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“In the face of COVID-19, the Department of Health and Human Services has provided guidance for all licensed child care providers to promote safety of children, families, child care providers, and their communities. At this time, we support providers remaining open in accordance with these guidelines, particularly those serving parents who are essential to Maine’s response, including first responders, health providers, public health staff, and essential state employees. These guidelines recognize the ongoing needs of the public and Maine’s families while prioritizing children’s safety.

With classroom instruction curtailed throughout the state, the need for child care has increased. As a result, we have enacted temporary emergency protocols that allow for a waiver of provider ratios for the care of school-aged children (Pre-K and 4-year-olds and older). Providers must consult with their Child Care Licensing Specialist to thoughtfully waive required ratios in order to ensure the health and safety of children, as outlined in the [official guidance from OCFS](#). We have also [issued guidance](#) to child care providers regarding the Child Care Subsidy Program to ensure continuity in services for families and providers. These changes correspond closely to those being implemented in other states, including in New England, and were made in accordance with federal guidance. This is a quickly evolving situation and the latest information on the Office of Child and Family Services’ response is available [online](#).”

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