



Early Childhood Connector | July 2025

Your quarterly newsletter on child care and early education.

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Join us for the next Connector Call

Have a question about a program or policy? Early educators can submit questions to the state to be answered during Early Childhood Connector Calls. Calls happen quarterly and are hosted online on WebEx. If you can't attend the call, it is recorded, and questions and answers are available in document format too. Spanish, Hmong and Somali translations are available. Learn more on the [Early Childhood Connector website](#).

- **Next call date:** Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2025, 7-8 p.m.
- **Meeting link:**
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=m8bec87608d692be6d4924585b35ec607>
- **[Submit your questions here](#)**. Questions are due two weeks before the call.

New wage scale and other early learning reports

Early educator wage scales are part of a nationwide strategy to address low compensation in the early care and education field. The new legislative report, [Child Care and Early Education Professional Wage Scale and Comparable Competencies](#), includes a model wage scale for early educators in Minnesota. It also recommends early educator compensation equivalent to K-12 educators with similar credentials and experience. Other recommendations include a base wage set to the individual cost of living and considering expertise attained through training and experience in addition to formal education. For more information on this report or on using the wage scale as a resource, contact Jessica Richards at jessica.richards@state.mn.us.

The state recently published other reports related to child care and early education, including:

- [Barely Getting By and Never Getting Ahead: Informing the Need for Pay Equity Through Minnesota's Early Care and Education Workforce Pay Equity Pilot](#) (Dec. 2024)
- [Child Care Assistance and Cost-Based Rate Setting](#) (Jan. 2025)
- [Legislative Memo: Number of Grants Awarded to REETAIN Recipients and Outcomes](#) (Dec. 2024)
- [Legislative Report: Great Start Compensation Support Payment Program](#) (Jan. 2025)
- [Legislative Report: Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System: Evaluation and One-Star Rating](#) (Dec. 2024)

Updated Early Childhood Indicators of Progress coming soon

The Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) serve as Minnesota's Early Learning Standards, outlining shared expectations for what young children (ages 0 to 5) can know and do as they grow.

The update of the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress ensures they remain relevant, research-based and inclusive for all Minnesota children. The key goals of the process include:

- Incorporating the latest research on child development to reflect current best practices

- Enhancing inclusivity by updating standards to better represent the diversity of Minnesota’s evolving communities, including cultural and linguistic backgrounds and varying developmental abilities
- Aligning with Minnesota State Kindergarten Standards to create a seamless transition from early childhood education to kindergarten

Finalized documents will be published on the Minnesota Department of Education and Department of Children, Youth, and Families websites in July. [Learn more about the revision process.](#)

New NAEYC Accreditation tiers and Parent Aware Ratings

Prior to May 2025, NAEYC only offered one tier of accreditation. NAEYC now offers three tiers: recognition, accreditation, and accreditation plus. Moving forward, NAEYC-accredited programs will need to choose which accreditation tier they wish to pursue.

Effective July 1, 2025, programs that choose the accreditation and the accreditation plus NAEYC tiers will be eligible to use the Parent Aware Accelerated Rating Pathway. In addition, these tiers will also count for the Child Care Assistance Program’s 15 percent higher tier of reimbursement for higher quality programs. This change provides flexibility in the definition of being “accredited,” to account for new options for validating accreditation.

Legislative session 2025 – child care licensing information

The regular 2025 legislative session ended on May 19, 2025, followed by a special session in June to complete legislative work. Recent communications were sent to family child care providers and licensed child care centers with a brief overview of licensing changes. A detailed implementation plan for these programs will be developed later. Certified child care centers have already received a detailed implementation plan outlining the changes affecting their programs.

To view these communications and sign up for updates, visit the webpages for [licensed family child care](#), [licensed child care centers](#), and [certified child care centers](#).

Help Me Connect is a top spot for finding a doula in Minnesota

One year after launching a list of doulas, Minnesota’s [Help Me Connect](#) website has grown to one of the largest lists of doulas in the state with extensive search features that make it easier than ever to find a doula.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) encourages families to find a doula through the [Help Me Connect](#) website and is sending a request to all doulas to sign up for the free service.

The Help Me Connect site includes a mapping function for finding doulas and more than 30 filter options, such as for home birth services, cultural or religious practices, and payment options.

Doulas provide physical, emotional and nonmedical support for parents before, during and after the birth of a baby. Having a doula with a shared background, lived experiences, or cultural practices can have positive impacts on the birthing experience.

Research shows that the support of a doula can provide benefits, such as the following:

- Reducing the length of labor.
- Reducing the likelihood of cesarean (C-section) birth.
- Providing nonmedical pain relief techniques.
- Reducing stress and anxiety.
- Supporting the partner/spouse.
- Babies often born with better heart rates and breathing.

The support of a doula is especially important for communities facing disparities including Black, American Indian, people of color, low income, LGBTQ, or people living in rural areas. A doula can help families feel safer, more empowered to make decisions about their body and baby, and more connected socially.

Learn more about doulas and birth workers on the MDH website: [Doulas and Birth Workers in Minnesota](#).

Resources for families, children and providers

- [Help Me Connect](#)
- [Office of the Ombuds for Family Child Care Providers](#)

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.

Have questions?

Email rachel.blair-paladino@state.mn.us with questions.