



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

## **Guidance Related to COVID-19: Subsidized Child Care Provider Attendance and Payment**

(Updated Sept. 21, 2020)

### **Background**

As part of the District of Columbia Government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is sharing updated guidance regarding the attendance policy and payment processes for subsidized child care providers.

### **Scope**

As of Nov. 1, 2020, OSSE will return to processing monthly child care subsidy payments based on the child's attendance at the child care facility. Please see below for more details and additional flexibilities accompanying this change, including information regarding an increase in allowable unexcused absences. Also included in this document are information on payment for school-age care, family co-payments, placement changes, subsidy family redeterminations, subsidy agreement renewal and guidance for new applicants to the subsidy program. Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) providers should refer to the [guidance released on Aug. 3, 2020](#), for guidance specific to that program.

### **Date Issued**

This guidance was originally issued on Sept. 21, 2020, and will take effect Oct. 1, 2020. It will remain in effect until further notice.

### **Guidance**

#### **I. Subsidy Payment Policy through Oct. 31, 2020**

The [prior policy](#) (updated on June 22, 2020, and which has been in place from May 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2020), is extended for an additional month, through Oct. 31, 2020. Subsidy reimbursement for October 2020 will continue to be equal to the individual facility's average monthly payment for fiscal year 2020 (FY20), from Oct. 1, 2019 through Jan. 31, 2020, regardless of attendance or a facility's operating status.

#### **II. Subsidy Payment Policy starting Nov. 1, 2020**

Effective Nov. 1, 2020, OSSE will return to reimbursing child care providers based on the monthly attendance submitted in the OSSE Attendance Tracking System (OATS) by the fifth business day of each month. Providers must be open to receive payment and those who do not submit attendance will not receive the monthly reimbursement. Facilities that are not open and operating in-person child care services are not eligible to submit attendance and receive payment. Children must attend in-person care to be considered present for the day.

### III. Unexcused Absences

The number of unexcused absences will increase from five to **10** per month, to provide additional funding stability for providers during this time. Monthly reimbursements will cease after the tenth unexcused absence for the enrolled child and resume the next month.

### IV. Excused Absences

COVID-19 related absences, including quarantining, can be considered excused absences if accompanied by appropriate documentation. An Unusual Incident Report (UIR) filed with OSSE may be submitted as documentation for children who may be quarantining following exclusion or dismissal from care based on observed symptoms at arrival or while in the facility's care. Children who are quarantining based on travel or potential exposure outside of the care of the child care provider must provide documentation to support the absence. If a facility is closed at the direction of DC Health or OSSE following confirmed COVID-19 cases, all days included in such closure can be counted as excused for children receiving subsidy.

Acceptable documents include the following:

- A note from a doctor;
- Travel documents;
- Notification of exposure from DC Health; or
- Detailed statement from the parent or guardian citing the details of potential exposure.

### V. School-Age Children

Child care facilities that are open and providing full-time care for preschool or school-age children will receive the full-time rate for children on days that DC Public Schools (DCPS) remains in a distance learning posture. A local education agency (LEA) that has a subsidy provider agreement may not be reimbursed for full-day attendance for a child for whom it also receives Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) funding. An LEA may receive reimbursement at the before and/or after school-age rate for children for whom it is providing in-person before- and/or after-school care. Subsidy funds may not be used for instructional services which supplant or duplicate the academic program of any school.

### VI. Family Co-payments

Per earlier guidance, OSSE no longer reimburses child care providers for family co-payments as of July 1, 2020. Child care providers who are open may (but are not required to) collect family co-payments for children in attendance. Co-payments will continue to be waived for families who are enrolled at child care providers who remain closed.

## VII. Placement Changes

Families who would like a placement change to a different child care facility due to closure resulting from COVID-19 can email [ESA.childcare@dc.gov](mailto:ESA.childcare@dc.gov) with the following information:

- Parent's name;
- Child's name;
- Current placement;
- Requested placement; and
- Effective date of requested change.

Families and the child care providers will receive email confirmation of the change.

## VIII. Families who Require Recertification of Eligibility

As clarification, families with children under age 13 and who have their 12-month eligibility expire during the public health emergency will remain eligible for subsidized child care throughout the public health emergency, until the District government enters Phase Four of the [COVID-19 reopening](#). Families will receive a notice in the mail with a request to come in and recertify after the public health emergency is lifted. Services for children who turn 13 will terminate at the next redetermination date following their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday (whether or not the District government has entered Phase Four).

## IX. Subsidy Agreement Renewal

The current child care subsidy agreements will be extended through Dec. 31, 2020. The Subsidy Agreement Renewal Application (SARA) will open on Sept. 21, 2020, for submission of the required documentation. Documentation has been streamlined for the renewal process this year. Additional information, along with the details of what will be required and how to access the system, can be accessed on OSSE's [website](#).

## X. New Applicants to the Subsidy Program

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Services Division (CCSD) has established drop boxes for families with new applications for the child care subsidy program at the Congress Heights (4049 South Capitol St. SW) and Taylor Street, (1207 Taylor St. NW) locations. Families who drop off documents for processing can expect a phone call from a DHS social service representative to conduct a phone interview regarding their eligibility.

The child care subsidy application and information about required documentation can be found [here](#).

### **Questions?**

If you have questions relating to this guidance, please contact Sara Mead, Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning, OSSE, at [Sara.Mead@dc.gov](mailto:Sara.Mead@dc.gov).

For resources and information on the District of Columbia Government's COVID-19 response and recovery, please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

### **Related Regulations**

- CCDBG Act and its implementing regulations, 45 C.F.R. Parts 98 and 99, as administered by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- District of Columbia's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, current version;
- Child Development Facilities Regulation Act of 1998, effective April 13, 1999 (D.C. Law 12-215; D.C. Official Code §§ 7-2031 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Facilities Act");
- Day Care Policy Act of 1979, effective September 19, 1979 (D.C. Law 3-16; D.C. Official Code §§ 4-401 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Day Care Act").