



**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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**PRESS RELEASE FOR MORE INFORMATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NH DHHS Announces New Funding Initiatives to Support
Child Care Programs, Staff and Families**

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has announced new initiatives to support the child care sector and the families they serve. These initiatives are part of a multi-faceted plan to stabilize child care in New Hampshire and are part of New Hampshire’s federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act.

“Throughout this pandemic, the state has invested unprecedented levels of financial support into our child care system while implementing much needed licensing flexibilities so they could remain viable and supported through the pandemic,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “These further investments are a key priority for us as we move out of the pandemic and look towards the future – a win for children, families, and child care workers.”

Over the next 30 to 60 days, DHHS will launch several new initiatives, including stabilization grants to child care programs, workforce recruitment and retention efforts, and market rate increases for the NH Child Care Scholarship Program.

“These programs will help ensure that residents who need access to child care in order to return to work will have as many options as possible,” said Christine Santaniello, DHHS Associate Commissioner. “Child care programs have been essential since the first case of COVID-19 in New Hampshire. The sector has received more than \$65 million in pandemic-related funding to remain open and serve families during the pandemic. This newest round of opportunities presents a unique opportunity for child care programs to prepare for the future and build programs that will meet the needs of all families in the decades ahead.”

Throughout the pandemic, DHHS has worked with child care providers, parents, and other stakeholders on an approach that met the needs of both families and programs. These partners will continue to work

towards continued stabilization and capacity building of the child care sector in New Hampshire. The multi-part effort includes:

- Child care stabilization grants open to all licensed and enrolled license-exempt child care providers beginning July 12th. This program will benefit child care programs, support families and address any child care workforce concerns. For more information and technical assistance opportunities (including webinars, FAQs and virtual office hours) please visit the DHHS child care consumer education website at <https://www.nh-connections.org/covid-19/financial-resources/>.
- Child care scholarship market rate increases for families enrolled in the NH Child Care Scholarship Program. The rates will increase as much as 10% for infants through preschoolers and an average of 40% for school age children, effective July 12th. This is the first school age rate increase in over five years. The rate increase will cover a greater percentage of tuition costs for scholarship children, which will lower a family's weekly expense and increase the child care program's tuition income. For information, please visit the COVID-19 section of the NH Connections website at <https://www.nh-connections.org/covid-19/financial-resources/>.
- Child care workforce recruitment and retention efforts to increase the number of child care workers in centers, homes and afterschool programs across the state. To support this effort, DHHS has launched the Child Care Careers Exploration Project. In addition, in partnership with the New Hampshire Early Care and Education Association, an internship program has been established to provide resources and guidance in the effort to recruit child care staff for centers, afterschool settings, and family child care.
- Other new initiatives including a child care virtual job board through the New Hampshire Connections Website; a program to recruit and train participants of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in an early childhood certificate program; a pre-apprenticeship program to provide experience for people interested in a career in child care; and Open Your Home to Child Care, a new initiative to help prospective family child care providers and license-exempt home providers navigate the start-up get needed materials, apply for their license and/or enrollment and attract families to their program.

DHHS will continue to monitor data related to wages, hours worked, staffing levels, vacancies, benefits, and education levels to further inform workforce solutions. With these collaborative efforts and comprehensive approach to the child care, along with the stellar work being done by New Hampshire's communities, these programs will continue efforts to build a stronger, higher quality, and more affordable child care system that serves all New Hampshire families.

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