



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 16, 2009

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Arizona Sets License Fees

Pilot Program to Offer Discount for Child Care Licensees

ADHS announced fees for all licensees this afternoon. During the comment period, ADHS heard loud and clear from the child care facilities that they wanted the Department to lower the proposed fees.

"My administration, especially Interim Director Will Humble at Health Services, has been diligently exploring alternatives to help the people of Arizona," said Governor Jan Brewer. "I am pleased that he and his team have been able to identify creative solutions to replace subsidies that the state can no longer afford to provide."

The Department examined several options to help providers. One solution was to reach out to First Things First which prioritizes the education and well-being of Arizona's Young Children.

"After the meetings, our team put on our thinking caps, restructured the child care fees, figured out a way to use federal and voter protected funds to offer a substantial discount for most child care facilities, and invented a new public health curriculum for pre-schoolers," said Will Humble, ADHS Interim Director. "As long as facilities participate in our new, easy-to-implement "Empower Pack" public health program for preschoolers, they can receive a significant break on their fees and teach their kids new and valuable life skills to stay healthy."

The Empower Pack pilot program will allow centers to pay 50% of the new fees. The facilities have to incorporate 10 ways to empower children to lead healthy lives (attached). The list addresses everything from providing healthy food and exercise, to limiting "screen" time. Children would be in a tobacco-free environment and families would receive information and referrals about tobacco prevention, cessation and second-hand smoke.

"Child Care Facilities provide a unique opportunity to reach families with really strong public health messaging," said Jeanette Shea, Assistant Director of Public Health Prevention. "Creating healthy habits at an early age will affect their entire lives and impact the health of our state overall."

The pilot program will reduce most child care fees to \$3,900.00 for a three-year license. Facilities with 11-59 will pay \$2,000 and those that watch 5-10 kids will pay \$500 if they participate in the pilot program for a three-year license.

All other licensing fees will increase as proposed. The fees will take effect January 1, 2010.

Empower Center Standards
10 Ways to Empower Children to Live Healthy Lives

1. Facilities should encourage physical activities as part of their curriculum by scheduling at least 60 minutes of structured activity (which can be broken up in shorter time periods) per day. Encourage "sun safe" physical activities.
2. Limit kid's screen time* to under one hour a day.
3. Avoid more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity at a time, except while the child is sleeping.
4. Offer water at least 4 times during the day.
5. Serve 1% low fat or fat free milk for all children over two years of age.
6. Serve only 100% percent fruit juice (with no added sugars), and limit kids to (4 ounces) per day.
7. Serve meals family style** - let the child decide how much to eat. Avoid rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind.
8. If eligible, participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.
9. Facilities and homes should be totally (24-hour) smoke-free campuses.
10. Provide all families with education and referrals regarding tobacco prevention cessation and second hand smoke at least 4 times per year.

***Screen time** includes: TV/DVD, Computer, and Video Games.

****Family-style** meal service means serving foods in bowls or dishes on the table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves or serve themselves with help from an adult. Caregivers eat the same food, promote healthy eating habits, and create a positive meal-time environment. Enough food must be placed on the table to provide the full required portion size for all the children at the table.

Note: Programs operating 6 hours or less would alter the activity schedule, screen time, and the number of times water is offered by 1/2.

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