



April 9, 2020

State of Nebraska Child Care
c/o CCDF Draft Plan Comments
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Ms. Vint,

First Five Nebraska (FFN) appreciates the hard work and thought you have put into Nebraska's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan. We are also grateful for your efforts to bring Nebraska into compliance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 2014. You and your staff are taking the necessary steps to ensure Nebraska's children most in need receive quality child care that promotes their healthy development, safety, and well-being.

This plan would be a large improvement for families that rely on the child care subsidy so their children can receive safe, quality care while parents endeavor to improve their situation through work or education. The research supporting the importance of continuity of care to children's development is robust. The key elements of the plan, including a 12-month eligibility period, no sliding fee increase during that 12-month period, graduated phase-out, and temporary change allowances all support this goal. We are also pleased to see the department allow enrollment payment for foster children and children receiving the adoption or guardianship subsidy. Because enrollment is a common standard for high-quality care, any step toward allowing the subsidy to pay for enrollment is a step in the right direction.

It is paramount that we verify the safety of the environments in which Nebraska's children will spend much of their time. Broader background checks, first aid and CPR requirements, orientations, training, and emergency preparedness support this effort. Including support for homeless families as a central issue for child care services is also a crucial step to ensuring more children in need have access to safe environments that will facilitate healthy development.

The proposed changes also demonstrate a commitment to making the child care subsidy more user-friendly for child care providers. Allowing providers to bill up to 5 absence days per child per month and maintaining a 12-month eligibility period will offer more stability to child care professionals who take on the important task of serving children in need.

FFN supports the proposed changes and again lauds the CCDF team for their great work. In addition to these changes, we hope to continue working with your team in the future to ensure that child care subsidy rates pay for the cost of providing quality care.

Sincerely,

Jason Prokop
Director
First Five Nebraska

Betty Medinger
Senior Vice President
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation