Governor Whitmer Takes Significant Step to Make Child Care Affordable and Accessible for Families

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LANSING – Governor Gretchen Whitmer today announced a $130 million investment to make child care more affordable and accessible for Michigan families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Child care providers have been critical partners in helping our state respond to COVID-19, and we are extremely grateful for their service,” **Governor Whitmer** said. “Every child care provider and early educator is important in giving parents some peace of mind while they are delivering essential services to our state at this challenging time.”

Michigan has created the “Child Care Relief Fund” to provide direct, non-competitive grants to child care providers. These funds help ensure:

- Child care providers currently serving essential workers remain open, and costs associated with providing care during the COVID-19 pandemic are not passed on to essential workers.
- Child care providers can stay afloat during the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” state of emergency.
- Child care is more affordable to families now, and as our economy begins to reopen.

- Child care providers across the state have the resources needed to reopen for Michigan's workforce when the recovery process of the current COVID-19 pandemic begins and more families are in need of child care options.

Michigan's Child Care Relief Fund consists of $100 million in federal CARES Act funding and $30 million from the state's child care fund, both dedicated to be used only for child care services.

Licensed child care centers, family group homes, tribal child care providers, provisional disaster relief child care centers, and subsidized license exempt providers are all eligible for Michigan's Child Care Relief Fund grants.

Grant recipients must commit to reducing their weekly rates for families by at least 10 percent, and provide care for children of essential workers regardless of where their parents or caregivers work. Grant recipients must also agree not to charge a fee to hold a child's spot in a program while receiving grant funds.

"These funds will help sustain high quality child care that is vital for Michigan's children and families," said **State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice**. "Whether it's to help child care providers cover fixed costs like their mortgage, utilities, insurance, or payroll, we wanted the funds to be as flexible as possible to meet their specific needs."

The Child Care Relief Fund will be administered by the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Child Development and Care – with support from the governor's office and the Michigan Department of Labor and Regulatory Affairs. Beginning April 29, there will be a simple online application for child care providers to use at **www.michigan.gov/childcare**.

Grants start at $1,500 for home-based providers and $3,000 for child care centers. Additional funds will be awarded based on the size of the provider, whether they are open and serving essential workers, and their quality rating.

In addition to this grant program, Michigan has also made important changes to the Child Development and Care program, commonly called the child care subsidy.

These changes ensure families can access the care they need and providers have some financial certainty. This includes continuing to review and approve applications; increasing the hours school age children can be in care; extending the deadline for re-determinations so families can continue to receive the subsidy during the crisis; and continuing to make subsidy payments based on the number of children enrolled in a program, not the number attending.

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