



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Office of the Secretary

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN G. PERRY • Chief Deputy Secretary

Dear Child Care Program Leaders:

I know many of you are weighing the decision to stay open or to close your programs in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and school closures. It is a hard choice: considering the health and safety of the children and families you serve and yourselves and your families; worrying about the impact to families who really need child care to be able to go to work in their critical frontline jobs protecting and caring for others; and considering the impact of your choice on your teachers' and parents' livelihood and your own business sustainability.

The truth is that there is not a right or wrong answer. While we are encouraging families to stay home with their children when they can, so that child care options are available for first responders and essential workers – some families really need you, and our economy needs you. That's not a new fact. It is just in the spotlight now because we are in a crisis we have not seen before.

At the same time, you need to take care of yourselves, your families, and your teachers and their families. We all know that running a child care business most often means operating on very thin margins. We all know that our child care teachers and administrators, some of whom may be themselves be vulnerable to COVID-19, often lack health insurance and rely on a low hourly wage.

At NC DHHS, we are working hard to give you the best guidance we can on how to [stay healthy and protect yourselves and others](#) from COVID-19. We have issued [detailed steps](#) child care programs can take to mitigate spread of the disease and protect your health and safety and those you serve.

For those of you who decide you can and will remain open, as you so often do to serve our families, fuel our state's economy, and protect our state and nation's security – we are immeasurably grateful for your service. For those of you who make the decision that closure is the best option – take care of yourselves and your families, and know we will be here for you with all the help we can offer when you reopen.

We will continue to pursue every opportunity to support child care programs and teachers with good health and safety guidance, financial stability, and flexibilities during this time. Stay tuned for continued updates and guidance, and reach out to your child care consultant or health consultant with questions. They are doing their best to be responsive to the large volume of calls and questions we are receiving.

With thanks and in solidarity,

Susan

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