



IVY HOUSE

SHARING GOD'S LOVE WITH FAMILIES BY PROVIDING
A SAFE AND CARING PLACE FOR KIDS TO STAY

WHAT IS A CRISIS NURSERY

A crisis nursery provides short-term, emergency child care for families experiencing stressful or unexpected situations. These situations may include medical emergencies, mental health crises, housing instability, domestic conflict, or other moments when parents need immediate support to keep their children safe. Crisis nurseries support the belief that asking for help is a strength, and that early support can prevent crisis from becoming trauma.

WHO WE ARE

Ivy House provides safe, short-term, and confidential care for children when parents or caregivers need extra support. Children may stay for up to 72 hours at a time and families can utilize our services for up to 30 days per year. All care is provided at no cost to families and includes food, clothing, diapers, and other essential needs. In addition to child care, Ivy House supports parents and caregivers through advocacy and a basic needs program. By stabilizing families during times of crisis, Ivy House helps prevent ACE's (adverse childhood experiences), child abuse and neglect while strengthening family resilience and long-term outcomes.

We care for on average 12-14 kids a month. Our record is 28!

We receive an average of 50 calls a month requesting care. Our record is 77!

Ivy House has a 1:3 ratio which gives children important adult attention.

Each year Ivy House gives out thousands of diapers, hundreds of pieces of clothing & makes over 1500 meals.

MN CRISIS NURSERIES

Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery
STAR House, St. Paul
Ivy House, New Ulm

WHAT MAKES IVY HOUSE DIFFERENT

- Ivy House is the first home based crisis nursery in the state of Minnesota; modeled like a true family home.
- We provide care beyond our county lines and any family can utilize our services as long as they have an emergency contact within 2 hours of Ivy House. We have cared for children from all over Southern Minnesota and even the metro.
- We want children to come to the same place and receive care from the same providers.
- Our home is the most consistent thing in some of our children's lives and it's why we believe our model is beneficial for children.
- Ivy House provides care for 2-72 hours at a time to allow short-term or long-term stays.

THE LICENSING CHALLENGE

- Ivy House currently operates under two licenses: Children's Residential Facility (CRF) & Special Family Child Care (SFCC)
- Neither license accurately reflects what Ivy House does. A CRF license is intended for residential facilities where children live on site, children do not live at Ivy House. The SFCC license is designed for ongoing child care, not short-term emergency stays of up to 72 hours.
- CRF regulations require an overnight stay. SFCC can not allow an overnight stay.

WHY MINNESOTA NEEDS A CRISIS NURSERY LICENSE

Creating a distinct license for crisis nurseries would do the following:

Acknowledge the Importance of Offering this Type of Care

Understand the need for free short-term, non-residential, emergency child care.

Reduce Administrative Costs

Allow organizations to focus resources on children and families, not redundant compliance.

Increase Access Statewide

Lower barriers for opening new crisis nurseries, especially in rural Minnesota.

Strengthen Prevention

Support parents during crisis moments, reducing child maltreatment, ACE's, and long-term system involvement.

THE IMPACT

- Crisis nurseries like Ivy House keep children safe and cared for during family emergencies
 - Support parents so families can stabilize and stay together.
 - Reduce the risk of abuse, neglect, and take burden off of CPS.
 - Help prevent ACE's, improving long-term health and wellbeing.
 - When parents are supported, children thrive!

LEGISLATIVE ASK

We urge legislators to create a Minnesota license specific for crisis nurseries and work directly with providers like Ivy House to establish clear, safety-focused standards. Communities across the state want to open crisis nurseries, but the current licensing structure creates unnecessary barriers that make it difficult or impossible to do so. A dedicated license would remove those barriers, strengthen prevention services, and allow more families, especially in rural areas, to access safe, short-term care before crises escalate.





**Written Testimony in Support of Crisis Nurseries License Requirement Modifications
(H.F. 3750 – Torkelson)**

House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee

March 11, 2026

Co-Chair Kotyza-Witthuhn, Co-Chair West, and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, writes to express our support for H.F. 3750, which would create modified license requirements for crisis nurseries. Unless absolutely required for public safety, people trying to serve others (especially at their own expense) should not face unnecessary barriers that inhibit their ability to serve the community, this includes barriers in state licensing. Please vote yes to resolve this gap in state licensure.

When families are facing difficult or unexpected situations, they often need flexible and timely care and support. Sometimes, this may mean short-term, daytime care, and other times, they may need overnight care for their children.

Organizations working to respond to these situations are facing obstacles that are causing delays for parents, lessening the amount of care opportunities for children, or causing the organizations to choose to provide just one type of care, which may not fit with the needs of every family in crisis. But it is within the state's power to provide flexibility to these organizations so they can fully respond to the needs of parents. If we want to make Minnesota the best state to raise a family, it is incumbent upon us to create pathways where families' needs are met, especially during times of uncertainty.

As the Catholic Church, we care deeply about the well-being of children and families and aim to support families and parents in need. We recognize that parents can face challenges and life does not always go as planned. When parents are in these difficult situations, it can be a great relief to send their child to a crisis nursery where they know their child will receive a good meal and a place to play or sleep. It allows the parent(s) space to attend an appointment, make a decision, or respond to the crisis at hand with a clear mind. For the child, being in this stable environment, even for just a short time, is a great benefit socially, academically, and mentally.

We ask that you modify licensing requirements so that organizations can respond to the needs of Minnesota families with more timeliness and flexibility, and less bureaucracy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Maggee Hangge
Assistant Director for Family Policy
mhangge@mncatholic.org

525 Park Street, Suite 450
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

Tel: 651-227-8777
Fax: 651-227-2675
www.mncatholic.org

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS ♦ DIOCESE OF CROOKSTON ♦ DIOCESE OF DULUTH

DIOCESE OF NEW ULM ♦ DIOCESE OF SAINT CLOUD ♦ DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER

March 10, 2026

Dear Legislative Leaders,

This heartfelt letter is written on behalf of Ivy House, a crisis nursery in New Ulm, MN. I am a physician assistant and have been in medical practice for 24 years. More importantly, I am a mother of 4 children, 2 of which are adopted. One of our sons is adopted from Haiti, where children are orphaned daily due to the country's devastation and poverty. Our youngest son is adopted from foster care. He was born in Minnesota and lived with his birth parents until they separated (domestic violence and drug abuse), and then ultimately, he was removed from his birth mother's care due to neglect and her drug addiction. He joined our family just before his 5th birthday. After 15 months in our home as a foster child, the court granted us permanent physical and legal custody. He will be 10 years old in April and he is thriving, doing well in school, and loves to play hockey and baseball.

These experiences working in health care, and working through adoption and foster care, have demonstrated to me the utmost importance of the work that Ivy House does for families and children daily. The loving supportive care and resources that Ivy House provides, to children certainly, but also to parents, is crucial in helping our communities build strong healthy families. These families are the foundation for a healthy, safe, thriving society.

After learning about the work of Ivy House, visiting and working with Amber Collins and the team at Ivy House, I am eager to open an "Ivy House" in my hometown of Owatonna, MN. The need is apparent in Owatonna and in many communities across the state. As of right now, the barrier to supporting families and children through Ivy House is licensing. Once a unique license is available to allow Ivy House to do this important work as it was meant to function, the benefits will expand across the state in multiple communities with multiple "Ivy Houses."

Ivy House and the people who pour into it (workers, volunteers, financial supporters, etc.) provide a necessary resource for many families in New Ulm and the surrounding communities. It's time to allow other cities and towns across Minnesota to provide the same, beginning with an appropriate unique license.

Please contact me if desired.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hedlund

651-216-9455

elizabethhedlund@msn.com



STAR HOUSE
Strength, Time, and Resilience

STAR House - Crisis Nursery

March 10, 2026

House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of St Paul based crisis nursery, STAR House, I am writing to express our strong support for House File 3750 (HF 3750), which would establish a clear licensing pathway for crisis nurseries in Minnesota.

STAR House exists to provide a safe and supportive place for children when families face temporary crises such as medical emergencies, housing instability, or other urgent challenges. However, under the current regulatory framework, we must navigate licensing structures that were not designed for this type of service. These overlapping requirements create operational limitations that make it difficult to fully utilize our program and respond to families as effectively as we would like.

A licensing framework specifically designed for crisis nurseries through HF 3750 would remove these unnecessary conflicts while maintaining safety and oversight. Most importantly, it would allow programs like STAR House to better serve families who are seeking short-term, preventative support during difficult moments.

We believe HF 3750 will strengthen crisis nursery services across the state and help ensure families can access the support they need before situations escalate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarah Ellefson
Executive Director
STAR House