

May 6, 2022

Dear Child Care Provider:

In honor of **Child Care Provider Appreciation Day** on May 6, 2022, 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.

In the spirit of recognizing that COVID-19 has impacted your programs and your operations for over 2 years, we must continue to express our gratitude with your flexibility to serve the children and families in your community during times of uncertainty. We understand that changes in guidance and expectations can be difficult, but you have been up to the challenge, and we can't thank you enough for your ongoing commitment and collaboration.

As many of you are aware, Iowa received funding through federal stimulus packages intended to stabilize and support the child care infrastructure. In addition to the previous work of providing monthly stipends, unlimited absent days, and co-pay relief for families, we have been actively working on many other initiatives. Over the past year, DHS provided strong financial and administrative support in collaboration with Iowa Workforce Development to increase capacity of child care by implementing the Investing in Iowa's Child Care and Child Care Challenge Fund.

On January 10, 2022, Stabilization grant funding was implemented and as 5/3/22, Iowa has approved more than \$86 million in stabilization grants to support over 1300 qualified child care providers with operations costs such as personnel costs, rent/mortgage, and equipment.

The Recruitment and Retention Bonus program was implemented on February 25, 2022, providing \$1000 bonuses to eligible child care providers and employees. Approximately 11,000 applications have been received and 7,000 applications have been processed with funding going out the door each week. For more information see: <https://dhs.iowa.gov/childcare/funding-opportunities>

The Governor has been very supportive in all of the efforts to support child care. In November 2021, Governor Child Care Task Force Recommendations were released: https://governor.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/IGOV_ChildcareTF_Report_112021.pdf

The Department of Human Services Task Force recommendations to support child care have included but are not limited to:

- Increased CCA absent day billing, increasing the allowable absent days from 4 days per month to 6 days per month.
- Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K), a new and improved system of assessing the quality of Iowa's child care programming was developed over a multi-year process. On April 1, 2022, DHS was thrilled to roll out the highly anticipated program that has a substantially enhanced bonus structure. For more information. please see: <https://iowaccrr.org/providers/iq4k/>.
- Shared Service Project in collaboration with Early Childhood Iowa. More information can be found at: [April monthly project update](#).

There has been a great deal of hard work by you, our valued child care providers and the Department is grateful that we have continued to work with you in partnership. Thank you so much for your ongoing support of children and families in your community.

Sincerely,

Julie Allison
Child Care Bureau Chief
Iowa Department of Human Services