

Caring and Sharing

New Providers

February 2025

- Radiya Tolla
Cottage Grove

March 2025

- Meghan Aubin
Woodbury

Provider Milestones

5 Years

- Jaime Thomas

10 Years

- Briana Burt

20 Years

- Colleen Heine
(& Megan Donahue)

30 Years

- Windy Weberg



Community Services
Child Care Licensing
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082

[Email](#) | [Website](#)

Helpers

Summer is coming and some providers consider the use of a “helper” since those kids are available more with school closed. “Helper” means a person at least 13 years of age and less than 18 years of age who assists the provider with the care of children. *If a provider identifies or utilizes a person as a helper, they must meet this definition.*

Providers are responsible for the supervision of their helper and are ultimately accountable for the actions of anyone assisting with children in care. *Helpers should never be left alone in order to replace the provider’s own supervision of the children in care.*

Ideas of tasks for helpers could include:

- Reading and playing with the children.
- Meal/snack preparation.
- Cleaning.
- Helping with schoolwork.
- Crafts with the children.

Helpers need to have a background check and Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) training before working with the children. If there are infants in care, then Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) training is also required. During the first year of employment, helpers would need to take an additional six hours of training.

Please consult with your licensor prior to utilizing a helper in your program.

Library News

Washington County libraries will now be offering blood pressure monitor kits for check-out. Kits include: Blood pressure monitor, cuffs in two sizes, and instructions.

Almost half of U.S. adults suffer from high blood pressure which can lead to heart attack or stroke. The library has partnered with the American Health Association to offer blood pressure monitor kits in all branches. Kits are available for check out or use at the library.

Closed Pending Reopening Status

The Department of Human Services (DHS) understands that sometimes programs need to pause operations for an extended period. To support this, they’ve introduced a new temporary license status called “closed pending reopening.” This status moves a program’s license from active to inactive for up to 12 months. While in this status, the program cannot operate.

When you're ready to reopen, you'll need to schedule a visit with your licensor to make sure your program space still meets all safety requirements. Once approved, your license will return to active status.

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Using this status is optional. *Programs with active licenses must continually meet all licensing requirements and may receive a licensing visit at any time.*

You might consider the “closed pending reopening” status if:

- Your program closes during the summer and only runs during the school year.
- You’re taking an extended vacation (more than a month).

- You need a maternity leave.
- You need time off for medical reasons.
- You're temporarily unable to use your space due to remodeling, flooding, or other issues.

If you anticipate being closed for a month or more, talk with your licenser to see if this status is the right fit for you.

Provider Highlight

The provider we are highlighting this month is **Kristen McClure**. Kristen has been a family child care provider for 24 years and lives in Woodbury. She cares for children ranging from 1 to school aged and holds a C2 license. Kristen was chosen for her education around community helpers in her program. In October, Kristen had three community helpers visit her program to enhance the theme for the month “Community Helpers” which was inspired by October being Fire Prevention Month.

How many community helpers visited your program?

I had three community helpers visit during the month of October. For three weeks in a row, I had different community helpers make a guest appearance; the mail carrier, a fire department, and the garbage and recycling company. This was the first year I set up these guest appearances. They were all a hit.

Did you find it easy to request a visit from community helpers?

The mail carrier just needed to get permission from their supervisor, and they just came out on their regular route. In requesting a visit from the garbage truck, it was just a call to the garbage company that services my home, and they also made an appearance on their regular route with the recycling truck. Due to staff coverage, Woodbury Fire Department was not able to make an appearance, however the Cottage Grove Fire Department was able to show up.



Child care kids on a postal truck.



Child care kids on a fire truck.

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If you had to pick just one, what would you say was the favorite community helper visit?

All the community helpers were a hit; however, the fire truck was the biggest because there were so many things to climb on and compartments to look in. The children sat in the front seat, and the firefighters turned on their siren as they left. Everyone also received a hat!

What do you think the children get out of these visits?

I think it links together everything we learn about in our curriculum in regards to community helpers. They talk about the uniforms the helpers wear and how not to be afraid. I feel it is good for the children to see this and not be afraid if a community helper ever shows up in an emergency.



Child care kids on a recycling truck.

Do you have any advice for other providers who might be considering reaching out to their local community helpers to set up a visit?

Start with the people who come to your house. A lot of helpers can incorporate a visit into their normal routes. I think it would be good to talk to the city you live in about a street sweeper or police car coming to visit. Look at the parents in your program as well to see if they can contribute to a community helpers visit in the home. I have also heard about other providers using Earth Day in April as a month to look at community helper themes around recycling.

Literacy

What is literacy? Simply put, it is our ability to read and write and learn. It's been said that we spend the first few years of our lives learning to read, and the rest of our lives reading to learn.

The Building Blocks of Learning

Many people believe that children learn to read and write in kindergarten or first grade. However, the foundation for literacy skills is laid years before children enter school. In light of a child's need for early and frequent brain stimulation, there are several important steps parents and caregivers can take to help a child's brain and language skills develop.

Engaging a child's senses is very important right from birth. Singing, rhyming, and talking



are very important. Babies develop listening skills and an interest in sounds and words from this activity.

Eventually the baby learns to understand certain patterns of sounds and tries to reproduce them, which marks the beginning of personal expression and two-way communication. Reading books aloud, showing pictures, and letting even infants handle written materials encourages the child to learn visual recognition and to identify what she hears with what she sees.

No one expects an infant to read, but simply having a book in her hands can start the process of getting familiar with books and

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reading materials. “Although a 9- to 12-month-old may chew on a book or bang it on the floor, parents and caregivers should still encourage children by including books in their repertoire of play objects,” says Dr. Fussell. “The same goes for reading to younger infants and toddlers. Parents need to be reminded of the power their voice has, and how their own babies will prefer to attend to their parent’s voice, given the opportunity, over other noises — such as a television.”

An important and normal part of developing early literacy skills for very young children is repetition. Sure, they may want to read the same storybook or look at the same pictures over and over. But this activity is actually “hard-wiring” their brains and providing consistent stimulation for language development, the cornerstone of literacy.

Teaching a Love for Books

The most important language stimulation we can provide to our infants and toddlers is reading to them, says Pamela High, M.D., FAAP. “I think that the most important thing parents do by reading with their infants, toddlers,

and preschoolers is to teach them to love books and stories so much that they will be very motivated to learn to read, even when it is a difficult task for them,” she says. Reading, rhyming, singing, and talking — beginning from birth — profoundly influence literacy and language development, the foundations for all other learning. The results last a lifetime.

Quick Tips for Reading Fun

Start talking, singing, and reading with your child from the beginning. Even though your child can’t read when he’s an infant, he’ll get the idea that books are fun and reading is a fun activity you share together.

- Repetition is good — it helps a child build important language skills.
- Reading doesn’t have to be a huge project. Just a 3-minute story every night before bed will help get your child interested in reading.

Board books and soft books are good for infants to get used to holding a book in their hands — and enjoying the experience.

Source: [Healthchildren website](#).

Help Me Grow

While every child is unique, children develop in certain predictable ways. Help Me Grow Minnesota provides resources to families and care givers about developmental milestones and what to do if there is a concern about a child’s development. Help Me Grow is the portal by which families and care givers connect to their local school district for screening, evaluation, and services.

Help Me Grow has created a training video specifically for childcare and early childhood professionals who work with families of children aged birth - 5 years. [The video](#) provides an overview of the role and practices of the childcare and early childhood community in the referral process through Help Me Grow MN.

The training video is broken into chapters for quick and easy viewing. (The chapters pop up on the side of your screen when you click on the word “Introduction” to the right of the time stamp at the bottom of the screen.)

The video is captioned in English and in Spanish. The captions will default to English unless you go into the “gear” or settings and change it to Spanish.

The chapters included in this training are:

- Introduction
- About Help Me Grow MN and IDEA
- Developmental Milestones
- Role of the Childcare Professional
- Steps to Completing a Referral
- Process Following a Referral
- Parent Stories
- Video Summary
- QR Codes to order materials from Help Me Grow

If you would like to schedule a presentation beyond this video from Help Me Grow MN staff, please [email Anna](#).



[HelpMeGrowMN.org](https://www.HelpMeGrowMN.org)
1-866-693-GROW (4769)



To refer a child through Help Me Grow, [visit the HelpMeGrowMN website](#)

or call
1-866-693-GROW (4769).

Background Studies

Background studies for family child care do expire so it is important to pay attention to the expiration date and take action when needed.

- **Fingerprint-based background studies expire every five years.** Licensors must submit the application for a new study within 90 days prior to the expiration date. *Do not submit a new application before that 90-day window begins.*
- **Name-based studies for minors expire on the minor's 18th birthday.** Licensors must submit the application for a new study on or after the minor's 18th birthday. *Do not submit a new application before the minor turns 18.*

Washington County will be emailing providers 90 days prior to the expiration date of the five year studies with instructions on how to submit a new study. *If you have a child in the home turning 13, please let your licensor know. Everyone living or working in the home over the age of 13 needs to have a cleared background study.* Providers need to have cleared studies on employees or new household members.

Please communicate with your licensor if you plan to make changes in your program.

Rule Reminders

[Minnesota Rules 9502.0435](#)

First Aid Kit: What is required in your first aid kit:

- Bandages
- First aid manual
- Ice pack or cold pack
- Mild liquid soap
- Scissors
- Sterile compress
- Tape
- Thermometer

Providers can add other useful items to their first aid kit. *The first aid kit must be easily accessible and taken on field trips.* Providers who often go on field trips might decide to have two kits so they can leave one in a stroller or car.

[Minnesota Rule 9502.0445, Subp. 3](#)

Labeling: *Food, lunches, and bottles brought from home must be labeled with the child's name and refrigerated when necessary.* This also includes breast milk or formula brought for an infant.

[Minnesota Statute 142B.72, Subd. 8](#)

Stairways: *Gates or barriers must be used when children aged 6 to 18 months are in care.* Gates or barriers are required even if you have an infant that is not yet mobile.

Draft Family Child Care Standards

DHS is in the process of collecting feedback on the second draft of the family child care licensing standards. Upcoming engagement opportunities include:

- **Survey:** A survey is currently in development and will be designed to get input from providers, licensors, community members, and parents.
- **Regional engagement:** DHS is working on scheduling regional meetings in collaboration with the Minnesota Initiative Foundations.

- **DHS led engagement sessions:** DHS is creating events on this topic.

If you have not already done so, county licensors encourage all providers to read the draft standards: [Draft 2 Revised Family Child Care Licensing Standards \(245J\)](#).

If you are not able to attend one of the feedback opportunities listed above, DHS is accepting [emails](#) on this subject.

Training

DISCLAIMER: In preparation of this newsletter, every effort has been made to offer the most current, correct, and clearly expressed information possible. Nevertheless, inadvertent errors in information may occur. For training information, please check the sponsor listing to be certain of all the details related to the training.

Trainings sponsored by:

Washington County Community Services

Reporting Child Maltreatment (Abuse & Neglect) Training for Mandated Reporters (*Child Care/Child Foster Care Providers Only*)

This training is designed for child care and child foster care providers interested in learning more about requirements for reporting child abuse and neglect in Washington County. View more information on the [Child Protection website](#). **Access the packet forms before the training.*

Wednesday, June 4 | 6-7:30 p.m.

FREE

Online with Teams

[Register via email](#)

Develop

Registration: [On the Develop Tool Minnesota website](#).

In-Person Classes:

What is the Study of Child Development

Discuss why and how a study of child development matters for educators, and why Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is critical. In addition, identify and examine the areas of key developmental processes—including ages and stages, brain development, attachment, self-regulation, and executive functions. KCF: I

Saturday, May 17 | 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

\$20 | 4 credit hours

Veterans Memorial Community Center,
Inver Grove Heights

Observation and Documentation: Planning for Individual Needs

This course on observation will focus on observation strategies, documentation methods, and using data to inform individualized care and learning experiences, especially for children with developmental concerns and challenging behaviors. KCF: IVA

Tuesday, May 27 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Eagan Community Center, Eagan

Make Your Next Move Your Best Move: Teacher Behavior Moves that Change Behavior

Experience factors that impact how we interact with our world. Reflect on what behavior is communicated through the perspective of the child's experiences, environment, and stress/trauma reactions. Produce positive social and emotional exchanges. Reframe/reimagine child and adult behavior using strategies that help with behavior modification (calming techniques, positive reinforcement techniques, and self-regulation). KCF: IIC

Tuesday, June 3 | 5:30-7:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Room for Growing, Forest Lake

Active Supervision: Safety Planning for Field Trips and Routine Outings

Define Minnesota DHS Rule 2 licensing standards regarding supervision in family child care settings. Identify the potential hazards and safety issues that children encounter when participating in field trips and routine outings. Create plans for children's safety and active supervision while away from the child care program, including unexpected situations and emergencies. KCF: VIIB

Tuesday, June 10 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

East Ridge High School, Woodbury

More Alike Than Different

Explore ability awareness and respect for diversity within the child care setting. Examine your own attitudes around disability and how that impacts child care practices including inclusion and expulsion. Develop strategies for successful inclusion of children with disabilities. KCF: IIA

Monday, June 16 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Forest Lake Area High School, Forest Lake

Learning Profiles

Discover and honor how one's brain and body are wired for learning and living. Each person's unique profile has a huge impact on her approach to new situations and her reaction to stress. This is child development and personal

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development; techniques learned in this class can be transferred to children and others. KCF: I

Wednesday, June 25 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

East Ridge High School, Woodbury

Online Scheduled Classes:

Sensory Smart Childcare: Beyond the Bin

Learn how to engage children in a variety of sensory experiences. Review the eight sensory realms, identifying the importance of each on child development. Engage in an exploration of ideas to incorporate a wider variety of multi-sensory activities in your childcare program. Recognize and verbalize the sensory experiences that are already being offered while learning the terminology to classify and describe these activities as valuable and positive learning experiences. KCF: IIA

Wednesday, May 28 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$20 | 2 credit hours

Supporting Parent/Caregiver-Child Relationships through Separation and Reunion in Early Education Environments

Within early childhood settings, frequent separations and reunions are experienced for infants, young children, educators, parents, and caregivers. Strategies and ideas will be shared with participants to support the attachment needs of infants, young children, and their parents/caregivers in the context of early care and education settings. KCF: IIC

Thursday, May 29 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$5 | 2 credit hours

Calming the Storm: Supporting Children Through Challenging Behaviors

In this online course, examine several common behavioral challenges that children experience in early childhood, as well as factors that contribute to their development. Explore strategies to assist children in working through strong emotions and developing healthy responses to frustrations to give children the tools to succeed in learning and in life! KCF: IIC

Monday, June 2 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Rediscover Your Passion and Purpose: Strategies for Thriving in the Early Childhood Profession

Apply ideas, share advice, and develop strategies that embrace personal success. Discover how to nurture yourself when you are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated,

powerless, tired, and burned out. Examine your mindset and shift your focus from what is holding you back to reconnect with your sense of purpose. KCF: VI

Tuesday, June 3 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Early Childhood Screen in Minnesota

Learn about early childhood screening in Minnesota. Examine what it is and how to explain it to other early educators and families. This virtual course is delivered on ZOOM online platform. It includes live large group participation with a presentation from the instructor, group discussion, individual reflection, and planning. KCF: IVA

Wednesday, June 4 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Beyond the Alphabet: Supporting Early Literacy

Promote children's language, literacy, and communication development by engaging children and supporting their interests within a literacy-rich environment. Examine common classroom books and evaluate their quality for use in early childhood programs. Share tips and gain tools to enhance your literacy environment and support children's play and learning. KCF: IIB

Monday, June 9 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Sowing the Seeds of Empathy and Kindness

Broaden your understanding of social emotional development by examining the cycle of attachment, the development of empathy, and the social dynamics of bullying. Explore methods that can be implemented with children birth through school age to nurture a healthy attachment, build empathy, and reduce bullying behavior. KCF: IIC

Thursday, June 12 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours

Creating Experiences in Culture and Diversity

Discover how to support young children's learning through inclusive experiences that build a natural curiosity about the world around them. Develop intercultural activities that teach acceptance and the value of diversity. Leave with developmentally appropriate curriculum ideas for your mixed age group or prekindergarten class. KCF: IIA

Monday, June 23 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$10 | 2 credit hours



Community Services
Child Care Licensing
14949 62nd Street North
Stillwater, MN 55082

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Washington County Child Care Licensing Contact Information

- Annie Walton, Licensor: [Email Annie](#) | 651-430-6539
- Becky Knighton, Senior Licensor: [Email Becky](#) | 651-430-6574
- Jennifer Rodriguez, Licensor: [Email Jennifer](#) | 651-430-6485
- Michelle McIntosh, Licensing Unit Supervisor: [Email Michelle](#) | 651-430-6476
- Child Care Licensing Email/Case Aide Phone Line: [Email Child Care Licensing/Case Aide](#) | 651-430-8307

Key Contacts

- Think Small:
 - Grants: 651-287-6919
 - Navigator: 888-986-8207 ext. 6005
 - Professional Development: 651-641-3549
- Training/register for classes through the [Develop website](#)

Contact Us for Article Submissions

Contact Becky Knighton, using the information above, with questions or to submit article submissions. The Child Care Licensing program of Washington County Community Services publishes this newsletter bi-monthly.