

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 5, 2021

North Dakota celebrates Child Care Provider Appreciation Day on May 7

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services places a priority on quality early childhood experiences to help children realize their potential. The department is joining Gov. Doug Burgum, parents and partner agencies in honoring child care providers on Friday, May 7, which Burgum has proclaimed as [Child Care Provider Appreciation Day](#) in North Dakota.

An estimated 71% of North Dakota parents of children ages five and younger are in the workforce, which means about 46,300 young children may need child care.

“Child care providers were ‘essential’ to working parents long before this pandemic, and they remain a vital part of our state’s economic and workforce development infrastructure. They truly deserve our gratitude and appreciation,” said department Executive Director Chris Jones.

There are approximately 1,400 licensed and regulated facility and home-based child care programs in North Dakota. Together they employ about 6,000 early childhood professionals.

Kay Larson of Child Care Aware of North Dakota praised these professionals for their dedication to children and families.

“Licensed, regulated and trained early childhood professionals provide critical enrichment opportunities and nurture the development of children from all backgrounds. This is important work, which may involve working long hours, often for modest pay, and with few employee benefits,” Larson said.

During the pandemic, North Dakota recognized the hardships experienced by providers. Child care program enrollment and income fluctuated, and providers faced other operational challenges as they worked to comply with changing health and safety guidance and absorbed increased costs for enhanced infection control practices and other operational changes.

With support from Burgum and lawmakers, the department distributed \$48.8 million in federally funded Child Care Emergency Operating Grants. This much-needed relief helped sustain the state’s child care infrastructure.

As North Dakota transitions to the recovery phase of the pandemic, the state continues to provide operating guidance to providers, to waive co-pays for families participating in the Child Care Assistance Program, and to issue CCAP payments to providers at the maximum state rate.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933
hsteffl@nd.gov

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892
lklawrence@nd.gov