DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

News stories

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Minnesota prioritizes child care during COVID-19

Temporary changes add flexibility for families and providers, give guidance on operating during peacetime emergency

April 24, 2020

Minnesotans who provide child care and families who rely on child care should know that the state is working to prioritize and support their operations and availability during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under emergency authority granted by Governor Tim Walz, Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead has approved temporary modifications to child care regulations and procedures. The changes add flexibility for families and providers while preserving access to care.

The temporary changes affect providers and families:

- Family child care providers have longer timelines to renew licenses and meet training requirements, and more flexible requirements for record-keeping and age distribution.
- Child care centers have more flexibility around requirements for staffing, age grouping, training and overnight care.
- Providers who serve the Child Care Assistance Program, or CCAP, have more time to renew their registration. Certain payment rules have been modified so they can continue to serve families. For instance, if a child is absent for medical reasons, the program continues to pay providers for more days than under normal rules.
- Families who rely on CCAP have extended eligibility if they were due for review before July. They can also switch child care programs without a waiting period if their provider closes temporarily, so they don’t lose access to care.

“The Minnesotans who continue to provide child care during this unprecedented crisis deserve our thanks,” Harpstead said. “Their work caring for the children of front-line workers keeps us all safer.”

Regulatory oversight of child care settings continues during the pandemic. State and county licensors are prioritizing on-site visits on a case-by-case basis, and continue to respond to critical incidents that present a high risk of harm to children or allegations of abuse or neglect.

The changes for child care, in addition to temporary suspensions of routine enforcements by DHS Licensing, give providers the flexibility to continue serving clients, mitigate the spread of the virus and protect the health and safety of children and themselves and their staff.

Executive Order 20-12 (https://mn.gov/governor/assets/FINAL_EO-20-12_%20DHS%20Commissioner%20Authority_tcm1055-424360.pdf), signed by Governor Walz on March 20, allows the Minnesota Department of Human Services to temporarily waive or modify state requirements so services can be delivered safely and without undue delay, protecting vulnerable Minnesotans and those who care for them. Waivers and modifications under the emergency authority are posted on the agency’s public website (https://mn.gov/dhs/).

The Department of Human Services serves more than 1 million Minnesotans, with programs and services that include health care, economic assistance and much more.

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