Child Care Update

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

We wanted to share the recording of the provider call from Monday August 17, answers to questions around enforcement on Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidance, and other relevant agency updates. Thank you for all you continue to do for the children and families in your community.

Provider Call

The recording from the Monday, August 17 provider call is now available. Due to the Labor Day holiday, the next provider call is Monday, September 14, at 7 p.m. We will share login details in a future update.

Share your capacity and status

Please remember to continue to update your capacity through the survey; your status connects to a map of available providers for families in search of care at mn.gov/childcare. If you received the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds, updating your capacity through the survey is required per your attestation. If you have questions about your license and availability to serve additional school-age children, call the Department of Human Services (DHS) hotline at 1-888-234-1268.

COVID-19 testing

Earlier this summer, the Walz-Flanagan Administration announced a commitment to providing access to COVID-19 testing for Minnesotans working in child care and pre-K to grade 12 schools. One saliva test will be provided to all staff currently working in licensed child care settings and certified centers as a back-up when they feel they need it and are not able to be tested in the community. Insurers will first be billed for medically necessary tests and uninsured individuals will be covered via federal Health Resources and Services Administration funding. The state will act as a payer of last resort, backstopping the cost of tests not covered by other payers so that no child care staff will be responsible for payment.

While we encourage testing through primary care or other community testing locations, at-home saliva testing provides another option after an exposure in the workplace. It can easily be completed at home, with guidance from a medical
practitioner. We will provide more information about how to access these tests next week. Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback on this effort.

**Testing locations.** You can find testing locations across the state on [COVID response page](https://www.covidresponsepage.com). As a reminder, COVID-19 testing is covered without cost-sharing, including for those who are uninsured.

**Community testing events.** MDH works in partnership with communities to provide safe and free on-site COVID-19 testing in areas with outbreaks, increasing cases, or other barriers to access existing test sites. Check on locations and dates for new community testing sites.

As a reminder, children and staff members should be excluded from your programs while they are awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.

If you, your staff, or families are experiencing any barriers to testing, please share your story and feedback so we can help address. Email us at childrenscabinet.mmb@state.mn.us.

**Questions on Public Health Guidance & Enforcement** We have received a number of questions on how the state will enforce the public health guidance related to child care. Critical businesses are required to complete COVID-19 Preparedness Plans and follow public health guidance. DHS provided a [template](https://www.dhs.mn.gov) to child care providers to assist in completing this task and we share regular updates on required guidance.

As part of the preparedness plan, licensed child care providers are required to follow MDH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) guidelines and incorporate it into their plans. These mandatory guidelines address exclusion practices that child care providers must follow if a child, staff, or volunteer tests positive for or develops symptoms of COVID-19. Program unable or unwilling to follow MDH and CDC guidance, such as exclusion guidance and face coverings, should not open. DHS’s existing authority can enforce these requirements and close programs that are not complying with MDH guidance (as stated in [Executive Order 20-74](https://www.dhs.mn.gov)). For updated information and links to relevant guidance, please continue to visit mn.gov/childcare.

Additionally, providers that receive the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care attested to using health and safety practices that prevent the spread of COVID-19 based on guidance from DHS and MDH. If there is indication a provider is not meeting the requirements for COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds, they will receive written notice and be provided an opportunity to clarify and/or make corrective actions. Failure to make the required corrections, and/or indication that a provider provided false or misleading information to DHS regarding funding requirements, may result in discontinuation of payments, recoupment of payments already made, and/or referral to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.
DHS Survey to Family Child Care Providers & Foster Families

Recently, many licensed child care and foster care providers received a survey from their county licensors. The purpose of the survey was to identify licensed providers who might be interested in providing respite and short-term care for children whose parents are either incapacitated at home or hospitalized due to COVID-19 and unable to care for their children. This survey is voluntary and intended for those not currently serving families. So far, counties and Tribes in Minnesota have worked with families in this situation to identify temporary relative and kinship care, which is typically the best option. However, agencies are working proactively to plan for all considerations.

The state has also created resources for families to make a plan for how their family and caregivers will respond to a potential illness or hospitalization. Having a plan can help reduce stress in the event of an emergency and help everyone transition.

Contact Us

If you have any questions, please send to childrenscabinet.mmb@state.mn.us or call us at 651-259-3636.

Thank you,

Erin Bailey & Jenny Moses, 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