



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

**Guidance Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19):
Subsidized Child Care Provider Attendance and Payment**
(Updated Feb. 7, 2022)

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 returned 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 specific to that program.

Date Issued

This guidance was originally issued on Sept. 21, 2020, and took effect Oct. 1, 2020. It was subsequently updated on Feb. 19, 2021 and Feb. 7, 2022. It will remain in effect until further notice.

Guidance

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. Excused Absences [UPDATED February 2022]

Child care providers may be reimbursed for up to 15 days of excused absences per month. Child care providers should use excused absences when individual children are excluded from child care for COVID-19-related reasons, including symptoms of COVID-19, a positive COVID-19 test, or quarantine or self-isolation following travel or close contact.

Excused absences should also be used when a facility is open, but one or more classrooms is closed for reasons related to COVID-19.

Acceptable documents for excused absences include the following:

- A note from a doctor;
- Travel documents;
- Detailed statement from the parent or guardian citing the details of potential COVID-19 exposure;
- An Unusual Incident Report (UIR) that was submitted to OSSE describing the circumstances under which a child was excluded from care due to symptoms of COVID-19;
- A UIR that was submitted to OSSE following a confirmed case of COVID-19 that details the exposure and identifies the classroom(s) affected;
- Communication from DC Health identifying staff and/or children in a facility as close contacts and providing direction regarding isolation or quarantine; or
- Communication from DC Health directing a provider to close one or more classrooms.

IV. Facility Closures

If a facility closes a classroom(s) due to a confirmed positive COVID-19 test(s) and/or exposure, excused absences (with the appropriate documentations) or unexcused absences should be used for children in the affected classrooms. No approval from OSSE is required for classroom closures following submission of the UIR and supporting documentation.

If an entire facility closes following a confirmed COVID-19 case, the facility should contact their assigned Education Services Monitor to determine eligibility for payment following submission of the UIR and supporting documentation. Payment for closed facilities will be approved for the time between submission of a DC Health report and UIR until a response is received from DC Health by the facility.

- Closures will typically be approved in the following situations, provided the facility reports the positive COVID-19 case to DC Health and submits the UIR to OSSE immediately upon learning of the positive COVID-19 case:
 - A child development home or expanded home provider is required to isolate or quarantine following a confirmed positive COVID-19 test;
 - All teaching staff in a facility have confirmed positive COVID-19 tests;
 - Two or more confirmed positive COVID-19 tests in all classrooms at the same time; and/or,
 - DC Health recommendation for closure.

V. UIRs

An UIR should be submitted to osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov for all positive COVID-19 tests of facility staff and children. A UIR must be submitted whether or not a facility closes. A copy of the report must be submitted to the Education Service Monitor if the facility is closed. All confirmed positive COVID-19 cases must also be submitted to DC Health by submitting an online form on the [DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website](#). Please do not report cases to DC Health via email or phone.

When completing the UIR, include the following information:

- Subject line of the UIR email should read **COVID-19 Positive Test** or **COVID-19 Related Closure**;
- The date of positive test(s);
- Number of individuals testing positive;
- Names of classrooms impacted;
- Actions taken by the facility in response to notification of a confirmed COVID-19 case;
- The date of closure (if applicable);
- The projected date of reopening (if known);
- Total number of business days the facility will be closed; and
- A list of the classrooms that are affected by closure.

After submitting the UIR to OSSE, facilities must submit all supporting documentation for the UIR. Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to the following information:

- Acceptable documents for excused absences as indicated above in the excused absence section;
- Communications from DC Health containing guidance for quarantine or closure; and,
- Documentation of positive tests for children and staff referenced in the UIR.

Failure to submit the required documentation may result in the delay or possible denial of payment where applicable.

VI. 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.

VII. 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.

For resources and information on the District of Columbia Government's COVID-19 response and recovery, please visit 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, US 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 (DC Law 12-215; DC Official Code §§ 7-2031 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Facilities Act");
- Day Care Policy Act of 1979, effective Sept. 19, 1979 (DC Law 3-16; DC Official Code §§ 4-401 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Day Care Act").