

Connecting Essential Workforce Families to Child Care



The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is excited to launch two new tools to help connect essential workforce families to local, safe child care. Healthcare workers and essential employees are now able to submit a [request for care](#) through the department's updated Child Care Finder or proactively view up-to-date availability across the state using the department's new [child care map](#).

Providing child care to the essential workforce is critical to flattening the curve of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. To meet this need, Governor Evers created the Child Care for Essential Workers Taskforce. Led by DCF, the taskforce worked with the Early Childhood Association (WECA) and Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) to connect essential workforce families in need of child care with locally available child care resources. To date, the taskforce has accomplished:

An initial assessment of supply and demand

In partnership with the Wisconsin Hospitals Association, DCF surveyed health providers to identify how many staff needed child care. Additionally, DCF surveyed early childhood providers and individual educators to identify how many centers would remain open and whether individual educators would be willing to continue providing child care.

Developed an application to automate the collection of supply and demand information

DCF launched a rapid acceleration of IT projects to begin automating this system.

- Child care providers can now update their status (open/closed) as well as how many child care slots they have available by updating their page in [Provider Portal](#)
- Essential workforce families can submit their child care requests through [Child Care Finder](#). Additionally, they can proactively search for available child care using DCF's new [Child Care Map](#) which is updated daily.
- Early childhood educators can [submit their availability](#) to serve families in center-based care, in an essential families' home, or at a new emergency child care center.

Published guidance to promote the health and well-being of children and the early childhood workforce

In coordination with the Department of Health Services (DHS), DCF has provided ongoing [guidance to child care providers](#), including templates and suggested policies/procedures to implement during COVID-19.

Matching essential workforce families with local child care

DCF, WECA, and local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are utilizing these newly updated applications to "match" families with child care. Additionally, texting services, emails, and phone calls are being utilized to identify the urgency of requests and to update families with information on their requests. This process is ongoing, and families will likely experience delays in being matched with available care.

Opening emergency child care centers

DCF is working with health care providers, child care centers, community organizations like YMCAs, schools, and other partners to open emergency child care centers for essential workforce families. New centers will be opened as demand for child care increases. DCF has provided [guidance and resources](#) for organizations interested in opening child care centers.

For any questions regarding this effort, please contact DCFMBCOVID19@wisconsin.gov.



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families