

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Human Services announces changes to child care rules to enhance health and safety standards

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services will begin implementing new early childhood services requirements on April 1 to enhance health and safety standards for licensed and regulated child care providers in the state. The changes will affect about 1,600 licensed center-based, preschool, school-aged, family, group and self-declared child care providers.

“The new rules are a combination of federal and state requirements that are important to the health, safety and well-being of children in regulated child care,” said Amy Olsen, the department’s early childhood services administrator.

The most significant enhancements pertain to medical safety. All licensed and self-declared child care providers and their staff members must be certified in first aid, infant and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillators (AED). In the past, only one staff member had to be certified in these areas. Individuals must complete an annual department-approved training, either in person or online, and pass a skills test with an instructor.

Olsen said there might be some providers concerned about the extra cost and time it will take for staff to complete the training, but in the end, parents can feel comfortable knowing this extra training will help ensure their child’s safety if there is a medical emergency.

Other changes require Sudden Infant Death Syndrome prevention training before staff members can care for an infant unsupervised, and providers must receive alternative infant feeding instructions in writing from a child’s parents or medical provider.

In addition, providers will have the flexibility to choose an emergency backup person that can fill in if they need to be away from their business for a day. Self-declared providers will be required to create an emergency and disaster plan, and complete monthly fire and emergency evacuation drills. Other health and safety enhancements will also take effect on April 1.

Olsen said the department regularly updates early childhood services rules to comply with federal and state law changes. The department follows a statutory process when proposing new rules that includes notification to providers, public notification in official county newspapers, and conducting a public meeting to gather public comments. The new rules were presented to lawmakers during the interim Administrative Rules Committee meeting on March 13, 2018.

The department’s early childhood services program sent letters to all licensed and regulated child care providers who will be affected by these changes.

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Parents seeking licensed child care can contact Child Care Aware of North Dakota toll-free at 800-997-8515 or go online to <http://ndchildcare.org/> for information on current openings and licensed child care providers and programs. They also offer information for parents on how to choose a child care provider and other helpful resources.

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