

20 July 2016

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services - Legal Services
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

RE: Regulations Related to Child Care Subsidy Program

First Five Nebraska applauds HHS for its commitment to the healthy development of Nebraska children who face adverse circumstances, as well as its efforts to ensure subsidized child care environments offer the level of quality that close the achievement gap for young children at risk. We are pleased to offer these comments in support of the proposed child care subsidy regulation changes.

We know there are over 64,000 Nebraska children ages 0-5 who are at risk of failing in school. (See attached map.) As of July 2015, 22,682 of these children and their parents utilized the child care subsidy.¹

Primarily impacting tribal wards and foster parents of tribal wards regarding eligibility redeterminations, the proposed regulations also reflect important improvements the Department has been implementing over the last year regarding transitional child care assistance. This change helps to ensure continuity of care for children at risk utilizing the child care subsidy. Continuity of care is critical to sustaining stable relationships with caring adults who are invested in the child's healthy social, cognitive, physical, and language development – all important for their long-term success.

The ability to impact a child's future success is never greater than during their first five years. First Five Nebraska supports the proposed regulation changes, and we look forward to working with the Department to make continued improvements in the future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jen Goettemoeller".

Jennifer M. Goettemoeller, MSW
Senior Policy Associate
First Five Nebraska

¹ Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services correspondence from Douglas Weinberg, Director of the Division of Children and Family Services, to State Senator Heath Mello. October 21, 2015.