

# Emergency Child Care Toolkit

Guidance for Essential Businesses Interested in Employee Child Care



Wisconsin Department of  
Children and Families

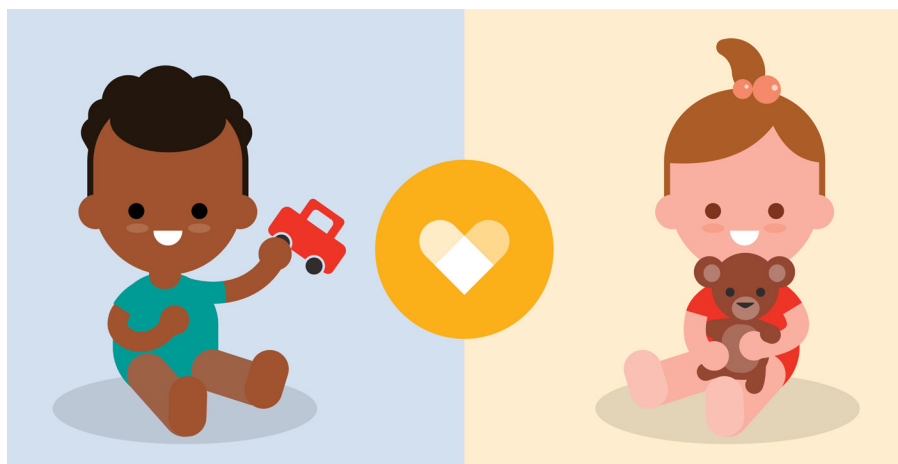
# Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is supporting the growing demand for child care for essential workforce families by assisting in the launch of emergency child care centers. The following toolkit includes information for essential workforce businesses and child care providers who want to connect to provide emergency care.

Wisconsin's Governor declared a public health emergency for the State on March 12, 2020. Effective March 25, 2020, Wisconsin's Governor issued [Emergency Order #12](#), the Safer At Home Order. [Emergency Order #6](#), which restricts the size of child care settings, also remains in effect. The goal of Safer at Home is to reduce cases of COVID-19. Among other things, the Safer at Home Order further restricts non-essential businesses and workers, allowing our health care facilities to properly care for our sick. Child care teachers, providers, and staff are designated as Essential Businesses under Safer at Home and may remain open to provide child care as explained in the Safer at Home Order. Child care is a critical function in supporting health providers and essential workforce in this crisis. This order also requires providers to prioritize child care for essential workforce families.

Per Governor Evers' Safer at Home order, DCF has defined essential workforce eligible for emergency child care as the following:

- **Tier 1:** employees, contractors, and other support staff working in health care;
- **Tier 2:** employees, contractors, and other staff in vital areas including but not limited to military; long term care; residential care; pharmacies; child care; child welfare; government operations; public safety and critical infrastructure such as sanitation, transportation, utilities, telecommunications; grocery and food services; supply chain operations; and other sectors as determined by the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families.



Questions regarding this toolkit should be directed to [dcfmbcovid19@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfmbcovid19@wisconsin.gov)

# Where to Begin

## Have you explored the existing child care resources in your community?

Child care centers across the state are staying open to support essential workforce families. Individuals and organizations should consult the [DCF map](#) to identify available child care in their area. Essential workforce employees can connect directly with the child care center. Employers can also direct their essential workforce employees to DCF's Child Care Finder [request form](#) to submit their request for child care in their area. Through this platform, DCF and partners are connecting essential workforce to center-based and in-home child care.

## Does your organization's child care needs exceed local child care capacity?

If your workforce is large enough that it exceeds available child care or there is not enough availability at local child care centers, you may consider establishing a new emergency child care center, either on-site or with a local partner. Examples of these efforts include the [Milwaukee YMCA partnering with Advocate Aurora](#) to offer on-site child care at St. Luke's Conference Center and [Epic partnering with UW Health and Meriter's Child Care Center](#) to offer child care at their old office building.

## What initial steps do I take to identify if offering emergency child care is feasible for my organization?

You should first begin by contacting your local [DCF child care licensing team](#) and [Child Care Resource and Referral agency](#). Both teams are regionally-based and can help you explore all available existing child care programs, connect with local child care providers, and identify the feasibility of launching a new child care program.

**1. Identify the licensee:** Child care settings must be managed by a currently regulated child care provider. This provider could sponsor the emergency child care center, and the emergency child care would become another location under the current license. This method could have the provider up and running almost immediately. For help identifying a licensee, you can contact your local [DCF licensing team](#).

**2. Identify the location:** Under the emergency orders issued to address the Covid-19 pandemic, child care centers may not operate with more than 10 staff present at a time and may not operate with more than 50 children present at a time. Any location – on-site or off-site – must allow you to meet the requirements of that order. Child care providers should also check any local orders for requirements that may affect the choice of location. If you do not have an on-site location, DCF encourages interested partners to contact their local child care centers, school, or community organization, like YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs, to identify potential spaces.

### a. Follow ratio requirements, public health guidance, and practice social distancing to promote public health.

- i. DCF has waived ratio requirements for children five and older, but the capacity of the setting cannot exceed a ratio of 10 adults to 50 children.
- ii. It is required that program not exceed ratios of 1:4 for children ages Birth-2, 1:8 for children age 2-3, 1:10 for children ages 3-4, and 1:13 for children age 4-5.
- iii. Guidance for child care settings will continue to be updated on [DCF's website](#). This guidance includes [examples of policies/programs](#) and templates for centers to use.



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a. **Comply with state and local building code requirements.** DCF will accept an occupancy permit as evidence that a facility meets the applicable building codes. You should contact your local municipality for information about how to comply with local building code requirements and to obtain an occupancy permit. If the facility you intend to use previously had a permit, then the municipality may already have the information it needs to review without requiring an on-site inspection.

b. **Complete an updated initial licensing checklist with your DCF licenser.** Any exception requests can be processed once the facility is up and running to determine the extent of the need.

### **3. Complete other requirements of child care licensing, including insurance, staffing, and policies/programs.**

a. **Submit evidence of current insurance coverage to DCF.** You must submit evidence of current insurance coverage to DCF. You should review your insurance policies, (general liability, worker's compensation, or any other policy under which your child care may have coverage), and check with your broker and insurance companies if you have questions about whether you have coverage for liability relating to exposure to COVID-19.

b. **Identify qualified staff.** DCF in partnership with SFTA and WECA have identified child care workers, teachers, and volunteers who are interested in providing care during this time. Contact your local [DCF licensing team](#) or CCR&R if you are looking for available staff.

i. At least one staff person per group of children must be trained in:

1. CPR (all age groups)
2. Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention (5 years and younger)
3. Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (all age groups)

ii. The qualified person may supervise other staff members who don't have this training.

iii. All staff members must be at least 18 years old.

c. **Secure needed supplies and materials.** As part of the DCF licensing check, a licenser must observe enough materials, bedding, equipment and furniture for children (via photos, Facetime, etc.). This will also include ensuring that there is enough extra clothing and bedding materials for all children.

d. **Establish required policies and programs.** Guidance on policies/programs for child care centers operating during COVID-19 can be found on the [DCF website](#). Specific policies include the following:

- I. Set a basic schedule for children in care. DCF will provide an outline of routines and schedules (feeding, pick-up, drop-off, etc.).
- II. Establish key policies and procedures including behavior guidance, sanitizing and child tracking.
- III. Develop emergency procedures.
- IV. Create a child file for intake including basic health and contact information. Centers may choose to implement more stringent public health policies during this time.



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# Questions?

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