

Family Survey to Study Impact of COVID-19 on Child Care

BISMARCK, ND – The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of child care as a vital component in North Dakota's infrastructure.

With that in mind, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, in partnership with Child Care Aware of North Dakota, is launching a child care survey to assess the impact that COVID-19 has had on access and use of child care since March and to help better understand what working families may need going forward.

The survey will provide lawmakers and agency officials with important data as they consider issues related to child care and the needs of young families.

Who should take the survey?

All North Dakota families whose household includes children ranging in age from newborn to 12 are encouraged to participate. The survey ends Sunday, Nov. 1, 2020.

Families can access the short 10-minute online survey at www.ndchildcare.org. Families unable to complete the survey online can participate by calling 800-997-8515 and pressing 1 to speak to a Child Care Data and Referral Specialist.

Department Executive Director Chris Jones urged families of young children to participate. "Access to high quality early childhood services strengthens our communities, our workforce and our families," he said. "As businesses and schools strive to continue providing goods and services and a quality education to children during this pandemic, agencies are hearing anecdotally that many families continue to face child care challenges. We want to collect more information directly from families on this important topic."

The department is responsible for child care licensing, quality and resource and referral. During the pandemic, the state has provided modified operating practices for child care providers licensed or certified by the state to help them operate as safely as possible.

With support from Gov. Burgum, the state's Emergency Commission and state lawmakers, the department has also invested over \$40 million to date into the Child Care Emergency Operating Grant program to sustain access to child care services. The grants have helped over 850 child care providers, large and small, navigate the ups and downs of attendance, added health and safety practices and staffing challenges.

For questions about taking the survey, contact Child Care Aware at survey@ndchildcare.org.

Child Care Aware of North Dakota works with all parts of the child care delivery system in North Dakota. This includes resources, technical assistance and professional development to licensed home- and facility-based child care providers and those that want to start a child

care business. Child Care Aware helps families evaluate care options, learn about child care licensing and develop an understanding of child care services. Communities and employers can also work with Child Care Aware to assess child care needs and implement strategies to recruit and retain child care for their residents and employees.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

N.D. Department of Human Services

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933

hsteffl@nd.gov

Child Care Aware of North Dakota

Kay Larson | 701-530-2504

KayL@ssnd.org