

May 7, 2021

Dear Child Care Provider:

In honor of **Child Care Provider Appreciation Day** on May 7, 2021, we want to thank you for the care you provide children and families in Iowa as part of your child care business.

Each year, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) takes this time to recognize the importance of the work that you do with Iowa's youngest citizens. We have been through a lot together and this year, as we continue to work through the COVID-19 pandemic, that is no different.

First and foremost, we must thank all of you for the extra steps you have taken to assure the health and safety of the children in your care. Thank you for keeping your doors open, re-opening your doors in periods of uncertainty, and putting trust in the Department to get you the information and support that you need to serve Iowa's families safely. As always, we work to keep our guidance current with recommendations through our collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health and the CDC. https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/DHS_ChildCareGuidance.pdf?032120201912

The Department is consistently focused on providing you with the most up-to-date information and support while remaining accountable to the use of federal funding opportunities and assuring the health and safety of Iowa's children and youth.

As many of you are aware, the Department has implemented a number of strategies to support child care programs and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can always review our current funding opportunities and supports at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/childcare/funding-opportunities>, such as those listed below:

- Unlimited absent days for CCA children not attending child care program
- Monthly stipends for all licensed and regulated child care programs
- Co-Pay Reimbursements to reduce burden on low income Iowa families

We are excited to report that through continued federal funding support, the Department is able to support the Governor's Initiative to invest in Iowa's child care through our "Investing in Iowa's Child Care" funding program that supports start up and expansion of child care programs. We are also supporting our existing infrastructure of child care programs through funding to support urgent regulatory needs. For more information, please see https://iowaccrr.org/blog/2021/4/27/news/dhs_announces_investing_in_iowa_child_care_funding/ar/2497/

While COVID-19 has certainly caused a lot of new activities and interest in the child care world, we continue to work on all of our day to day activities, including contracts that support child care providers, regulations, policies to support families on Child Care Assistance (CCA), professional development, etc.

Please be sure to stay up to date on regulatory requirements through review of guidelines, which can be most easily found at:

<https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/DocumentsandForms.aspx>

Thank you for being our partner and for supporting Iowa's children and families, even in the face of the unknown. You have truly shown what it means when they say that, "it takes a village". A community that is supportive, engaged, and who works together, can be quite powerful. Thank you for being a part of our community.

Sincerely,

Julie Allison

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Child Care Bureau Chief

Iowa Department of Human Services