

Legislative Task Force on Access to Affordable Child Care: Key Issues for the Department of Human Services

Regulatory Infrastructure

The State of Minnesota licenses more than 10,500 child care providers across the state with the capacity to provide licensed care for more than 225,000 children. The Department, in partnership with counties, licenses child care providers to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children in care. To assist the Task Force with its work, the Department will provide an overview of the existing licensing and background study standards that apply to licensed child care in Minnesota and explain how the Department works with providers and counties to ensure that licensed child care is healthy and safe.

Cost & Affordability

Child care costs are a significant part of the budget of many families. Many costs are paid directly by families. In some cases, public funding pays some or all of a family's child care costs. The primary program at the Department of Human Services to help families pay for child care is the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The program helps families with low-incomes pay for child care so that parents may pursue employment or education leading to employment, and that children are well cared for and prepared to enter school ready to learn. The Child Care Assistance Program includes the MFIP/TY Child Care Assistance Program (for families currently or recently receiving cash assistance) and the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance Program for other families with low-incomes. The Child Care Assistance Program, which is administered through counties, serves approximately 30,000 children in approximately 15,000 families in an average month. The Department will provide the task force with information about current policies such as eligibility requirements and maximum rates paid to providers.

Workforce

The Department supports child care quality and workforce development through a series of grant contracts that focus on professional development and the implementation of Parent Aware, Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System for early childhood programs. The Department will provide the Task Force with information about the availability and cost of training for providers, other professional development supports including information on the Career Lattice and the Knowledge and Competency Framework, and an overview of Parent Aware.

Child Care and Development Block Grant Changes

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 made significant changes to health and safety standards that apply to licensed child care providers and child care providers that receive child care assistance payments. The Act also made significant changes to eligibility and other policies in the Child Care Assistance Program. Finally, the Act outlined requirements for increased transparency to the public about child care choices. Throughout its presentations, the Department will highlight changes needed to bring Minnesota into compliance with the requirements of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014.