Guidance for school and child care this fall 08.31.20

Hope you’re doing as well as can be expected at this time. A new school year is right around the corner for those of us with children and, unlike years past, this one is full of anxiety and uncertainty. I wanted to provide some updated guidance as it relates to school/child care this fall so you can make decisions accordingly.

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, you should be exploring alternative options in the case that local school district or daycare decisions require care for your children at home – and you should have an established backup plan, especially if you serve in a position providing direct services to inmates and are required to report to work. At this time, you may use Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act ("EFMLA") leave if you find yourself without adequate school/care options this fall because your local school or daycare is shut down due to a COVID-19 outbreak. It is important to note that EFMLA remains limited to up to 12 workweeks of leave in the fiscal year and is applicable for school/care coverage only if there are no adequate care options for you in your community. See the attached documents and check in with your local human resources contact if you have questions.

If you are still looking for child care or school-age care information, here are some good resources:

- Child Care Aware referral line at 1-888-291-9811 lists available licensed child care providers.
- [MN.gov/childcare](http://MN.gov/childcare) contains a map of available providers and those willing to support distance learning.
- [Parent Aware](http://Parent Aware) has tools and information to find the best quality child care and early education for your child. Search more than 12,000 programs by quality rating, location, schedule, ages served, and more on the website. The website is presented in four different languages.
- Community Education and other school-based care programs promote learning and social development through after school and school-age programming for students. Contact your local school district office for more information.

Please remember our agency has policies and resources in place to help if you or a family member in your care are diagnosed with COVID-19 or you’re struggling with the pressures of the job or home. Those resources include:

- The option to telework, even with your children present, if you are not providing direct service or security as long as you can perform your job duties;
- [Paid COVID-19 Leave](http://Paid COVID-19 Leave) or [EFMLA](http://EFMLA) for health and care needs related to COVID-19;
- Access to [Doctors on Demand](http://Doctors on Demand) and the agency’s in-house Peer Support team that can be reached by calling 651.361.7110 or emailing peersupportunit.doc@state.mn.us.

Thank you for continuing to so effectively manage your personal obligations with your public service duties. These past few months have been difficult for all of us, and we might have more COVID-19 challenges ahead of us. Please continue to protect yourself, your families, your colleagues and the folks we serve by using proper protocols.

Stay safe, and stay healthy.

Marcus Schmit, Assistant Commissioner, Operations Support Division