



April 9, 2020

Shannon Christian, Director
Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C ST SW, Room 4502
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Director Christian:

As the nation grapples with its response to the coronavirus pandemic, I write with a set of resources that could be helpful to the maintenance and recovery of our child care system.

Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) has recently launched the Emergency Child Care & Technical Assistance Center™ to support and train the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) community and build their capacity in this space. The new Emergency Child Care & Technical Assistance Center™ will build on our existing services to offer: technical assistance, webinars, communities of practice, a hotline as well as live chat and email support, and digital resources.

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies and state and local partner organizations interact with parents, providers, businesses and governments to provide an array of child care services for our communities. These services include disseminating information on federal and state resources for child care, supporting families navigating complicated child care systems, and leading initiatives that increase the quality, affordability, supply and accessibility of child care. With over 400 community-based agencies serving over 860,000 families a year, the CCR&R network is the most trusted place to find child care.

CCR&Rs are working overtime during the coronavirus pandemic to help the families of emergency and essential workers with changing child care needs. CCR&Rs are supporting states in developing data solutions and quickly standing up emergency care. They are also assisting child care providers with the guidance and resources needed to maintain a healthy environment. CCR&Rs are at the nexus of sustaining the child care system so that it can serve families and communities well in times of crisis, like now, and into the future. To do this critical work CCR&Rs also need support. Many have already stepped up to meet these community needs. **I urge you to leverage the tremendous power of the CCR&Rs in states and communities and provide funding and support for our national response to this unprecedented pandemic, and beyond.**

CCR&Rs Can Support Emergency Response and System Sustainability

Nationwide, there are three basic types of state CCR&R networks: managing, coordinating and voluntary.¹ These state CCR&R networks, as well as local CCR&Rs, depending on type, role, and capacity, may be suited to support state efforts in a variety of ways. Below are examples of the ways that CCR&Rs can help states in this emergency as well as support the federal and state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) partnership:

To support the state in bolstering the child care system:

- CCR&Rs can provide detailed information about the available supply of child care as well as the demand for child care from emergency and essential personnel. Child Care Aware® of America has partnered with Yale University Professors Walter Gilliam and Eli Fenichel and their colleagues to promote and disseminate an interactive map that estimates the need for child care among emergency and essential workers.² And, multiple states are already deploying mapping to track their state-specific supply.
- In many states, there is a need for an entity to serve as a communications hub and data collector for providers and families. CCR&Rs are well equipped to play this role. This may involve actions such as setting up a portal for providers who want to provide child care to emergency and essential workers to indicate their availability and harnessing or creating a workforce registry to fill workforce gaps with already eligible educators.
- CCR&Rs are an important conduit of information about the needs of child care providers and families to state administrators and leaders. In several states CCR&Rs are already administering surveys, convening gatherings, and compiling actionable information.
- Participate in cross-agency and cross-sector meetings and convenings, including with emergency managers and other social services response teams. CCR&Rs can act as a convener where appropriate.
- Where appropriate, CCR&Rs can distribute funds to child care providers to cover costs during closures, distribute funds to child care providers to take children of emergency and essential personnel, or even help their state create a payment mechanism to families accessing care who are not part of the existing subsidy system.

To support providers and families:

- CCR&Rs can provide training and technical assistance to providers regarding closure considerations, regarding how to quickly start care for emergency and essential worker families, and help in translating policy changes from the state or federal level. CCR&Rs are also providing invaluable referrals and connections for families in need of care – both by utilizing technology solutions and deploying what they know from their longstanding local referral work.
- In communities nationwide, CCR&Rs are building bridges between lenders who participate in Small Business Administration programs and child care providers who are seeking financial support. CCR&Rs, alongside other community groups, are also providing technical assistance to help navigate the process.

¹States that do not have a managing, coordinating, or voluntary network have one of the following: a single statewide agency (10 states); Local, community-based CCR&Rs operating independently (8 States have more than one local CCR&R but do not have a formal state CCR&R network); or, no CCR&R system with limited CCR&R services performed within state government (3 states).

² Child Care for Essential Workers during Coronavirus Outbreak. <https://www.childcareaware.org/coronavirus/child-care-essential-workers-coronavirus-outbreak/>

- CCR&Rs are also able to serve as a connector for providers to access supplies and sanitation resources necessary to safely provide care to the children of essential personnel.

Pre-pandemic CCR&Rs were deeply engaged in supporting and growing the child care system, investing in quality improvements, providing technical assistance and professional development, and understanding local trends and needs of families in their communities. This means that as the sector rebuilds, they are also poised to help states transform post-pandemic.

I look forward to our ongoing collaboration to ensure that the child care system is supported in this unprecedented pandemic and into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynette M. Fraga". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D.
Executive Director