

Caring and Sharing

New Providers

October 2025

- Nicole Arnold
Cottage Grove

November 2025

- Amanda Robl
Woodbury

Provider Milestones

15 Years

- Jennifer Swedzinski

25 Years

- Joey Olson

30 Years

- Kelly McConnach

35 Years

- Jill Soaz

Park Events

View winter park events and programs on the [county Parks website](#).



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

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

When do I need to do that by?

2026 is our second year of continuous licensing for family child care. Providers and licensors have been getting used to the idea of different due dates than just when your license expires. Here are some answers to common questions we have been hearing:

- **Crib inspection forms:** All cribs set up in the home should have a crib inspection form completed on it; even if it is a new crib and you are just starting to use it or you are only storing extra blankets in it.
 - *Crib inspections should be done by the end of every month.*
 - Don't forget the form has two sides.
 - Complete the back which has an annual certification where the consumer product safety commission website should be checked.
 - If you checked the website on March 14, 2025, then be sure to check again by the end of March 2026.
- **Fire extinguishers:**
 - **Servicing:** *These need to be serviced annually.*
 - For example, if you serviced your extinguisher February 20, 2025 then it needs to be serviced by the end of February 2026.
 - **Purchasing/replacing:** If you are purchasing a new extinguisher, your licensor will want to know when it was purchased.
 - You can keep the receipt attached to the extinguisher.
 - Many extinguishers have a year stamped on the bottom but that might not correspond to when you purchased it.
 - If you purchased a fire extinguisher January 15, 2025, then you need to either get that one serviced or purchase a new one by end of January 2026.
- **Fire and storm drills:** By the end of every month, the provider should practice fire and storm drills and document it on a form including the date and time of the drill.
- **Rabies for cats and dogs:** *All rabies shots should be current.*
 - For example, if your dog has a rabies shot that expires April 16, 2026, then the dog should have their new shot *before* April 16, 2026.

Contact your licensor for any questions.

Pets

Child Care Licensing Rule allows only certain pets to be living in a family child care. Pets are limited to: Dogs, cats, fish, guinea pigs, gerbils, rabbits, hamsters, rats, mice, and birds.

- The birds need to be clear of chlamydia psittaci.

Continued on page 2

Continued from Pets on page 1

- *Birds need a blood test from the vet to verify they do not carry chlamydia psittaci prior to living in the home.*

If a provider wants a pet not listed in the rule, they need an approved variance. **Washington County will not grant variances for any reptiles or amphibians.** *Check with your county licensor before bringing home any pet that is not listed in the rule.*

Also in the rule, make sure:

- To notify parents of pets' presence.
- Children handle animals with supervision.
- Dogs and cats are current on rabies shots.
- Pet cages are located away from food preparation and serving areas.
- Play areas are free of animal excrement.

Provider Highlight

Kelly Anderson: Featuring Large Motor Skills Room for Busy Bodies

The provider we are highlighting this month is Kelly Anderson. Kelly has been a family child care provider for seven years, lives in Lakeland, and has a C2 license. Child care in her home came as a natural step for Kelly after 25 years of providing nanny services for families. Kelly was chosen for her use of indoor space for large motor skills to keep busy in the winter months (and all year long).

How did you decide you needed a large motor skills room?

I decided we needed a large muscle room a few winters back when getting outside was a challenge because it was so cold. It was not a replacement for outdoor time, we go outside unless there is a bad wind chill, but rather a way to channel our high energy in a positive way.

Do you have any specific games the children play on the large muscle equipment?

The kids have made up lots of games on their own. Favorites right now are the ring around the rosie in the jumparoo, monkey bar contests, and "basketball" - kind of like duck duck gray duck but they are balls on the jumparoo and "exercise" - where they each name off exercises that their friends copy. By far the best is watching the tricks that they come up with.



What advice would you give to a provider who is looking to add large equipment into their indoor space?

Add a space if you have been thinking about it. It's well worth it and it helps with the less is more approach when

toys get overwhelming. Be sure to add safety mats as the kids quickly become dare devils. A favorite inexpensive piece that doesn't take up a lot of space is the sensory swing. Someone is always in it.

What is the biggest benefit of having this equipment in your child care space?

The physical strength of my group of kids is amazing. They are climbing, jumping, hanging, and learning how to control their bodies at a very young age. They have also learned to give space to each other, watch and wait for safety, and to use the sensory swing to be calm when they need it. It's also a perk for me to be able to simply say, "go jump" if someone needs somewhere to put their energy!

In addition, parents are always amazed at what their kids can do on the equipment, "watch my trick" is almost a daily statement at pickup time. Having a safe space for the kids to continually practice their large motor/muscle skills helps them build confidence in themselves and their skills.

Library News

We are excited to announce that Washington County Library now offers access to the online learning platform **Craft & Hobby!** This tool offers creative classes and inspiration for makers of all ages and skill levels.

Craft & Hobby features thousands of on-demand video classes across categories like sewing, knitting, photography, paper crafts, painting, woodworking, cake decorating, and more. Classes are taught by experienced instructors who guide you through each technique with clear, step-by-step instructions.

Craft & Hobby is available to all Washington County Library cardholders.

To get started with Craft & Hobby:

- Click this [Craft & Hobby link](#) or on our [Research & Learn web page](#).
(You must use this link to log in.)
- Sign in with your library card number.

If you have questions about [Craft & Hobby](#), ask a librarian at your local branch.

Website Resource

The Discover the Forest website is an online educational and nature-exploration resource aimed especially for families, children, and educators. It's designed to help people learn about forests, get outdoors, and understand why spending time in nature is valuable.

What you'll find on the website:

- **Things to Do:** Outdoor activity ideas and inspiration for kids/families.
- **Tips & Tools:** Practical guidance for playing and learning outside (e.g., how to make time outdoors part of everyday life).

- **Why Nature Matters:** Information on the benefits of outdoor time for children's health, curiosity, and development.
- Activities and resources that make outdoor learning fun and meaningful, often backed by research on childhood development and nature engagement.

Visit the [Discover the Forest website](#) for more information.

Communication Tips With Parents

Many times dropoff and pickup times are busy and challenging for communicating quickly with parents. Providers are caring for the rest of the children and parents are trying to get out the door to get to work or get home to make dinner. Here are some ideas to promote communication:

- **Provide daily information sharing information about the child's day.** This could be in the form of a daily sheet sent home, bulletin board, or an app. You can share meals served, fun activities, or other pertinent information.
- **Schedule a "conference" or time in the evening to discuss important issues.**
 - *Do not discuss these issues in front of other children or other parents.*
- If there are behavior problems, work with the parents to create a behavior guidance plan.
- **Remember to share the good stuff!**
 - Parents want to hear about how their child is doing and what they are learning during the day.
 - Let parents know if you are planning a special activity or lesson so they can reinforce it at home.
 - Let parents know when their child meets a new developmental or social milestone.
- **Be open to feedback.**
 - Know that parents have made the decision to leave their child in your care. Be proud they have entrusted you with their child's care. Try to listen to concerns and put yourself in their shoes.



Child Care Provider

Winter Workshop

Washington County Licensing invites you to attend a free Saturday morning training provided by South Washington County Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Jeffers Foundation.

Details:

- Earn up to 4.5 hours of training.
- Connect with your peers.
- Have your fire extinguisher serviced.
- Win prizes.

Saturday, Feb. 7

8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Liberty Ridge

11283 Eagle View Blvd., Woodbury
Located across the street from Liberty Ridge Elementary.

Training Schedule:

Time	Activity
7:30 a.m.	Doors open/Light breakfast
8-10 a.m.	Temperament in Early Childhood Participants will explore the components of temperament, identify their own temperament traits, reflect on common behaviors in early learning/child care settings and how temperament might influence those, and explore ways to create a goodness of fit in their practice to support development.
10-10:15 a.m.	Break/Prize Drawings
10:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Preschool Outdoors Join us for an interactive winter workshop designed to spark confidence and creativity in using outdoor spaces for nature-based play and learning—all year long! Come ready to learn, explore, and play comfortably outdoors (dress for the weather!). We'll dive into hands-on activities that highlight how winter environments can ignite curiosity, support children's development, and strengthen their connection to the natural world.

Registration:

Call 651-430-8307 or [email Child Care Licensing.](#)

Required by Friday, Jan. 30.

Provide the following info.: Name, email address, phone number, and Develop ID.

Fire Extinguisher Servicing:

St. Croix Fire and Safety will be available to service fire extinguishers from 7:45-10 a.m.

- Annual maintenance: \$10
- Recharging: \$17



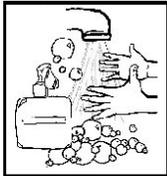
Which Soap is Best?

Antibacterial soap vs. Plain soap: Which is better?

Antibacterial soaps are no more effective than plain soap and water for killing disease-causing germs outside of healthcare settings. There is no evidence that antibacterial soaps are more effective than plain soap for preventing infection under most circumstances in the home or in public places. Therefore, plain soap is recommended in public, non-healthcare settings and in the home (unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).

Do antibacterial soaps promote antibiotic resistance?

There is no evidence that antibacterial soaps cause antibiotic resistance, but some scientists believe they may contribute to the development of antibiotic resistant germs.



Plain soap:

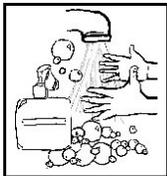
- Recommended for use in non-healthcare settings
- Easy to find in stores – read the label!
- Usually less expensive than antibacterial soaps
- Rubbing your hands is the most important step in cleaning your hands



Antibacterial soap:

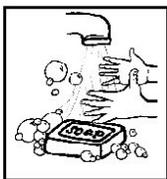
- Not needed in businesses or most homes (unless directed by your healthcare provider).
- No more effective than plain soap in killing germs on your hands or body
- Must be left on your hands for about two minutes in order to have any effect on bacteria.

Liquid soap or bar soap?



Liquid soap:

- Liquid soap is generally recommended over bar soap for cleaning your hands. It is easy to use and will not spread germs from one person to another
- Many liquid soaps also include a moisturizing agent, so your hands may not dry out as quickly from frequently cleaning your hands



Bar soap:

- Germs can grow on bar soap and easily spread from one person to another
- Bar soap can be used in a household if no one has skin infections
- Bar soap should not be used in public places

References and more information is available on the MDH Hand Hygiene Website: health.mn.gov/handhygiene



CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE

Tip Sheets

12 Types of Play

PLAY IS...

- Self-chosen and self-directed.
- Intrinsically motivated. The means (processes) are more valued than the ends (results).
- Guided by mental rules, but with room for creativity.
- Imaginative.
- An active and alert state of mind, but is relatively non-stressed.

Different Types of Play

Play is not *just play*. There are a variety of types of play and each is important for healthy growth and development.

Large motor play

Children explore movement and ways in which they can combine movements through play such as running, playing ball, jumping, climbing, dancing, and completing an obstacle course. Large motor play develops coordination, balance, and a sense of where one's body is at in relation to the space that surrounds the child.

Small motor play

Small motor play is play with small toys and activities such as stringing beads, doing puzzles, and building with construction materials.

Mastery play

Children often repeat an action or play activity and will continue until they have mastered the skill.

Dramatic/fantasy play

Children take on roles in pretend games about familiar experiences such as going on a family camping trip or a birthday party. They may create props and use them as they engage in adventures, such as creating a castle with a card table and sheets.

This type of play:

- Allows children to rearrange the world in their own way.
- Promotes problem-solving and is rich in language and imagination.
- Often begins with the phrase, *Let's pretend*.

☆☆ 12 TYPES OF PLAY

- #1 LARGE MOTOR
- #2 SMALL MOTOR
- #3 MASTERY
- #4 DRAMATIC/FANTASY
- #5 SYMBOLIC
- #6 LANGUAGE
- #7 CREATIVE OR EXPRESSIVE
- #8 SENSORY
- #9 CONSTRUCTION
- #10 ROUGH AND TUMBLE
- #11 GAMES/RULE-BASED
- #12 RISK-TAKING

☆☆



Symbolic play

Children take everyday objects and use them to represent something else such as a prop for make-believe play. For example, towel becomes a superhero cape.

Language play

Children develop mastery of language by playing with words, rhymes, verses, and songs that they make up and change. They tell stories and act them out. Children are fascinated by other languages, especially when these languages are presented in playful ways such as a in a song, rhyme or a story.

Creative or expressive play

Children have opportunities to express ideas and emotions through art, music, and writing. This type of play supports the development of creative thinking.

Sensory play

Most children enjoy sensory play with water, sand, mud, and other materials. This provides gives them the chance to explore the properties (textures, sounds, smells, etc.) and functions of materials, equipment, and objects.

Construction play

The development of visual/spatial, fine motor, and math skills are supported by constructive play. This type of play requires skill and use of the imagination.

Rough and tumble play

This essential type of play involves playful fighting, wrestling, and chasing games. The purpose has less to do with fighting than children being curious about touching, tickling, and measuring their own strength with that of a peer as well as discovering physical flexibility.

Games/rules-based play

Children follow or create rules to reach a shared goal. This might include playing a game outdoors such as Hide and Seek, creating their own games, and computer, card, or board games.

Risk-taking play

Children learn to master challenges through risk-taking play. Most children know how far they can go without getting hurt. Many children do not have opportunities for this type of play because most play spaces are designed to be as risk-free as possible. But, through this type of play, children can learn to assess risks and set boundaries for themselves.

Additional Resources

Healthychildren.org | The Power of Play - How Fun and Games Help Children Thrive
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/fitness/Pages/Caution-Children-at-Play.aspx>

Minnesota Children's Museum | The Power of Play
<http://www.childrensmuseums.org/images/MCMResearchSummary.pdf>

For more information, visit www.inclusivechildcare.org.

Copyright © 2025 Center for Inclusive Child Care

These materials may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. Information in this tip sheet has been modified from multiple sources.

Funding provided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

www.inclusivechildcare.org

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:

Develop

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

In-Person Classes:

Pediatric and Adult First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

This American Red Cross Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED course incorporates the latest science and teaches students to recognize and care for a variety of first aid emergencies. Students will learn how to respond to breathing and cardiac emergencies to help victims of any age. Special attention will be given to pediatric (infants and children up to 12 years of age) care specifically for child care providers in all settings and any child caregiver. KCF: VIIB

Saturday, January 17 | 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
\$50 | 4 credit hours
Sun Ray Library, St. Paul

ACE Interface Understanding NEAR Science: Building Self-Healing Communities

Children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are at an increased risk of negative health, mental health, and social outcomes. During this session, participants learn about key findings from the fields of neurobiology, epigenetics, ACEs, and resilience research (NEAR science), which outlines how toxic stress can impact healthy development, and the ways to prevent and mitigate the harm of childhood trauma. KCF: IX

Tuesday, January 20 | 5-7 p.m.
\$10 | 2 credit hours
Room for Growing, Forest Lake

Supervising for Safety for Family Child Care

Discover guidelines to establish effective policies and practices within the family child care program, ensuring a safe and healthy environment for children. Explore Minnesota Rule 2 health and safety licensing standards along with best practices related to standard precautions (including infectious disease), medication administration, allergy response, food safety, physical premises safety,

hazardous materials safety, risk reduction, mandated reporting, emergency preparedness, and active supervision. KCF: VIIA and VIIB

Saturday, January 24 | 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
FREE | 6 credit hours
Forest Lake Area High School, Forest Lake

Exploring the Family Caregiver Partnership

Examine the importance of building quality relationships with families of children with special needs as an essential element in successful child care placements. Explore specific strategies for building parent-provider partnerships including open communication, trust, respect, and other key components necessary for achieving the goal of successful inclusion and retention of all children. KCF: III

Monday, January 26 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.
\$10 | 2 credit hours
Veteran's Memorial Community Center,
Inver Grove Heights

Online Scheduled Classes:

It's Time to Go Outside! Outdoor Play and Safety in Family Child Care Settings

Reflect on the exciting opportunities for children's exploration and learning that can only be found in the great outdoors! Explore important safety considerations and supervision needs that exist within the environment, including playground equipment and materials, as well as the variables and hazards unique to family child care settings. Create a plan for safety and supervision while promoting children's health and well-being in outdoor play spaces. KCF: VIIB

Tuesday, January 26 | 6-8 p.m.
\$20 | 2 credit hours

Policies and Practices for Family Child Care

Gain a better understanding of the importance of strong policies for your business. Learn how to create your own policy manual and contract or revise what you have to increase its effectiveness. Learn strategies to help with enforcing your policies. KCF: VI

Wednesday, January 28 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.
FREE | 2 credit hours

Continued on page 9

Continued from Training on page 8

Cooking With Kids

Learn how to safely make food and sensory materials, such as playdough, with children in early childhood settings. Participants explore hands-on methods that build fine-motor, language, and math skills while fostering creativity, cooperation, and meaningful sensory exploration. KCF: IIA

Tuesday, February 3 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.
FREE | 2 credit hours

Preschool Ages and Stages

Become familiar with the physical, social emotional, cognitive, and communication/language changes that occur during 36-60 months. In interactive discussions and activities, discover developmentally appropriate activities for areas of development for preschoolers and the importance of play. KCF: I

Monday, February 9 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.
\$10 | 2 credit hours

Baby Signing and Reading Cues Birth to Age 2

Explore the research and benefits behind baby signing

and learn common American Sign Language baby modifications. Engage in learning activities to recognize children, ages birth to age 2, verbal and non-verbal attempts to communicate and explore developmentally appropriate ways to respond and encourage language development. KCF: IIB

Saturday, March 7 | 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
\$15 | 2 credit hours

Other Trainings

Provider's Choice for Gather and Grow Virtual Conference

This conference offers five classes. Take one class or all five!

Saturday-Tuesday, January 24-27
\$25/class or \$85 for all five | 10 credit hours if attending all five classes.

Visit the [Providers Choice website](#) for more information.

Training Tidbits

Develop Records

If you would like to give your licensor access to your Develop Learning record, which means you won't need to print it, please follow the directions below and inform your licensor that you have given access:

1. Log in to your account on the [Develop website](#).
2. Click on the "Employment" tab under your profile.
3. Click on "Edit employment" tab.
4. Click the blue "Add Position" button.
5. Select "Direct Care and Education Program."
6. Search **only for your Department of Human Services (DHS) license number** and click search, then scroll down (third search box down).
7. Scroll down, then click on your name to select that program as your "Employer" and "Confirm."
8. Fill out your position details.

If you have any difficulties, either [email Develop support](#) or call 844-605-6938.

Health and Safety I and II Training

Providers need to take both Health and Safety I and II every five years. Taking a Health and Safety I or II class can count as a Supervision class.

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID)/Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) Videos

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) have updated the online videos for SUID and AHT to offer more variety. The videos are emotional and powerful. These videos now total over one hour. You can watch any combination of the videos to equal one hour and document the date the videos were watched. *The full online or in-person class of SUID and AHT must be taken at least once every two years.*

View the [video training on the DHS website](#).



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](#) | 651-302-6898
- 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.