



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF ECONOMIC & HOUSING STABILITY

Lori A. Shibinette
Commissioner

Christine L. Santaniello
Director

129 PLEASANT STREET, CONCORD, NH 03301
603-271-4242 1-800-852-3345 Ext. 4242
Fax: 603-271-8712 TDD Access: 1-800-735-2964 www.dhhs.nh.gov

March 18, 2020

Dear New Hampshire Child Care Providers and Stakeholders,

First, we want to thank all of you for your ongoing commitment to New Hampshire's children and families now and throughout every day of the year. We are at a critical point in the COVID-19 crisis and need your help, more than ever, to weather this storm. The key to keeping first responders, medical staff and critical services operating, along with having access to goods and services and family supports across the state, is our ability to continue child care at whatever level we can, in every community. In order to make that happen, the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration (BCDHSC) has partnered with the Child Care Licensing Unit (CCLU), Child Care Aware of NH and others to put into place the following child care supports. We also will be adding other options/supports once we receive approval from the Office of Child Care.

Licensed Child Care Programs

1. Programs may increase the number of children being cared for in their centers. Contact Licensing at ccluoffice@dhhs.nh.gov or call 603-271-9025 for more information.
2. For support in establishing off site locations and/or creating smaller and alternative care settings (e.g. small group of school agers at a community-based location), contact Licensing at ccluoffice@dhhs.nh.gov or call 603-271-9025 for more information.
3. Contact the emergency child care team at the BCDHSC for assistance in setting up emergency child care settings for first responders and employer-based settings with supplies and staff. (Dianne Chase at 603-271-7190 or Dianne.chase@dhhs.nh.gov).
4. Providers receiving NH Child Care Scholarship Program quality rating payments will receive an automatic extension if their enrollment period ends during the state of emergency. In this case, providers will need to reapply to maintain their quality designation after the crisis ends.
5. During the current crisis, program staff may care for at least three children in their homes, if your physical center is closed. Contact Licensing at ccluoffice@dhhs.nh.gov or call 603-271-9025 for more information.

Current and Potential License-Exempt Providers

1. The BCDHSC will provide expedited enrollment of license-exempt providers, as well as waivers to expand the number of children permitted in care. Providers may care for up to 9 school agers (total) or a combination of children that include no more than 4 children under the age of 3 with no more than 2 of those being under the age of 2. Contact Marlene Burton at 603-271-4228 or marlene.burton@dhhs.nh.gov for more information.

2. Providers receiving NH Child Care Scholarship Program quality rating payments will receive an automatic extension if their enrollment period ends during the state of emergency. In this case, providers will need to reapply to maintain their quality designation after the crisis ends.

All Providers Serving Children Enrolled in the NH Child Care Scholarship Program

1. As of March 17, 2020, providers may bill for full-time afterschool care for children whose parent(s) are engaged in an approved full-time activity.
2. Providers may utilize the “Disaster” billing category (D) that allows you to bill for full enrollment at the child’s service level, regardless of whether or not the program is open and the child is present. *Please note:* This option is available to providers (open or closed) as long as the child has not been enrolled with a different provider for the same billing period. The BCDHSC will share specific “Disaster” billing instructions with providers within the next two days.
3. Redetermination for family eligibility will be suspended during the crisis, with families remaining at their current service levels unless they notify BCDHSC that they would like to reduce their hours.
4. Renewals of program quality designation (Licensed-Plus and Accredited) will be suspended throughout the crisis. Quality payments will continue at the current level without interruption.
5. Credential renewals and applications will be suspended until further notice. If necessary, providers may obtain a letter from the BCDHSC stating that their expiring credential is considered to be in good standing during the crisis and will be renewed as soon as possible when the crisis ends.

Families Seeking Child Care

1. Access to an emergency child care telephone line is available at Child Care Aware of NH. Website link and contact information is under construction.
2. Child Care Aware of NH is in the process of constructing a Website link to a list of current and potential child care providers where families can post their child care needs.
3. Families have ongoing access to the regular resource and referral services to all families (available at <http://nh.childcareaware.org/>)

Thank you for your patience as we all move through these challenging times - together. Watch for regular updates on additional options, supports and resources as they become available.

Best,

Debra

Debra Nelson, Bureau Chief

Dianne

Dianne R. Chase, Asst. Bureau Chief

Bureau Contact Information:

Provider Line – 603-271-4242 (voicemail only)
DHHS.ChildDevelopment@dhhs.nh.gov