



# The Licensing Link

February 2021

Dakota County Social Services

**Inside this issue:**

Enhanced Background Studies Update	2
Background Study Reminder	2
"Off Year" Visits	2
Rule Reminder	2
Parent Aware	3
Annual Training Update	3
Childhood Resilience	4
Newsletter Quiz	5
Childcare Licensing Directory	6

2020.

What a year. Pandemic, political turmoil, economic upheavals. All of us (very) unceremoniously shoved into this new COVID world. We know many of you have faced real hardship this last year and want to acknowledge the anxiety, stress and upheaval of this time. We also want to ensure you hear a loud and clear THANK YOU from us to you. You have persevered – all while hunting down bleach and cleaning supplies in the early days, navigating COVID Preparedness Plans, managing mask mandates and participating in Zoom relicensing visits. You have repeatedly stepped up to the plate in new and different ways almost every day. Thank you for all your flexibility, humor and hard work on behalf of the children and families of Dakota County!



## Essential COVID Info on Dakota County Provider Website

If you find yourself in need of a quick reference guide for critical COVID information, look no further than our Dakota County provider home page:

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/ChildCare/Providing/Pages/default.aspx>

Here you'll find a short, essential list of COVID resources including:

Minnesota Department of Health COVID email address

What to Do When Notified of a Lab-Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Child Care Settings

COVID-19 Decision Tree regarding exclusion guidance

We know there has been a tidal wave of information coming at you. We intentionally kept the resources on our site very focused to help you find the information you need, when you need it. If you have any questions at all about COVID guidance, your licensor is also an excellent resource. Don't hesitate to reach out to us and we are happy to help as best we can.

## Enhanced Background Studies – Update

What a wild year it has been trying to manage a pandemic and the rollout of Enhanced Background Studies (Netstudy2.0). We kicked off our Enhanced Background Study rollout in January 2020, with a goal to move all Dakota County providers through the process by June. Like so much this year, COVID drastically altered these plans. After a brief re-open this fall that was quickly shut down with the November COVID surge, DHS again suspended the rollout due to closure of fingerprint sites and safety concerns. If you are still waiting to go through the process, there is nothing to do except hold tight. We will send an email update when DHS resumes fingerprint-based studies and we are again able to move our existing providers through the process.

In the meantime, if you have a *new* person who requires a background study (example: new household member, substitute or child turning 13), contact your licensor. These individuals still are legally required to have a background study. In lieu of fingerprints, DHS has an emergency background study process in place. These studies are completed through Netstudy2.0, but are based on name and date of birth only. Emergency background studies are temporary - a fingerprint-based Enhanced Background study will be required when the process again re-opens.

### **REMINDER! Children Turning 13 Need a Background Study**

Remember that anyone living in your family childcare household who turns 13 needs a background study. Notifying licensing staff of someone turning 13 is the responsibility of the provider. Please contact your licensing worker to get the process started. Minors ages 13-17 will not need fingerprints unless they are employed by the program or have lived out of state in the last five years. As always, please contact your licensing worker with any questions.

## Update on “Off Year” Visits

Dakota County Child Care Licensing will resume off-year visits beginning February 2021. These visits will be virtual, via zoom or FaceTime. We will not be going back to complete visits missed during COVID unless we hear differently from DHS. Your licensor will reach out to you to request some (limited) documentation and schedule at a time that is convenient for you and your program. Please remember that these visits can be completed 90 days before or 90 days after your license renewal month. Thank you for your flexibility and patience as we continue to find new ways of work to ensure everyone’s safety during COVID.

### **Rule Reminder**

Statute 245A.16, subd. 1 delegates authority to county agencies to perform licensing functions, including issue variances. This statute was updated in 2020 with the requirement that all counties publish policies and criteria for issuing variances on the public website as well as distribute them annually to all licensed providers in the county. Our variance policy was sent out to all providers via email on February 11, 2021. Our policy along with the variance application form can also now be found on our website on the Provider Forms and Guides page: <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/ChildCare/Providing/Pages/forms-guides.aspx> .

## A Message from Parent Aware

The Child Care Aware/Parent Aware team of coaches would like to thank every Child Care Provider in Dakota County for ALL you do for the children and families in our communities. This has been a crazy year and you have stepped up to provide continued care for families and shown everyone just how important child care is for the Economy/Parents/Communities/Employers etc.

We have been honored to work alongside many of you in the Parent Aware program to offer you support and cheer you on. So many of you have stayed committed to the Parent Aware program and continued improving your quality, even during these trying times, and that shows how dedicated you are to your profession.

We have been and will continue to provide your programs with our monthly health and safety supply distributions and other information regarding the availability of state grants. We will continue to support and be accessible for all of you.

Thanks so much again for your dedication to the children and families of Dakota County. We appreciate you!!!

Your Child Care Aware/Parent Aware Team,

Mischelle Ulrich—Child Care Aware Supervisor  
Karen Bradley—Parent Aware Coach  
Heidi Aarestad—Parent Aware Coach  
Emily Hope—Parent Aware Coach  
Brooke Scanlon—Parent Aware Coach



## Show your stars!

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has announced new Parent Aware Grants. Starting July 1, Parent Aware Grant amounts will be tiered based on star ratings, and programs earning four-star ratings will be eligible for the grants.

### What is Parent Aware?

Parent Aware is the quality rating and improvement system for early care and education in Minnesota. Get the recognition you deserve for demonstrating best practices in early education! Benefits include:

- Free coaching sessions that fit your schedule
- Free professional development advising to set your own goals
- Free and low-cost trainings
- New activities to prep children for school
- No application fee
- Higher child care assistance rates
- Ability to accept early learning scholarships
- Additional resources and opportunities for rated programs
- Learn more at: [ParentAware.org/providers/benefits-for-rated-programs](https://ParentAware.org/providers/benefits-for-rated-programs)

- ★ **Building Quality Grants:** \$1000 after a minimum of 20 hours of coaching.
- ★ **Full-Rating Grants:**
  - 1 Star will receive \$1500,
  - 2 Stars will receive \$2000,
  - 3 Stars will receive \$3500 and
  - 4 Stars will receive \$4000
- ★ **New policy for re-rating:** rated programs that apply to be re-rated in advance of their current rating expiration date will only be eligible for grants if they earn a higher star rating level than they currently have.
- ★ **Providers that have participated in the Building Quality pathway** are eligible to participate again.

These quality improvement dollars can be spent on professional development training, curricula, assessment tools, toys, equipment, technology—such as a computer, printer, or software—or other materials tied to the provider's program goals.

To attend an information session visit [ParentAware.org/programs/districts/metro](https://ParentAware.org/programs/districts/metro) or contact Mischelle Ulrich: 952-985-4045 or [mulrich@360communities.org](mailto:mulrich@360communities.org).

To reach a Hmong/Somali/Spanish interpreter, please call 651-665-0150. Yog xav tau lb tug Hmoob bixhals lus, thov hu rau 651-665-0150, nyem #3. Si loo gaaro turjubaan Somali ah, fadlan soo wac: 651-665-0150, option #4. Para solicitar un intérprete de español, por favor llame al 651-665-0150 opción #2.

## Update – Resumption of Annual Training Requirements

Early on during COVID, DHS issued a waiver to temporarily extend training timelines for existing license holders and staff during the Governor's peacetime emergency. DHS amended this waiver in November 2020 to resume annual and ongoing training requirements for family child care effective January 1, 2021. This means that as of January 1, 2021, all family child care providers and staff are to resume annual and other ongoing trainings. (One exception to this is CARS training; the deadline to renew this training remains extended due the need to offer the training in-person and continued lack of availability.) DHS has instructed licensors to give technical assistance and not issue correction orders for license holder and existing staff training until July 1, 2021. Remember that **all training requirements except for pediatric CPR can be completed online with Develop**. If you are struggling to find trainings, don't hesitate to contact your licensor for assistance.

## Keys to Childhood Resilience

Resilience is the ability to overcome serious stress or difficulty and bounce back stronger than ever. And what's happening during COVID-19 is stressful for kids in too many ways to count – routines upended, milestones missed, distant friends and family. Kids are also very perceptive, which means they easily pick up on the anxiety of the adults around them, even when we try our best to hide it. But there is good news. We can help teach kids be resilient, even during these unusual times.

### Keys to resilience:

**Connection:** Even in difficult times, children do well when they have stable, supportive adults in their lives.

**Routines:** Routines provide a sense of safety, control and predictability. Helping a child master a daily routine is an essential skill.

**Self-care:** Children become more resilient when they know how to identify their feelings and learn how to manage them in healthy ways.

**Self-efficacy:** When children believe in their own abilities and have a feeling of “I can do this,” they turn challenges into opportunities for growth. This supports the development of their self-esteem.

**Family:** Family traditions give children the connection and stability they crave. Even during uncertain times, traditions are a foundation for hope and reassurance.

**Mindfulness:** When children learn how to focus on the present moment, they become better at managing stress and adapting to change.

**Play:** Play is fundamental to how all children learn, especially young children. It allows kids to make mistakes in a safe and comfortable environment and develop problem-solving skills.

Resilience is a skill you can help children build. Like a muscle, it can be built up and strengthened. Giving kids stability and the tools (and confidence) to solve problems, overcome challenges and pick themselves up from failure helps them become stronger, braver and better able to face life's inevitable challenges.

Most important – don't forget to be patient – with yourself and the kids. No one was prepped for life during a pandemic. If you can show children that you're rolling with the punches, they'll learn that they can too. That's Resilience 101!

(Adapted from [Robert D. Keder, MD](https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/), Growing Resilient: What Your Child Needs to Get Through Tough Times, posted on <https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/> )

*"If your child feels loved, they feel safe. If your child feels loved, they can open up to you. If your child feels loved, they will be courageous in life because they know they have a cushion to fall back on. If there's one big gift we can give our children is to know they are truly loved, no matter what." – Carolina King*

# Licensing Link: February 2021 Quiz

*Return this quiz to your licensor via mail or email for one hour of training credit!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Licensing Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

1. T or F A 13-year old child living in a child care home requires a background study.
  
2. T of F New household members are still required to have a background study even though fingerprinting is not currently available.
  
3. Critical COVID information can be found on the \_\_\_\_\_ website.
  
4. List 3 keys to childhood resilience:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Dakota County Child Care Licensing will resume off-year visits beginning \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
6. Legislative updates in 2020 require counties to publish variance policies on the public website and distribute them \_\_\_\_\_ to all licensed providers in the county.
  
7. All training requirements except for \_\_\_\_\_ can be completed online with Develop.
  
8. T or F Per a DHS waiver, child care provider are to resume annual training requirements as of January 1, 2021.

## DAKOTA COUNTY CHILD CARE LICENSING DIRECTORY

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### Dakota County Social Services

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