



Early Childhood Connector | Spring 2024

Your quarterly newsletter on child care and early education.

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Welcome to the Early Childhood Connector

Thank you for signing up for the Early Childhood Connector Newsletter! The Minnesota Children’s Cabinet and the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services created this newsletter to streamline communications to child care providers and early educators in Minnesota. Child care providers and early educators can expect a quarterly newsletter and some additional email updates. Please fill out the survey linked at the bottom of this newsletter to let us know what you think of the content and how we can improve our communications.

Early Childhood Connector Calls

On a quarterly basis, the state is hosting Connector Calls with child care providers and early educators to answer questions related to legislation, licensing, programs, grants and more. The purpose of the call is to answer clarifying questions that providers may have. Calls are hosted online on WebEx, [recorded, and available on the Early Childhood Connector webpage](#).

Educators of all types are invited to these calls. We welcome questions from licensed programs, certified centers, exempt programs, legally nonlicensed providers, Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers, and individuals interested in starting a child care business.

Join us at the next Early Childhood Connector Call

- **Next call date:** Tuesday, July 16, 2024, 7-8 p.m.
- **Where:** Hosted virtually on WebEx
- **Meeting link:**
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=m1a73d1de890a96661896f516c52e1e29>
- **Purpose:** For the state to answer clarifying questions for child care providers and early educators. The state will not address individual grievances during this time.
- Please [submit your questions here](#). Questions must be submitted before the event; we will not answer live questions. We will do our best to answer all questions as time allows. Please submit your questions two weeks before the call.

Please save the date and meeting link on your calendar; the state will not send a meeting invite. The call will be recorded and temporarily available to folks who cannot attend.

[Learn more about Early Childhood Connector Calls, including upcoming dates, and submit your questions here.](#)

We look forward to seeing you at the next call!

New resources to support the early childhood workforce

[Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce: Making a Difference in the Early Years](#) is a document designed to support the field of early care and education. It includes career pathways, professional development opportunities, degree programs, funding resources, stories and quotes from professionals, and more. This project was created through Minnesota's Preschool Development Grant, in partnership between the Departments of Education, Human Services, Health and the Children's Cabinet.

Four corresponding videos were also created. Click the following links to hear from early childhood professionals across Minnesota as they share what inspires them to work with young children and families, why they think the workforce is important, why they love their jobs, and more. English and Spanish subtitles are available for all videos.

- [Stories from the Field: A Tribal Provider and an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant](#)
- [Stories from the Field: An Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and an Early Head Start Teacher](#)
- [Stories from the Field: A Family Child Care Provider](#)
- [Stories from the Field: A Center-Based Child Care Teacher and a Parent Aware Coach](#)

Additionally, translated versions of Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals and the corresponding Companion Guides are **now available for download in Hmong, Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese**. The Knowledge and Competency Framework describes what early childhood professionals working with young children should know and be able to do. Versions are available for those working with infants and toddlers, family child care providers, and preschool-age children in center and school programs. Visit the [Knowledge and Competency Framework webpage](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page for the download links.

New resource to connect to licensing information

It can be difficult to navigate and understand the differences in licensed child care programs. Rules that apply to licensed centers may not apply to family child care programs, and it can be difficult to understand the differences between certified and licensed centers.

In an effort to help providers find the right information about their program, the Licensing Division created a new resource for certified programs and licensed centers and family child care programs. The [new chart](#) provides websites, contact information, email lists and more that are categorized by a program's license type.

Providers play a critical role in shaping the experiences and well-being of the children throughout Minnesota. The state recognizes the challenges and responsibilities providers face daily, including navigating different types of licenses and information. We hope the chart helps connect providers to the right resources.

Wading pools, splash pads and other water toys

Spring has sprung and summer is just around the corner. Child care licensors often get the question: Can I use a wading pool, splash pad or other water toy in my child care program and do I need to have a parent/guardian sign the permission slip designated for wading pools?

MN Statutes, section 144.1222 defines a wading pool as a private residential pool, not as a public pool for purposes of public swimming pool regulations, as long as a portable wading pool has a maximum depth of 24 inches and can be manually emptied and moved. There are many new products on the market that may not specifically be called out as a “wading pool” but would meet the definition of a wading pool as they hold up to 24 inches of water and can be manually emptied. This includes splash pads that have a basin that collects standing water. In these situations, we would expect that parents be provided the MDH notice and sign a permission slip as required in MN Statutes, section 245A.14 subd. 10. Knowing that products are ever changing, if you have a question about whether or not your product would fit under the above definition, please reach out to your licensor.

If a provider chooses to use water in other ways such as a bucket of water for a car wash or a water table, these items would not typically fall under the definition of a wading pool. While they hold a small amount of water, they are not products that would allow a child to sit or swim in. Providers are expected to use appropriate supervision when using materials or products that would require adult supervision.

CMV awareness starts here

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus. People who work in child care have a higher risk of getting a CMV infection as the virus is especially common in toddlers and young children who attend child care.

Anyone at any age can get CMV and it doesn’t usually cause symptoms in healthy people, but it poses a risk for pregnant people who can unknowingly transmit CMV to their growing fetus. When a baby is born with CMV, the infection is called congenital CMV. One in 5 babies with congenital CMV will be born with or develop lifelong health concerns or disabilities. In 2023, Minnesota became the first state to test all babies for congenital CMV as part of the newborn screening program.

Samantha, a Minnesota licensed family child care provider with over four years of experience, had never heard of congenital CMV until her daughter was diagnosed through newborn screening.

“I truly believe that [child care] providers should know the complications that can arise with this virus and how severe it can be – not only right now but in [the] years ahead! The child may not show any symptoms at birth, but they could develop [symptoms] later and watching for them early on will allow for early intervention,” Samantha stated.

CMV is passed from person to person by direct contact with bodily fluids, like urine and saliva. Children can transmit the virus to others, including parents and caregivers, even if they don’t seem sick. Children with congenital CMV should not be excluded from attending child care. Providers should take measures to help prevent the spread of the virus by washing hands often, especially after wiping a child’s nose or mouth and

changing diapers and properly disinfecting toys and other surfaces that may have a child's urine or saliva on them. Providers should also support families of children who have congenital CMV.

Read the Minnesota Department of Health's [CMV and Congenital CMV fact sheet for child care providers](#) to learn more.

Resources for families, children and providers

- [Additional resources for families, providers and communities](#)
- [Help Me Connect](#)
- [Office of the Ombuds for Family Child Care Providers](#)

Have questions?

Email ccs.communications.DHS@state.mn.us with questions.

Have feedback?

Let us know your thoughts on this newsletter [by taking a short survey](#). Your answers will help the state improve its communications with child care providers and early educators.