

## **For Immediate Release**

March 22, 2020

### **Guidance for Supporting Families in Accessing Healthy and Safe Child Care During the COVID-19 Outbreak**

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is recommending continuity of operations for licensed child care facilities at this time (centers, preschools, day care homes and school age programs). Child care facilities may accept new enrollees in accordance with the terms of their license. However, depending on the unique and changing situations of each community, local public health officers may implement more restrictive guidance and provisions for child care facilities, up to and including closure within their authority and jurisdiction.

Child care providers should direct all questions to their local child care surveyor. Surveyors will coordinate efforts and communication with local public health officials to provide guidance based on the rapidly changing situation at the community level.

“We know this is a stressful time, and especially for families who rely on child care and those whose work circumstances are changing,” Governor Laura Kelly said. “There are a number of child care resources available to help you meet the needs of your family. We’re all in this together and will help families access the support they need.”

KDHE continues to accept and process applications for new child care facilities. Individuals interested in becoming a licensed provider are encouraged to contact their local licensing surveyor. Visit the [KDHE Child Care Licensing](#) website and click on *Local County Contacts* to find the surveyor in your area.

“Child care professionals provide a critical service in our state,” Dr. Lee Norman, KDHE Secretary, said. “They allow parents who are our doctors, nurses, police officers, firefighters and more to respond to this pandemic. Child care facilities have very strict regulations regarding the number of children in the facility as well as health and safety guidelines that must continue to be met.”

For [FAQs](#) and [guidance](#) regarding child care operations during the pandemic, please visit the [KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center](#) website.

### **Options for families in need of child care**

Many working families are facing challenges related to accessing healthy and safe child care during this time. We encourage everyone to assist with supporting families and communities as they work to develop creative solutions to meet the needs of working families.

[Child Care Aware of Kansas](#) provides assistance to families searching for licensed child care. They can be reached toll free at 877.678.2548.

KDHE has an [online information system](#) that serves as a tool to support families in making informed child care choices and can be used to review compliance history of a current licensed provider. The online tool is an important step to verifying that a facility is licensed and provides compliance history for parents and guardians.

Families that need flexible options or irregular care might consider having someone come into the home. Relatives, older siblings, and friends or neighbors currently not working due to COVID-19 related business closures might be available to help.

Other options for families that need limited care include informal care arranged between friends/neighbors on an irregular basis or someone to provide care in their own home for no more than two children for not more than 20 hours week. None of these options require a license from KDHE.

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