A Collaborative Resource Guide for Child Care and Afterschool Planning in School Districts for 2020-2021

Introduction

As the start of the 2020-2021 school year fast approaches, we know that for most K-12 students in N.C., the school year will start virtually. Many districts that had planned to provide an option of in-person instruction through a hybrid approach or reduced class sizes moved to virtual instruction for all students for the start of the school year. Some families already committed to attending school virtually for the semester or entire school year if offered by their school district.

K-12 virtual instruction has many implications for families and students. It affects students' social, emotional and academic development. For many families, it also limits parents' ability to work full-time, especially for parents that are essential workers, cannot work from home or afford care for their children while they work inside and outside of the home.

School districts, community organizations and the child care community are working to find care solutions for children so families can return to work without worrying about their children's safety. This document outlines recommendations and guidelines that should be taken into consideration as they plan for the care of K-12 students, especially those ages 6-12 during this period of virtual instruction as they require supervised time at home and cannot stay home alone on virtual school days.

The Collaborative Planning Process

As districts and/or communities are planning for the child care of school age children during virtual instruction, an instrumental first step is to establish a collaborative planning process. The collaborative planning process should include school districts, the districts' after school programs, child care programs and community organizations that offer care for school aged children such as the parks and recreation department, the Boys and Girls Club and/or the YMCA. This collaborative planning process can help build the capacity of school age care in communities and school districts while supporting the licensed child care community important to keeping the economy moving. It can also offer parents different choices and locations for their school-aged children.

Guidance for Child Care and Afterschool Programs

The following checklist and information helps child care and afterschool programs evaluate their ability to serve school age children and support their virtual learning.

- Determine if your child care program is licensed to serve children up to age 12.
    - o If not, programs should contact their DCDEE Child Care Licensing Consultant to request an age served change in their child care permit. The Licensing Consultant will visit the center, collect the required information and issue a change permit for capacity and age range.
    - o Review DCDEE School Age Care Requirements here.
- Once licensed to serve children up to

the age of 12, the next step is to determine the capacity to support school age children and their virtual learning.

- o Staffing - School age teachers in licensed child care programs are required to obtain Basic School Age Care training. The training can be obtained through Southwest Child Development Commission's Self-Paced Basic School Age Care Training (Required for School Age Child Care) that can be found [here](#).
- o Technology - Does your program have the internet capacity and speed to support multiple children logging onto their virtual classrooms? Will your program provide laptops and/or tablets to students that need them for their virtual learning or will students bring their own? What will be the internet safety measures placed to make sure students are safe while on the internet?
- o Space and materials - What space and materials does your center have to support school age children?
- o Ability to serve multiple age groups - Does your staff have the training and experience to serve multiple age groups with virtual learning?

- Connect with the local school district in writing, by email or phone to find out who is leading the effort, holding the meetings and developing the plans for the school year to support student virtual learning and care of students.
  - o Ask to be a part of the planning process. It is important for child care and afterschool programs to be at the table.
  - o Let the superintendent or designee know that your child care or afterschool program has the capacity to help with child care. Explain that your program is licensed to provide child care and you have the capacity and space to adequately support children's educational needs during school hours.
  - o Determine if funding is available to support this work. Are there child care subsidies available, school district support or parent pay? Determine the cost of providing this level of child care services.

- Contact the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency to update licensing, vacancy and services provided information about your child care program. **Child Care Services Association** provides information to families about the availability of child care and

afterschool services in Alamance, Caswell, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Orange, Person, Vance and Wake counties.

Guidance for School Districts

In order to ensure all families' equitable access to child care during the virtual learning period, we suggest school districts follow the steps outlined below:

1. Survey the current before/after school and school age care availability in your district. Start with community partners and also extend to all organizations that have the license, space and capacity to provide school age care. Districts can reach out to their local resource and referral agency (**Child Care Services Association**) to help them attain a list of licensed child care programs in their district and learn more about the current availability of school age and before/after school care.
2. Include child care and afterschool programs in the district's planning process for school age care during virtual learning. Including all programs in the planning process helps ensure that all child care issues are addressed and it also increases the capacity to provide care for students ages 6 to 12 in the school district.
3. Consider what child care the school district can provide at current school buildings. What capacity (space, staff and licensing) does the district have available?
4. Include parents' input in the planning process. Parent surveys can help guide the planning process and ensure that parents' and families' needs are considered and addressed in care plans for the district.
5. Consider supporting families in the transportation of children to and from child care. While safety is the main priority for school districts, the planning process should include a discussion about how to provide transportation to and from care for families that need it the most.

As our struggle with the pandemic continues, it is important to provide students with stable educational environments this school year. The best path forward is for school districts, along with community groups like child care/afterschool programs, to partner to create a system of care and education support for students and families.