



## RESPONDING TO COVID-19: CHILD CARE FOR CRITICAL SECTORS

Updated March 28, 2020

### **ARE YOU A PARENT OR GUARDIAN IN NEED OF CHILD CARE?**

We understand that the COVID-19 has disrupted child care plans for many families. The child care landscape has been greatly impacted by this pandemic – whether family members are sheltered in and can no longer care for children due to age or an underlying condition or a child care provider closes due to decreased enrollment, financial strain, or public health needs. Yet, we know that many families crucial to our state’s fight against COVID-19 continue to need child care so they can go to work. As a result, in [Executive Order 20-02](#) and [Executive Order 20-19](#) Governor Walz encouraged child care providers to remain open and prioritize essential workers of critical sectors during this peacetime emergency.

**FINDING OPEN CHILD CARE.** If you are a parent or guardian in need of child care – especially if you work in one of these [sectors](#) – **call the Child Care Aware parent line at 1.888.291.9811 to be directed to available licensed child care providers or visit [mn.gov/childcare](https://mn.gov/childcare) to view a map of available providers.**

**PRIORITIZING EMERGENCY NEEDS.** Over 2,000 child care providers have reported that they are open to families of essential workers. Families can view current providers on the map on [mn.gov/childcare](https://mn.gov/childcare), a site launched to offer child care providers and families of emergency workers seeking care the most up-to-date information. Child care providers are asked to prioritize caring for children in this order (explained beginning on page 2 [here](#)):

- Tier 1 (age 0 to 5)
- Other essential workers (age 0 to 5), and
- Children of essential workers, including school-age.

[Minnesota Distance Teaching and Learning Implementation Guidance](#), resulting from the Governor’s executive orders, requires school districts and charter schools to provide care to enrolled students age 12 and under who are children of critical workers in Tier I ([here](#)); they are also encouraged to consider local community needs related to care for children of workers beyond the Tier I areas. **Care for district-enrolled children of Tier 1 workers at schools must be provided at no cost.** If schools cannot do so, they are asked to work with child care providers to identify and contract for care if possible. Parents or guardians interested in school-age care should contact their district directly with questions and enrollment processes. *Note this MDE guidance is updated daily.*

**COST.** Child care providers will charge tuition that varies with their program policies and business practices. Many providers are working to accommodate financial considerations of families during this time of emergency. Families in need of financial assistance may still apply for and eligible families may receive [Child Care Assistance](#) and [Early Learning Scholarships](#). The Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota’s [Bridge to Benefits screening tool](#) can be used to help you determine potential eligibility and information needed to apply for these and other public programs that support economic stability. Families may also call 1-888-291-9811 for assistance with financial resources to afford care.

**EMPLOYERS.** Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan sent a [letter](#) to employers sharing resources created by the state to help support child care needs during the pandemic.

**STAY AT HOME ORDER.** To limit the spread and respond to the pandemic of COVID-19, on March 26, Governor Walz issued a Stay at Home order. Other than exempted activities like going to the grocery store, doctor, walking outside or other [activities](#), Minnesotans are asked to stay at home. People working in critical sectors, such as health care services, public safety and law enforcement activities, energy, IT services, critical transportation, and other critical sectors listed in the [Executive Order](#) are permitted to leave home if they need to do so for work. There is not anything in the order that specifically prohibits a family working in non-critical sectors from taking their child to child care and if a private child care provider wants to continue taking kids, the Executive Order does not expressly prohibit that; however, this is not keeping with the overall message and spirit of the Governor’s Stay At Home order and need to keep child care providers open for emergency workers.