

# Caring and Sharing

## Provider Milestones

### 5 Years

- Lynne DeVallier

### 20 Years

- Colleen Thorn

### 25 Years

- Tracy Thiede
- Lynn Turner



## Washington County Fair

Come join the fun!  
Events include bingo,  
carnival, parade, music,  
animals, food, and  
much more!

**July 30-Aug. 3**

12300 40th St. N.,  
Stillwater



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

Email | [Website](#)

## Department of Children, Youth, and Families

On June 18, licensing officially moved from the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the [Department of Children, Youth, and Families \(DCYF\)](#).

### Change in Minnesota Statutes

- Existing licensing and certification standards currently found in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 245A and Chapter 245H have moved to new Minnesota Statutes Chapters [142B](#) (licensing) and [142C](#) (certification).
- **The licensing and certification requirements remain the same; only the location of where to find them has changed.**
- Requirements found in Minnesota Rules have not moved.
- Background study requirements in Minnesota Statutes, [Chapter 245C](#) have not moved.
- The Maltreatment of Minors Act in Minnesota Statutes, [Chapter 260E](#) have not moved.

### Licensing Process

- A license holder's existing DHS license certificate remains valid through the current license period.
  - *License holders do not need to reapply or take any action.*
  - License holders will get a new DCYF license certificate when their current license expires.
  - *The current license number associated with the program will not change.*
- There is **no change** to which programs are directly licensed by the State of Minnesota and which programs are licensed by the counties or private agencies.
- Over time, licensing forms will be updated to reflect DCYF branding, statutory location changes, and updated contact information.

[View the Office of Inspector General website](#) for more information.

## Background Study Change

The timelines for background studies will be changing to meet federal compliance:

- Currently, study subjects have 14 days to complete the consent disclosure and the fingerprinting and photograph requirement. When an entity user submits a background study application on or after July 14, the study subject must complete the consent and disclosure within four days. Once completed, they will have 10 days to have their fingerprints and photograph captured.
- Study subjects who initiate their own background study application will continue to complete the consent and disclosure in the applicant portal when filling out their application. Once the entity submits the applicant-initiated application, the study subject will then have 10 days to have their fingerprints and photograph captured.

If you have questions or need additional instructions, please call (651-431-6620) or [email the Contact Center](#). Washington County support staff, Sarah Yang, is also available to assist via [email](#).

## Provider Highlight

The provider we are highlighting this month is **Heidi Biron**. Heidi has been a family child care provider for 13 years and lives in Cottage Grove. Heidi was chosen for the outdoor science activities in her program.

### Tell us about your outdoor science activities:

We have a large outdoor area, animals, and nature trails that we can explore. We are always investigating a plant, flower, animal, or insect. It is mostly child-led, and I support their curiosity with materials like nets, tweezers, bug viewers, etc. Recently the children have been into recreating animal habitats. They investigate what the animal likes and build a habitat with plants, food, and other nature materials.

### We heard you ordered a worm farm. Tell us a little about that:

The children love to find worms, so we went on a worm hunt with our shovels. We learned that they like shaded areas and it is easier to find them after it rains because they move closer to the surface.

After we collected some worms, the children took turns filling the farm with soil and two layers of colored sand. The colored sand helps to see the worms making tunnels. Then we added the worms and used a pipette to add some water. The children topped it with some leaves which is our first experiment. Worms pull leaves into the earth which composts and creates more nutrient enriched soil. The worm farm came with a booklet of experiments the children are excited to try. They come every day excited to check on the worms and see if they can spot a new tunnel.

### Where did you purchase your worm farm?

Last year we used a large pickle jar. It worked, but was a little too wide and worms like it dark so they stayed in the middle and were hard to see. This year, I bought one online.



*Continued from Provider Highlight on page 2*

### **What else would you like to tell me about outdoor science:**

Outdoor science is a great hands-on learning experience. Before this activity, some of the children were scared to touch the worms. I explained to them that it was their choice and that they could still be a part by helping create the worm habitat and that the farm container would be a safe way to observe the worms. When it came to finding the worms, the little girl that said she wouldn't touch a worm ended up finding the most and picking them up with no problem. I have seen outdoor science encourage

a lot of children to grow outside their comfort zone in a safe way. The children are always proud of themselves.

### **Do you have any suggestions/ideas for providers who want to incorporate outdoor science into their family child care program?**

It can be as easy as going for a walk. Even if it's just in your outdoor space. Walk around with the children and ask them what they see and if they are interested in something. Help facilitate learning by using their senses. Ask them things such as, "What does it look, smell, and feel like? If safe to eat, what does it taste like? Does it make a noise?"

## **Wading Pools**

Summer is finally here and licensors often receive questions about outdoor water fun. Additionally, licensing workers may be asked which activities require parent/guardian permission slips prior to water play. [Minnesota Statutes, section 144.1222](#) defines a wading pool as a private residential pool and not as a public pool for purposes of public swimming pool regulations; as long as the portable wading pool has a maximum depth of 24 inches and can be manually emptied and moved. If a pool is more than 24 inches deep, then the pool is considered a swimming pool, not a wading pool, and the rules for swimming pools would apply.

There are many new products on the market that may not specifically be called a "wading pool" but would meet the definition of a wading pool as they hold up to 24 inches of water and can be manually emptied. This includes splash

pads which have basins that collect standing water. In these situations, we expect parents to be provided the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) notice and sign a permission slip. The permission slip can be found on the [Washington County Licensing website under Forms for Families](#).

Please reach out to your licensor if you have questions about whether a product fits under the wading pool definition especially with so many ever-changing products.

If a provider chooses to use water in other ways, such as a bucket of water for a car wash or a water table, these items would not typically fall under the definition of a wading pool. While they hold a small amount of water, they are not products that would allow a child to actually sit or swim in.

## **Library Events**

The Washington County Library program has summer reading programs for kids, teens, and adults. All ages can download a game card online or pick one up at their local library. There are lots of activities to choose from depending on the age. Some activities include:

- Attend a library program.
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood.
- Try a new recipe.
- Write a poem.

- Read to an animal.
- Take a mindful stroll through a park.

### **The reading programs run from June 1 - Aug. 16.**

For each program, participants complete activities on a game card and return it to the library to collect a reward. Each person who completes a game card is also entered in a drawing for the chance to win grand prizes.

## Substitutes

Some providers may choose to use a substitute in their program. According to Minnesota Rule, a “substitute” is an adult at least 18 years of age who assumes the responsibility of the provider. *Use of a substitute must be limited to a cumulative total of not more than 500 hours annually.* Providers who use a substitute must keep a written record of the name, dates, and number of hours the substitute provides care.

A substitute temporarily fills in for the provider and works under that license. It is important to select a substitute that is trusted to run the program.

*Prior to providing care, a substitute must meet the following requirements:*

- Completed a background study.
- Reviewed program emergency plan, chemical use policy, and any allergies as well as documented that these were completed.
- Completed required training:
  - Abusive Head Trauma (AHT).
  - Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), if any infants are in care.
  - Pediatric First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
  - Basics of Licensed Family Child Care for substitutes.
  - Basic Education for Safe Travel (B.E.S.T.), if your substitute will be driving children.

## Donate Gently Used School Supplies



Washington County is collecting used school supplies for a School Supply Swap on Aug. 6.

**Through Aug. 2, you can donate gently used items** at any library branch, the Washington County Environmental Centers in Forest Lake or Woodbury, or Public Health and Environment office locations.

Donations should be gently used items that students would normally discard at the end of the school year.

Accepted items include:

- Pencils/pens/markers/crayons
- Notebooks
- Lined or graphing paper
- Calculators (*working*)
- Backpacks (*working zippers, no rips/tears/stains*)
- Scissors
- Rulers/protractors
- Erasers
- Glue sticks
- Watercolor paints
- Pencil cases
- Pencil sharpeners
- 3-ring binders (*1-inch only*)
- Pocket folders

[View the School Supply Swap section on Public Health and Environment’s Reuse and Repair Resources website](#) for more information.

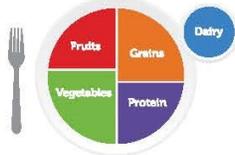


## Contact Information

Please keep your licenser informed of any changes to your home/cell phone numbers

and email address so you can continue to receive notifications from us.

## Start simple with MyPlate



# Healthy Eating for Toddlers

Healthy eating is important at every age. Offer toddlers a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on foods and beverages, choose options that are full of nutrients and lower in sodium and avoid added sugars. Start with these tips:



### Provide foods full of nutrients

Offer your toddler a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars and choose those with lower sodium.



### Look for cues

When children are hungry, they usually let you know. But fullness cues are not as obvious. Children may be full if they push food away, close mouth, turn head away from food, or make sounds to let you know. Recognizing and responding to these cues helps children learn how to self-regulate their intake.



### Prevent choking

Have toddlers sit at a table for meals and snacks and not wander around with food in their mouth. Foods such as hot dogs, candy, nuts and seeds, raw carrots, grapes, popcorn, and chunks of peanut butter can be choking risks. See the [USDA Team Nutrition worksheet](#) for more.



### Drinks matter too!

Did you know the only beverages your toddler needs are water, milk, and, if available, breast milk? Avoid drinks with added sugars like soda, flavored milks, juice drinks, and sports drinks.



### Try new foods

Try serving a new food alongside a familiar food in the same meal. It may take up to 8 to 10 tries for a child to accept a new food.



### Serve safe food

Help your child learn to wash their hands before eating. Only serve foods that have been cooked properly and avoid serving your toddler unpasteurized (raw) juice or milk.



## Basic Education for Safe Travel (B.E.S.T.) Program:

### Required Program for Foster Care and Daycare Providers

As part of Minnesota Statute § 142B.51, foster care and daycare providers are required to complete a car seat safety training every 5 years. The Child and Restraint Systems (C.A.R.S.) Program is transitioning to the new B.E.S.T. (Basic Education for Safe Travel) Program. This streamlined, hybrid approach will ensure providers receive up-to-date information, while offering proper training on the correct use of child restraint systems, based on the child's size, weight and age, as well as the proper installation of car seats or booster seats in the vehicle used by the provider to transport children.

### How B.E.S.T. Works: The 2-Step Process

#### Step 1: Complete the Online Car Seat Basics Course

The first step is to find a B.E.S.T. Facilitator to begin the process. They will assist you in signing up for the online course, Car Seat Basics, provided by the National Safety Council. This introductory e-learning course that covers essential car seat safety, including the proper use and installation of child restraint systems.

- **Duration:** Approximately 1 hour
- **Completion Requirement:** A certificate of completion will be issued upon finishing the course. You must retain this certificate as proof of completing the online course. You will need to show this certificate to your B.E.S.T. Facilitator prior to the in-person evaluation (Step 2).
- **Important:** Each individual must complete this course and obtain their own certificate. Certificates are not transferable.
- **Accessibility:** The Car Seat Basics course is available in English. For non-English speakers, consult B.E.S.T. Facilitator to arrange a course in a classroom setting with a translator.

#### Important Details for Step 2 (In-Person Evaluation)

- **Proof of Online Course Completion:** Before the hands-on session, participants must show proof of completing the Car Seat Basics online course. You can present your certificate to your B.E.S.T. Facilitator either electronically (on a mobile device or email) or as a printed copy. Each individual must show their own certificate.
- **Timeframe for Completion:** The in-person evaluation (Step 2) must be completed within 30 days of finishing the Car Seat Basics online course to remain valid.





## Basic Education for Safe Travel (B.E.S.T.) Program:

### Step 2: In-Person, Hands-On Skills Evaluation

After completing the online course, participants must attend an in-person, hands-on evaluation session with a certified B.E.S.T. Facilitator. During this session, you will:

- Practice proper installation techniques for car seats and/or booster seats.
- Learn how to correctly harness a child into a car seat or use a booster seat with the lap belt and shoulder belt.
- Receive guidance and support from the B.E.S.T. Facilitator.

If you do not have access to a car seat or vehicle, the B.E.S.T. Facilitator can provide equipment for the in-person, hands-on skills evaluation.

- **Duration:** Approximately 60-90 minutes
- **Completion Requirement:** After successfully demonstrating the proper use of the car seat and/or booster seat, you will receive a signed B.E.S.T. In-Person Evaluation Form, verifying completion of the hands-on evaluation. This form must be kept for your records and submitted to your licensor.

### Record Keeping and DHS Compliance

It is the responsibility of the individual completing the B.E.S.T. Program to maintain a record of the following documents:

1. **Car Seat Basics** Certificate (Step 1)
2. **B.E.S.T. In-Person** Evaluation Form (Step 2)

These documents must be provided to your DHS licensor as proof of having completed the B.E.S.T. Program, which must be renewed every 5 years.

### Find B.E.S.T. Facilitators

To locate a B.E.S.T. Facilitator and find a B.E.S.T. Program, visit [BuckleUpMN.org](http://BuckleUpMN.org).

### About B.E.S.T. and Its Benefits

- **Updated Curriculum:** The new B.E.S.T. Program curriculum incorporates the latest car seat safety guidelines, ensuring that foster and daycare providers receive the most current instruction.
- **Flexible Learning:** The hybrid format allows for online learning and a more focused, hands-on experience during the in-person evaluation.





## Basic Education for Safe Travel (B.E.S.T.) Program:

### C.A.R.S. Transition to B.E.S.T.

- The C.A.R.S. Program will be valid through December 2024. Starting January 2025, the B.E.S.T. Program will be the only approved training program that meets the requirements of Minnesota Statute §142B.51 for foster care and daycare providers.
- The transition to the B.E.S.T. Program is designed to make car seat training more accessible, efficient, and relevant to caregivers' needs.

### Important Reminder

If you transport children under age 9, you must complete the required car seat training, the B.E.S.T. Program, within 6 months of becoming licensed and every 5 years thereafter. This training is mandated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and must be provided by a B.E.S.T. Facilitator certified and approved by the Minnesota Safety Council on behalf of the Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety, through the Occupant Protection Grant. B.E.S.T. Facilitators have a certificate to verifying their approval to conduct this training.

### Have Questions?

For more information or to find a B.E.S.T. facilitator, visit the Buckle Up Minnesota website.

Updated 11/2024



MINNESOTA SAFETY COUNCIL  
Chapter of the National Safety Council



## What's typical in child development?

*Developmental milestones help track a child's progress*

While all children develop at different rates, developmental milestones are a great way to track a child's progress as they grow. Developmental milestones measure typical achievements at various ages of a child's life, which can help parents and caregivers determine if a child is on track in development.

Help Me Grow offers information on developmental milestones for ages birth through 5. When a child is younger, developmental milestones are focused more on motor skills and movement – for example, at **6 months**, is the child rolling over in both directions or beginning to sit with little help?

At **9 months**, caregivers should look for improvement in motor skills, simple speech like mama and dada, and responding to his or her name. At each age there should be progression in both speech and motor skills. Some common milestones with each age until 5 years include:



- **12 months:** Pulling to stand up, showing preference for certain people or toys, using simple gestures such as waving goodbye
- **18 months:** Walking alone, saying three or more single words, scribbling with a crayon or pencil, showing interest in other children
- **2 years:** Kicking a ball forward, pointing to things when named, using two or three words together
- **3 years:** Building with blocks, creating a tower up to 6 blocks, showing concern and affection for others, playing make believe
- **4 years:** Copying simple shapes, understanding the concept of same and different, playing cooperatively with other children
- **5 years:** Speaking clearly in sentences of five or more words, counting 10 or more objects, wanting to please friends and wanting to be like friends

Help Me Grow's developmental wheel is a great tool for childcare providers to use and share with parents and guardians. The wheel offers both developmental milestones and actions for parents and caregivers to take to encourage their child's development.

For more information about developmental milestones, visit [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org). To request a developmental wheel or other resources, contact Kathy McKay at [kathy.mckay@BrightWorksMN.org](mailto:kathy.mckay@BrightWorksMN.org).

*Portions of this content, developed by Help Me Grow Minnesota, may have previously appeared elsewhere.*



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.