

**Testimony  
Child Care Study  
Economic Impact Interim Committee  
Senator Dave Oehlke, Chairman  
September 29, 2014**

Chairman Oehlke, and members of the Economic Impact Committee, I am Jennifer Barry, the Early Childhood Services Administrator with the North Dakota Department of Human Services (Department). I am here today to give you an updated report on child care capacity and to share with you some of the Department's efforts to recruit licensed child care providers in response to the high child care demand we are seeing across the state.

The [two capacity snapshots](#) I have attached show some positive movement. From July 2013 to July 2014, 2,600 new licensed child care slots were added in the state, and capacity has increased every month after July 2013 except March 2014. In most counties, the extent that licensed child care meets the potential demand has increased from July 2013 to July 2014. While this information is encouraging, there are still 30 counties in which the licensed capacity meets less than 30 percent of the demand for child care. We also know that while the number of licensed slots has increased, that many programs are not able to operate at full capacity because of the operator's inability to hire and maintain staff to meet ratio requirements. This is why the Department is committed to continued recruitment efforts with multiple partners.

As part of our contract with Child Care Aware of N.D., the Department is able to offer free training, one-on-one consultation, and financial incentives for new child care applicants. The incentives range from \$800-\$1,200 for home providers to up to \$15,000 for child care facilities. The

financial incentives may be used to purchase necessary materials and equipment such as shelving, toys and other learning materials, fire safety equipment, and child-sized furniture. With the current biennium's funding, Child Care Aware is working with 136 home providers, of which 116 have already obtained licensing, and 30 child care facility operators, of which 15 have obtained licensing.

The Department and the Department of Commerce have worked collaboratively on a [brochure](#), which I have handed out. The brochure will be used by the various agencies included in the brochure as a way of referring potential child care providers to all of the resources that are available to them.

Finally, I'm pleased to present, as much as time allows, the new licensed home child care provider recruitment video that the Department has partnered with the Department of Commerce to develop. We plan to make the video available to the public on multiple websites, in the county social service licensing offices, in early childhood higher education programs, at job fairs, parenting groups, local economic development agencies, and through any other appropriate venue.

The Department is hopeful that these current efforts will result in the recruitment of new quality child care programs that are able to access multiple resources and be successful in serving their community needs.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.