



Early Childhood Connector | Winter 2025

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, Human Services, and Children, Youth, and Families 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, April 15, 2025, 7-8 p.m.
- **Where:** Hosted virtually on WebEx
- **Meeting link:**
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=m62fd4e54008f5f9df93e4b04d3deff24>
- **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!

Minnesota awarded a new Preschool Development Grant

Minnesota has been awarded a \$24 million grant from the federal government, the next round of the [Preschool Development Grant \(PDG\)](#). The grant provides \$8 million annually through September 2027 and will continue the state's collaborative work to support kids and families. The state's PDG team is excited for the opportunities this grant will give Minnesota!

Here's a snapshot of what's next for PDG in MN:

- Investing in the [MN StoryCollective](#), a storytelling project that works with community partners to collect stories. The initiative then brings together folks from across Minnesota to make sense of what's being shared and to identify opportunities to act.
- Expanding family engagement initiatives and working towards a statewide parent advisory council.
- Continuing mixed delivery efforts to coordinate services and resources across different early care and education program types.
- Continuing work on wage scales and workforce compensation.
- Completing the cultural adaptation of the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® for American Indian populations in Minnesota.
- Updating data stories through the [Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System](#).
- Increasing the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health workforce.

Past grant activities include launching [Help Me Connect](#), supporting [Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grants](#), and supporting the early childhood workforce, including [outdoor learning](#), [transitions to kindergarten](#), and [Early Childhood Screening](#). View the [full application](#) on the [PDG webpage](#).

Don't miss out on the Child Tax Credit

You and the families you serve may qualify for a Child Tax Credit of \$1,750 per qualifying child. This is a refundable credit, meaning you can receive a refund even if you do not owe tax.

What is the Child Tax Credit?

The [Child Tax Credit](#) is available to Minnesotans who have children under age 18. By filing a Minnesota tax return, you may qualify for \$1,750 per qualifying child with no limit on the number of children. The credit gradually phases out if your income is over \$31,090 (\$36,880 for Married Filing Jointly).

How do I claim the Child Tax Credit?

Complete [Schedule M1DQC, Dependents and Qualifying Children](#), to determine who is a qualifying child for the Child Tax Credit. Then, complete [Schedule M1CWFC, Minnesota Child and Working Family Credits](#), to determine your credit amount.

Advance payments of the Child Tax Credit

Beginning with tax year 2024, you can choose to receive part of your Child Tax Credit for the next year in three advance payments before you file your next income tax return. Minnesota is the first state in the nation to offer [this option for Child Tax Credit recipients](#).

Free tax preparation

You may also qualify for free tax return preparation. Go to the [Minnesota Department of Revenue website](#) and enter free tax preparation into the search box to find free tax preparation services near you.

Child care licensing and certification transition to DCYF

This summer, child care licensing and certifications will move from the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Existing licensing and certification standards currently found in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 245A and chapter 245H, will move to new Minnesota Statutes chapters 142B (licensing) and 142C (certification). Requirements found in Minnesota Rules will not move. The new statute locations will be effective after the transfer to DCYF (anticipated June 2025). The licensing and certification requirements remain the same, only the location of where to find them is changing. To see how this will impact statutes, review the [licensing crosswalk](#) and [certification crosswalk](#) documents. These documents outline where requirements are currently found and where they will be found in the new chapters of statute.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find more information about the transition?

- Visit the DCYF [transition website](#).

Will I still use the Provider Hub?

- Yes, anyone currently using the Provider Hub will continue to use it after licensing transfers to DCYF.

Will the family child care and child care center websites change? Where should I go for current information?

- The licensed and certified child care center and family child care DHS webpages will continue to be resources for providers. The webpages will transition in a phased approach.

How will I be able to reach a licensor during or after the transition?

- Licensed or certified child care centers can continue to contact their licensor or the licensor on call.
- Family child care providers can continue to contact their county licensor.

More information will be shared with providers about the transition in the coming months.

The Provider and Agency Hub

The Provider and Agency Hub for licensing is available for licensed child care centers, certified child care centers, and state of Minnesota licensors. Continued improvements to the system based on existing user feedback, along with additional functionality, has been the priority over the last year. The launch for family child care and county licensors is anticipated to begin in summer 2025. Additionally, the licensing information lookup (LIL) website and personnel redesign are scheduled for release in summer 2025. For those involved in the next phased launch, more details will be shared directly in the coming months. Stay tuned for updates [on this webpage](#).

Child Care Regulation Modernization update

The Child Care Regulation Modernization project team would like to thank everyone who reviewed and provided feedback on the first draft of the revised child care licensing standards released in April 2024. Feedback collected on each draft during the summer of 2024 is summarized in key theme reports for [family child care](#) and [child care centers](#). In November 2024, DHS published and distributed the reports, which can be found on the [project website](#) under the Get Involved and the Resources tabs.

Please contact the project team at ceregmodernization.dhs@state.mn.us with any questions.

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.