anticipate additional families needing child care, including an increased need for school age care. Please continue to update your capacity through the survey. Given the Stay Safe order, updated guidance for schools and all those providing care to children on encouraging prioritization of enrollment is available. As you have questions about your license and availability to serve additional school-age children call the Department of Human Services hotline at 1-888-234-1268.

Provider Call

The next provider call is on Tuesday, May 26, at 7 p.m. The call will feature agency partners, including MDH, Department of Education, Department of Employment and Economic Development and Department of Human Services.

- **To have a question answered:** Email your question to childrenscabinet.MMB@state.mn.us by Wednesday May 20th at 5 p.m.

- **Join the call:** Log in to WebEx or by phone (1-415-655-0003; Access code: 960 685 991).

- **Access the recording of the May 11 conference call.** Please note that some of the information related to child care and COVID-19 cases has evolved.

Parent Aware changes to respond to COVID-19

The Department of Human Services temporarily changed some requirements for Parent Aware, Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System. These changes provide flexibility for child care providers in meeting requirements and deadlines for applying for ratings during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. It also makes Parent Aware coaching available online or over the phone and training available online.

For more information, see the Frequently Asked Questions for child care providers or Frequently Asked Questions for school-based prekindergarten and Head Start programs and their child care partners. Questions about changes for child care providers can be emailed to DHS.child.care@state.mn.us, and questions about changes for school-based prekindergarten and Head Start programs can be emailed to MDE.ELS@state.mn.us.
As we safely return more Minnesotans to work, we remain grateful for your service to the children and families in your community. We will continue to provide updates on business supports, supplies, and other resources as on mn.gov/childcare. Please continue to send questions to childrenscabinet.MMB@state.mn.us or call us at 651-259-3636.

Thank you,

Erin Bailey, Executive Director, Governor’s Children’s Cabinet

On behalf of participating agency leaders and staff

Contact Us.

Website: www.mn.gov/childrenscabinet
Email: childrenscabinet.MMB@state.mn.us