



CHILD CARE
LICENSING BUREAU



Staffing Shortages in Michigan's Child Care

Child care staffing shortages throughout the state have made it difficult to find caregivers for our youngest Michiganders. With over 9,000 vacancies, shortages of staff are impacting the industry's ability to serve children and families.

To help meet this pressing need, LARA's Child Care Licensing Bureau (CCLB) is offering licensed child care providers more options to comply with rules related to the child care workforce.

CCLB recognizes the importance of meeting potential employees where they are and allowing them to gain experience in the classroom while completing required professional development—including coursework, industry recognized credentials and degrees. Creating more opportunities for current and future child care professionals will lead Michigan to a highly trained and sustainable workforce.

This memo explains why the exception to certain rules, a "rule variance" is needed, what flexibility is available, and how providers can apply.

The Solution:

Addressing staffing needs in child care businesses across the state is vital to expand options for kids and families and protect and grow child care professionals. LARA’s Child Care Licensing Bureau is now accepting requests for exceptions to the rules, “rule variances”, identified by child care professionals as barriers to bringing on new staff members.

Role	Flexibility Available	Licensing Rules	Action Required to Receive an Exception to the Rule
Early childhood or school age program director	A potential program director does not have the required education, coursework, and/or experience	R 400.8113(7) through R400.8113(9)	The individual must be pursuing a relevant certificate or degree. This can include enrolling in classes at a college or university, applying for (and participating in) Michigan Reconnect, or applying for TEACH. See additional details about these opportunities below.
Lead caregiver	A potential lead caregiver does not have the required education, coursework, and/or experience	R400.8122(5) and R400.8122(6)	The individual must be pursuing a relevant certificate or degree. This can include enrolling in classes at a college or university, applying for (and participating in) Michigan Reconnect, or applying for TEACH. See additional details about these opportunities below.
Child care aide	A potential child care aide does not meet the age and education requirement	R 400.8101(g) R400.8182(1) through R400.8182(3)	CCLB will consider individuals that are 16 or 17 years old, if the individual is supervised by a licensee designee, an approved program director, or approved lead caregiver that meets education and/or experience requirements. Child care aides that are 16 or 17 may not care for children without another adult in the room.

Note: A licensee will not be granted exceptions to the rules for both a program director and lead caregiver. For example:

- If a site hires a program director under an exception to the rules, a lead caregiver must be fully qualified and meet all education, coursework, and experience requirements.
- If a site hires one or more lead caregivers under an exception to the rules, the program director must meet all education, coursework, and experience requirements.

Within 90 days of being granted an exception to the rule for educational and coursework requirements for program directors or lead caregivers, the individual will need to apply for, enroll, and be actively involved with one or more of the following:

- **Michigan Reconnect:** Michigan Reconnect (Reconnect) is a last-dollar scholarship program that pays for you to attend your in-district community college tuition-free or offers a large tuition discount if you attend an out-of-district community college. To be eligible, you must:
 - Be at least 25 years old when you apply
 - Have lived in Michigan for a year or more
 - Have a high school diploma or equivalent
 - Have not yet completed a college degree (associate or bachelor's)

[Apply for Michigan Reconnect today!](#)

- **T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships:** T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Michigan scholarships are available to support eligible employees complete early childhood education credit hours as part of an approved license variance request for caregiver qualifications. To be eligible, applicants must be:
 - Working a minimum of 20 hours per week in a licensed program,
 - Earning no more than \$19.60/hour and
 - Submit proof of an approved license variance for caregiver qualification.
- Contact the Michigan AEYC office for more information by email at teach@miaeYC.org, by phone at 866-648-3224 ext. 312, or by utilizing the online chat feature at www.miaeYC.org.

[T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship application](#)

- Other programs (accredited college/university, Montessori credential, Child Development Associate Credential, Michigan School-Age Youth Development Credential).

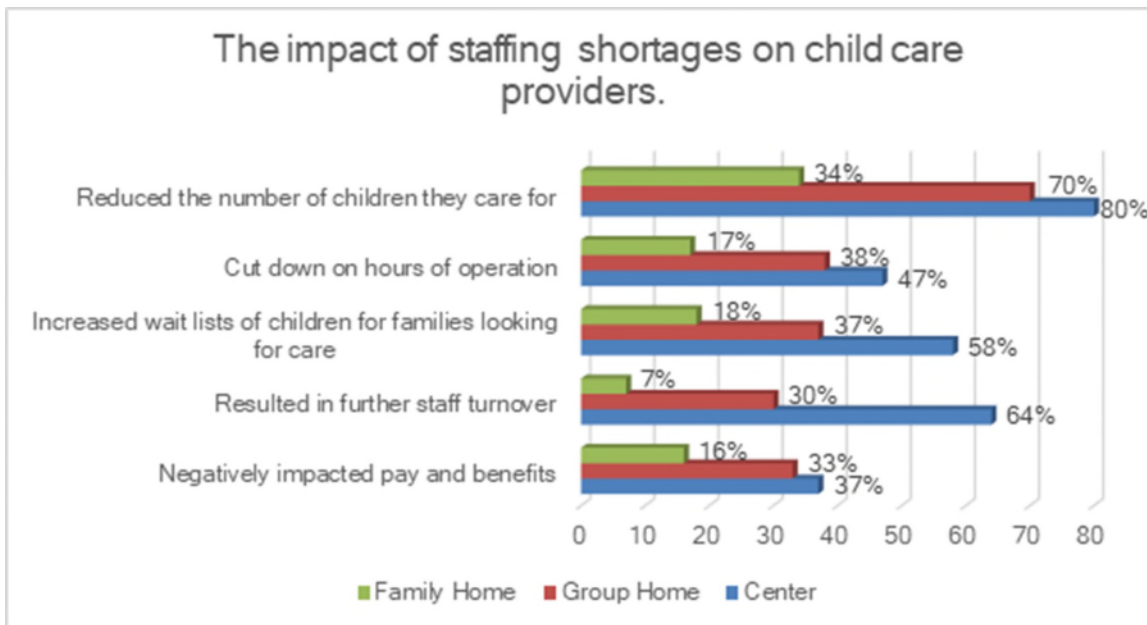
The department may grant exceptions to a rule, called a “rule variance” under R400.8104, if the alternative proposed provides clear and convincing evidence that the health, welfare, and safety of children is protected. Therefore, an exception may only be applied when it is determined that the granting of the exception will not reduce the level of protection afforded the children in care.

Survey: Fewer Options for Fewer Families

In February 2022, LARA’s Child Care Licensing Bureau sent a survey to almost 8,000 licensed child care providers in the State. CCLB’s goal was to learn more about the staff vacancies, collect child care professionals’ input on the impact of hiring challenges on child care, and understand how licensing regulations impact programs’ ability to fill open positions.

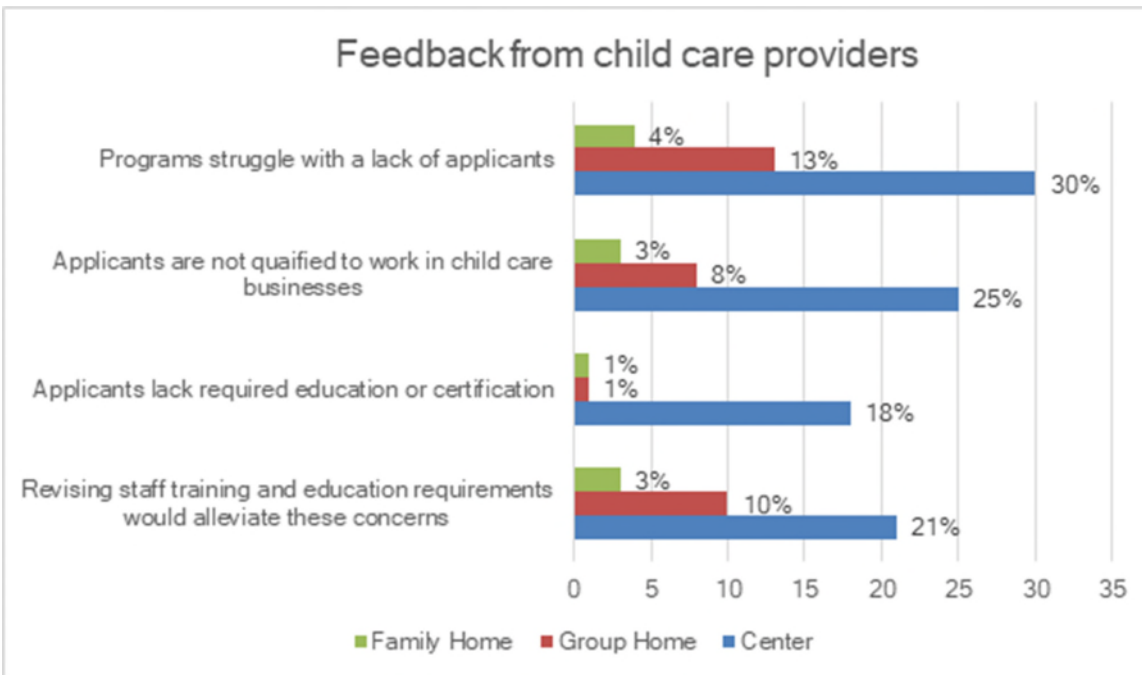
The 2,511 responses from licensed child care professionals confirmed that the staffing shortages means fewer options for child care and early childhood education for kids and families across Michigan.

Specifically, providers shared that staff shortages have:



The second goal of the survey was to better understand the impact of child care licensing rules on staff shortages and identify a way to help child care providers while maintaining health and safety of children in child care.

The survey found:



How to apply for a variance:

