

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Offers Support to Child Care Providers During COVID-19 Pandemic

PHOENIX – (March 23, 2020) Governor Doug Ducey and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today DES will continue to financially support child care providers, ensuring continued services to first responders and essential personnel, and keeping child care available for families beyond the pandemic.

“Arizona is working around the clock to address COVID-19,” said Governor Doug Ducey. “Our focus is on stopping the spread of COVID-19 while providing help to those who need it most, including healthcare workers, first responders and other essential personnel that rely on child care. We will continue to work together — the government, non-profits and the private sector — to do all we can to keep kids and families safe and healthy.”

“We recognize that mitigation strategies necessary to combat the spread of COVID-19 have a significant impact on our child care providers,” said DES Interim Director Tom Betlach. “However, child care providers are indispensable to supporting workers on the front lines of fighting this disease and ensuring Arizona children are given the care and supervision they need during this difficult time. We need to maintain a robust infrastructure for when recommendations change and demand resumes. We commend Governor Ducey for this essential move to support providers and the families they serve, and we are thankful for the continued partnership of our child care providers.”

“We are extremely grateful,” said Mary Sue Watson, owner of the Children's Campus and Premier Children's Learning Center. “I’m afraid many child care centers will close, and a lot of those centers are in very low-income areas. During this time, it’s really important that we stay open so that children have meals. As long as parents need us, and as long as it’s safe, we’re going to be open. The community needs us.”

“We are just super thankful that the State was able to put this together,” said James Emch, owner of Valley Child Care & Learning Centers. “This will help us keep our staff, stay open and provide to our communities. This is a huge boost in uncertain times.”

Child care providers contracted with DES will continue to receive child care reimbursement payments no less than those provided in January 2020. Additionally, providers will be reimbursed at the full day rate for any children that had previously been attending part time and now would require full day care, due primarily to school closures. Payments for services provided in March will be issued to providers soon after April 1, and payments will continue to be distributed after the first of the month until the end of the state of emergency.

DES is grateful for those child care providers who are caring for the children of first responders and essential personnel, ensuring that children are safely cared for while emergency teams are meeting the needs of Arizona's citizens.

The DES Child Care Administration provides assistance to eligible families in need so they can continue education or employment while ensuring a safe environment for their children. Learn more at <https://des.az.gov/child-care>.

For more information about DES services during the COVID-19 outbreak, visit <https://des.az.gov/services/coronavirus>.

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