

# Child Care Connections

ND Early Childhood Section and Child Care Assistance Program



Welcome to North Dakota's child care provider newsletter. Each quarterly issue is filled with all the latest updates that you need to know as a child care provider. By [subscribing to Child Care Connections](#) you will be kept informed and learn about resources and opportunities that will help you as you serve North Dakota children, families and communities.

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## ARPA Stabilization Funding Recap

States were required to expend American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization funds by Sept. 30, 2023. North Dakota distributed more than \$46 million of these funds to providers throughout the state. Here is a recap of the allocated funds.

### Child Care Stabilization Grant

**Total amount awarded: \$36 million**

**Impact:** 884 programs received Child Care Stabilization Grant funding to help promote stable and sustained operations for child care in communities across North Dakota. Those 884 programs were caring for 23,232 children, consisting of 8,448 infants and toddlers, 9,898 children from the aged three to five, and 4,886 school aged children.

Child care providers used these funds for personnel costs, rent, utilities, facility maintenance, insurance, personal protective equipment, cleaning, equipment and supplies, and other goods and services.



### Health and Safety Grant

**Total amount awarded: \$6 million**

**Impact:** 818 programs were awarded Health and Safety Grants to help support the health and safety of children.

Providers used these funds for things such as air purification systems, evacuation cribs, easy-to-clean toys, touchless dispensers and garbage cans, portable sinks, cleaning supplies, sanitizing dishwashers, vacuums, cleaning services, disposable products for eating/diapering, flooring upgrades, and repairs to fences, gates, and handrails.

## Technology Improvement Grant

**Total amount awarded: \$2.3 million**

**Impact:** 910 programs were awarded Technology Improvement grants to help purchase computers, printers, internet service, and cyber security software increasing programs' access to professional development and data systems to participate in the workforce registry and apply for child care licensing renewals.



## Inclusive Child Care Grant

**Total amount awarded: \$1 million**

**Impact:** 79 programs were awarded Inclusive Child Care grants. Of the amount distributed, 88% of the funds were used to support an extra pair of hands to help provide care. Programs also used funds for equipment and materials, and environmental modifications to support the care of children with special needs and disabilities.

## Bright & Early ND Quality Improvement Grant

**Total amount awarded: \$242,500**

**Impact:** 95 programs received a Bright & Early ND Quality Improvement Grant for achieving a Step 2, 3, or 4 Bright and Early ND Quality Rating. Providers that receive a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) rating demonstrate their commitment to help all children have high-quality early experiences that help them develop the skills they need to be successful in school, work, and life. Bright & Early ND uses a block system approach which includes four levels, or steps, to quality. Each step focuses on a component of quality care and must be demonstrated by the program before moving to the next step.



## Child Care Start Up Grant

**Total amount awarded: \$650,000**

**Impact:** 95 providers received grant funds to start a new child care program and 15 providers received funding to expand capacity. The Child Care Start Up grant created an additional 2,415 child care slots throughout the state, with 477 of them in 11 underserved counties.

## Career Pathways Incentives

**Impact:** Career Pathway Incentives recognizing Early Childhood Workforce Registry members with verified early childhood credentials or degrees were distributed to 624 Early Childhood Professionals.



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## What's Available Now

### Workforce Retention Stipends

The state will have **Workforce Retention stipends available until early September 2024**. If you are not already participating, you can apply inside your Growing Futures Workforce Registry membership account.



### ND Child Care Initiative

Health and Human Services has been working hard to put the ND Child Care Initiative funded by the 68th Legislative Assembly to work for you. Stay up-to-date on the initiative by visiting its new page that has been added to the HHS website.

**ND Child Care Initiative**

### CCAP Rate Increase for Infants and Toddlers

Perhaps you have already seen an increase in child care assistance for infants and toddlers which brings more income to your program allowing you to decrease a scholarship or loss of revenue if you have been waiving the difference between the state max rate plus parent copay and the actual tuition fee.



### Shared Services Alliance

You might also be aware that our contracted partner Child Care Aware® of North Dakota has announced a new opportunity to join a shared services alliance. The shared services alliance, will help you save time, improve cash flow and revenue, better support and manage your staff, and improve family communication. Contact Child Care Aware today to learn more.

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## Coming Soon

### CCAP Tiered Quality Based Bonuses

Beginning in November 2023, providers that participate in North Dakota's QRIS, Bright & Early ND, and have a Step 2, 3, or 4 Quality Rating are eligible to receive an additional CCAP tiered bonus payment per CCAP child. These funds are separate from the CCAP payment and do not need to be applied to a family's bill.

The first bonus payments will be processed on Dec. 5, 2023, and will include all approved November and December payments. These payments will continue to be

processed once a month, on the fifth of every month, and will be received within three to five days. Payment amounts will be based on the following rates:

- Programs with a current Step 2 Quality Rating will receive an additional 5% of the state max rate for each approved CCAP payment.
- Programs with a current Step 3 Quality Rating will receive an additional 10% of the state max rate for each approved CCAP payment.
- Programs with a current Step 4 Quality Rating will receive an additional 15% of the state max rate for each approved CCAP payment.

Below is an example of a payment:

A child care provider who is licensed as a group, and who has a QRIS rating of 2 on Dec. 1, 2023, has been approved for a full-time CCAP payment for a 12-month-old and a 4-year-old. This provider will be approved for an additional \$83 on Dec. 5.

- Full-time state max rate for a 12-month-old is \$980, the QRIS payment is \$49
- Full-time state max rate for a 4-year-old is \$680, the QRIS payment is \$34

The most updated provider rates can be found [here](#).

*QRIS payments will be rounded down with the rate is not a full dollar amount.*

For programs interested in pursuing a Bright & Early ND Quality Rating, visit Bright & Early ND [imbed link in Bright & Early ND website] to learn more about the process, benefits, and resources available to support participation.

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## Did you know?

### Market Rate Survey

HHS is excited to announce the partnership with North Dakota State University (NDSU) and Child Care Aware® of North Dakota to complete the 2023 Market Rate Survey (MRS). Your participation in this survey allows us to set accurate CCAP payment rates to support sustainable child care in North Dakota. The survey was emailed to all providers this week.



### Survey information and updates

View the report from the 2021 MRS Survey in the [Public Information section of the CCAP webpage](#).

### Prospective CCAP Payments

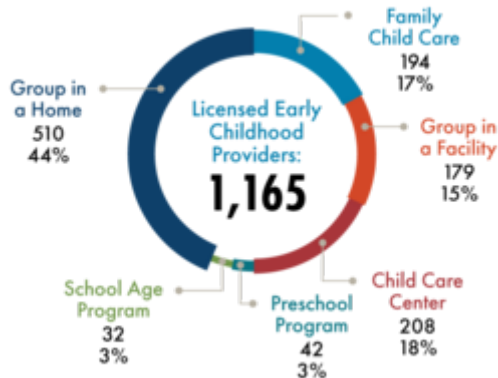
CCAP has modified how payments are issued and is now paying at the beginning of each month. Payments are available on the first of the month if requested by the

25th of the month prior. These prospective payments help providers anticipate their revenue.

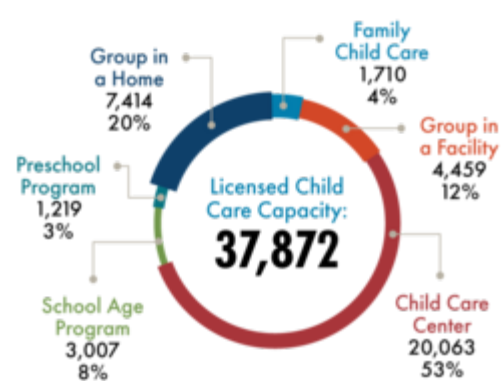
## Quarterly Provider Snapshot

(As of Aug. 1, 2023)

### Number of Licenses by Provider Type



### Number of Licensed Slots by Provider Type



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## Criminal Background Check Unit Update

Currently the Criminal Background Check Unit (CBCU) is in the early stages of building an automated background check system. The benefits of this project are:

- Reducing the amount of forms being returned due to inconsistent and incomplete information.
- The CBCU team will be able to process and complete background checks more efficiently.

A few other projects CBCU is working on include:

- New live scan machines for Cass County were ordered in July and are being installed this month.
- A full-time staff person was hired at South East Human Service Center to better assist individuals complete the finger printing process for Cass County and the surrounding areas.





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