



March 13, 2020

Dr. Kristi Snuggs, Director
NC Division of Child Development and Early Education
2201 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2200

Dear Kristi,

On behalf of NCLCCA, I am reaching out to you to provide as much help as we can to the Division, Governor Cooper, the licensed child care center owners, directors and staff we represent and the families we serve in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. We are hearing from owners and operators across the state daily and feel a sense of urgency to share their requests with you immediately as this crisis is so fast-moving. There may be additional follow-up recommendations because the situation is so fluid. We hope to stay in close communications with you in the coming weeks and months.

To date, here are our initial recommendations to help licensed child care centers and families during the COVID-19 outbreak and try to ensure that North Carolina doesn't have fewer high-quality centers or early childhood teachers and directors on the other side of this crisis:

1. Instruct DCDEE consultants and strongly encourage county health consultants to suspend routine inspections for now and instead focus visits to licensed child care centers on technical assistance aimed at coronavirus prevention and parent/family/caregiver education.
2. Relax group-size and staff-child ratio regulations for now. We recognize this may be a controversial recommendation, but believe the situation calls for it. We expect higher absenteeism rates among staff and will follow the governor's direction to encourage sick staff members to stay home. This will obviously exert enormous pressure on our ability to stay in compliance with these regulations. We believe these regulations could be relaxed without jeopardizing children in our care.
3. Temporarily suspend the DCDEE policy that links NC Pre-K provider reimbursement to each individual child's attendance and instead pay by the classroom. This will help high-quality licensed child care centers remain financially stable and viable as fear, panic and work-from-home directives cause parents/families/caregivers to pull their 4-year-olds out of licensed care.
4. Similarly, to the extent that North Carolina can exert autonomy and influence, temporarily suspend or alter attendance requirements related to reimbursement for Subsidized Child Care for three primary reasons: a) We do not want the child/family to lose the Subsidy slot; b) we want centers to be able to continue to pay their employees, and c) we want to ensure that high-quality centers are still financially viable and operational after the crisis subsides.

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5. In the event of a mandatory closing of licensed child care centers, continue to reimburse centers serving NC Pre-K- and Subsidy-eligible families with funding already provided in the State budget so centers can continue to pay their teachers and staff and will survive this crisis and still be able to serve these families when it subsides.

Thank you for your attention and consideration, Kristi. I look forward to hearing from you soon and working together on what I am confident are shared concerns and common goals.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Campbell".

Kevin Campbell, President

We work to ensure a successful future for young children and their families by working to ensure the success of those who provide licensed early care and education.