



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

Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Emilie Amundson

March 30, 2020

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

New efforts launched to connect essential workers with child care

(MADISON) – The Department of Children and Families (DCF) launched two new tools to connect essential workforce families to local, safe child care. Healthcare workers and essential employees can now [submit a request for care through the department’s updated Child Care Finder](#) or proactively view up-to-date availability across the state using [the department’s new child care map](#).

"The value child care provides to our communities is currently on fully display," said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. "We are doing everything in our power to support early childhood educators so they can continue to provide child care to the families of essential workers."

Providing child care to the families of essential workers is critical to flattening the curve of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. Governor Evers created the Child Care for Essential Workers Taskforce to address this need. Led by DCF, the taskforce worked with the Early Childhood Association (WECA) and Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) to connect essential workforce families in need of child care with locally available child care resources. To date, the taskforce has accomplished the following items.

Completed an initial assessment of supply and demand

In partnership with the Wisconsin Hospitals Association, DCF surveyed health providers to identify how many staff needed child care. Additionally, DCF surveyed early childhood providers and individual educators to identify how many centers would remain open and whether individual educators would be willing to continue providing child care.

Made the collection of data easier and faster

DCF improved existing systems and applications to automate its surveys. Child care providers can now update their status as well as how many child care slots they have available by entering their information through the [Provider Portal](#). Essential workforce families can submit their child care requests through [Child Care Finder](#). Additionally, families can proactively search for available child care using DCF’s new

[Child Care Map](#) which is updated daily. Early childhood educators can [submit their availability](#) to serve families in center-based care, in the home of essential families, or at a new emergency child care center.

Provided guidance to keep children and providers safe

In coordination with the Department of Health Services (DHS), DCF continues to provide ongoing [guidance to child care providers](#), including templates and suggested policies and procedures to implement during the public health crisis.

Began matching essential workforce families with local child care

DCF, WECA, and local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are matching families with child care using current demand and supply data. Through texting services, emails, and phone calls we are identifying the urgency of requests and to updating families with information on their requests. All partners are working to fill these matches as quickly as possible - families are also encouraged to use the Child Care Map.

Supported needs of emergency child care centers

DCF continues to work with health care providers, child care centers and directors, community organizations like YMCAs, schools, and other partners to explore the need for emergency child care centers. New centers will be opened based on regional demand. DCF provided [guidance and resources for organizations interested in opening child care centers](#).

For more information, visit the [Child Care section of the DCF COVID-19 website](#). This press release is available via Adobe pdf file.

(END)

###