



201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916

Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Emilie Amundson

March 23rd, 2020

Contact: Thomas McCarthy or Gina Paige, 608-422-7800 or dcfmedia@wisconsin.gov

Department working to connect health care and essential workers with child care

(MADISON) – The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is coordinating efforts to find child care for families of workers providing vital service to the state’s COVID-19 response. Child care available remains one of the top concerns to keeping health providers and essential employees at work.

Last week, DCF worked with the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) to administer a survey of health care employees to gauge need. At the same time, the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), and the Registry assessed the capacity of providers to take new kids during the time of crisis. Over the past 48 hours, work began on matching supply and demand to make sure health care workers were able to find the child care they needed.

“In a short order, our partners and agency staff were able to come together around a solution to address the child care needs of health care workers across Wisconsin,” said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. “Over the coming days, we will continue to work on ways we can help other essential workers find care.” DCF continues to work with WHA and DHS to develop a model for on-site care at the state’s hospital and health care facilities. The initial guidance developed by the department is based on local examples of hospitals, child care providers, and the business and non-profit community coming together to create new, drop-in care for health care workers in a specified region. The department is working with the Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCAs to explore similar options throughout the state near hospitals and sites with large numbers of essential staff.

“I continue to be amazed by the generosity and good-will of the people in Wisconsin,” continued Secretary Amundson. “As we identify needs, people are raising their hands to help. This is especially true for the many child care providers who stayed open, adapted to more rigid rules to keep kids healthy and safe, and agreed to take new kids during this challenging period.”

Child care providers were asked to reduce their footprint to settings with no more than 10 staff and no more than 50 children present to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread. Child care providers and centers are small businesses that are impacted by many of the same economic pressures other industries are experiencing when practicing social distancing and limits on human interactions. Like many states, Wisconsin was already facing a shortage of child care availability in many parts of the state. To address some of these gaps, DCF has sought hazard pay funding for child care workers remaining open and asked educators to volunteer in child care settings.

“I want to be clear: child care workers are essential staff themselves,” said Amundson. “And we need to do whatever we can to support them. If you have the luxury of keeping your kids at home with you, I am asking that you strongly consider doing so,” concluded Amundson.

For more information, visit the DCF COVID-19 website. People should follow simple steps to prevent illness and avoid exposure to this virus including:

- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching your face;
- Staying home when sick.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and we encourage you and the public to frequently monitor the [DHS website](#) for updates, and to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or dhs.wi on Instagram. Additional information can be found on the [CDC website](#).

(END)

###