

May 12, 2023

Dear Child Care Provider:

In honor of **Child Care Provider Appreciation Day** on May 12, 2023, we want to thank you for the care you provide children and families in Iowa.

While early care and education can be a very rewarding career, we know it can also be a challenging one. We see how you tailor your programs to meet the needs of children through networking with your peers and we appreciate your efforts in finding new ways to recruit staff. In an effort to support you, we made funding and technology opportunities available.

Through federal stimulus funding, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been able to provide a variety of supports to our child care providers. In 2022, Iowa offered the Child Care Stabilization Program, giving \$219 million dollars to eligible child development homes and licensed child care centers. In addition, HHS was able to invest \$46 million into recruitment and retention bonuses for child care providers.

We recognize stimulus funding supported short-term efforts and see the ongoing need for child care assistance. HHS recently implemented an ongoing increase to Child Care Assistance (CCA) reimbursement rates for providers and increased eligibility for low-income families. We will be completing a new Market Rate Survey in the coming months, and strongly encourage you to participate as this helps drive reimbursement rates.

From a 2021 survey, we learned both child development homes and child care centers spend a large amount of time on administrative-related tasks. To reduce this burden and keep up with technology demands, two Child Care Management System Software (CCMS) vendors, brightwheel and Playground, were selected to provide free services for a year. These vendors will reduce duplication by submitting data to Iowa's CCA data system, KinderTrack (KT).

We want to remind you of funding available for Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) programs. Eligible participants will be reimbursed \$20 for every hour designated program staff spend on IQ4K-mandated training.

We value your continued partnership and everything you do to support the children and families in your communities.

Sincerely,

Julie Allison
Bureau Chief
Child Care