



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)  
Supporting Subsidized Child Care Provider Attendance and Payment  
Guidance Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**Background**

As part of the District of Columbia Government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) released guidance on Sept. 21, 2020, regarding the attendance policy and payment processes for subsidized child care providers, [available here](#). OSSE also returned to processing monthly child care subsidy payments based on the child's attendance at the child care facility on Nov. 1, 2020.

**Scope**

This document is intended to address frequently asked questions related to child care providers' implementation of the *Guidance Related to COVID-19: Subsidized Child Care Provider Attendance and Payment Guidance*.

**Date Issued**

This guidance was issued on March 25, 2021 and will remain in effect until further notice.

**General**

Child care providers must submit attendance for currently enrolled children in the OSSE Attendance Tracking System (OATS) by the fifth business day of each month. Providers must be open to receive payment, and children must attend in-person care to be considered present.

**FAQs**

- 1. How should closed providers code monthly attendance?**
  - Programs that remain closed after Nov. 1, 2020 will not be reimbursed.
  - Providers who remain closed should code all children as an Unapproved Closure (UC).
- 2. Should a program terminate from OATS children who are no longer attending? (Updated March 2021)**
  - Effective May 1, 2021, child care providers **must** terminate children who are no longer attending the facility from the child care provider's assignment roster. **"No longer attending" is defined as children who have not attended the program (in-person) at all in the past 60 days of operation. This is a change from previous guidance, when child care providers could choose to terminate children who were no longer attending, but were not required to terminate from enrollment.**
  - Providers **must** make at least two attempts to contact the parent/family of non-attending children before terminating them from the program. A record of the attempts to contact the parent/family, including the date of each attempt, should be kept in the child's subsidy

case file and available to submit to OSSE if requested. Contacts or attempts to contact families prior to the date of the issuance of this notice may satisfy this requirement provided there is documentation.

- Level 2 providers should indicate children who are no longer attending their program with a T in OATS, and terminate enrollment in the Subsidy Eligibility and Assignment (SEA) system.
- Level 1 providers should indicate children who are no longer attending their program with a T in OATS, and OSSE will provide the information to DHS to terminate enrollment.
- Providers who remain closed will no longer have to submit attendance. OSSE will terminate all children assigned to their program.

**3. How many excused and unexcused absences can a child have each month? (Updated March 2021)**

- The number of excused absences remains unchanged from the previous policy at **15 per month**.
- The number of unexcused absences has increased from five to **10 per month**. Monthly reimbursements will cease after the 10th unexcused absence for the enrolled child and resume the next month.
- Providers that are closed for care should not report unexcused absences.

**4. Will COVID-19 related absences be considered excused? (UPDATED January 2022)**

- Yes, COVID-19 related absences, including instances when an individual has symptoms of COVID-19, tests positive COVID-19, or is quarantining or self-isolating following travel or close contact, can be considered excused absences if accompanied by appropriate documentation.
- A UIR may be submitted as documentation for children who may be quarantining following exclusion or dismissal from care based on observed symptoms or close contact in the child care facility.

**5. What is acceptable documentation for COVID-19 related absences?**

- A note from a doctor,
- Travel documents (for quarantine following travel outside of the District of Columbia, Maryland or Virginia),
- Detailed statement from the parent or guardian citing the details of symptoms or potential COVID-19 exposure,
- An Unusual Incident Report (UIR) 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.

**6. If a provider closes a *classroom* due to a confirmed case of COVID-19, is the provider eligible for subsidy payment while the classroom is closed?**

- A facility that closes a classroom(s) for COVID-19 related reasons (including when it is not practical to operate a classroom because teaching staff and/or children are required to isolate or quarantine) may receive payment for children's absences on days their classroom is closed.

- No approval from OSSE is required for classroom closures following submission of the UIR and supporting documentation.
- 7. How should a provider code children’s attendance for days when a classroom is closed due to COVID-19 related reasons?**
- The facility should code attendance as either excused absences (with the appropriate documentations) or unexcused absences (if documentation is not provided) for children in the affected classrooms on days those classrooms are closed.
- 8. If a provider closes the entire facility due to a confirmed case of COVID-19, is the provider eligible for subsidy payment while the facility is closed?**
- 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 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.
  - Payment for closed facilities will *typically* 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.
  - The determination of eligibility for payment in any specific case will be made based on the specific circumstances and documentation provided by the facility.
  - Failure to submit the required documentation may result in the delay or possible denial of payment where applicable.
  - If the Education Service Monitor (ESM) confirms that the closure is approved for payment, the facility should use the code approved closure (AC) for those days when submitting attendance.
- 9. What is acceptable documentation for an approved closure (AC) due to COVID-19?**
- All confirmed positive COVID-19 cases must be reported to DC Health via the online form on the DC Health Covid-19 Reporting Requirements website.
  - In addition, facilities that close for COVID-related reasons must submit an Unusual Incident Report (UIR) to OSSE at [osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov](mailto:osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov) , with a copy to the ESM.
  - *After* submitting the UIR to OSSE, facilities must submit additional supporting documentation for the closure. 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.
  - Facilities that have questions about what additional documentation is needed should consult with their ESM.
  - Failure to submit the required documentation may result in the delay or possible denial of

payment where applicable.

**10. If a facility has a confirmed COVID-19 case but does not close, does the facility still need to submit a UIR?**

- A UIR should be submitted to [osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov](mailto:osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov) for all positive COVID-19 cases that are present in the facility during the infectious period.
- A UIR must be submitted whether or not the facility closes.
- Confirmed positive COVID-19 cases must also be reported 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.
- Child care facilities only need to report a positive case to DC Health and OSSE if the positive individual was at the facility during their infectious period.
- Even if you believe the positive individual did not have close contact with anyone or if they worked in an office by themselves, it must be reported so that DC Health can conduct a proper investigation.

**11. How can we tell if someone was in the facility “during their infectious period”?**

- A person’s infectious period begins two days before symptom onset, or the date of the positive test if the individual does not have symptoms, and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset, or 10 days from the date of the test if the individual does not have symptoms.
- For example, if a family was on vacation for two weeks and tested positive a day or two before they were about to return, you do not need to notify DC Health or submit a UIR since there was no risk of the individual causing COVID-19 transmission within your facility. You also do not need to notify DC Health or submit a UIR for cases that occur outside the facility (for example if a parent or sibling of a child tests positive for COVID-19 and has not been present in the facility).

**12. What information needs to be included in a UIR for a confirmed COVID-19 case or COVID-related closure?**

- 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.

**13. If a child is quarantined for 10 days, will OSSE pay for all 10 days? (UPDATED January 2022)**

- If a child is required to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19 symptoms, testing positive for COVID-19 or close contact, those absences are considered excused as long as there is acceptable documentation. Children can have up to 15 excused absences per month.
- If a family or provider is unable to provide documentation, providers may claim unexcused absences and will be reimbursed for 10 unexcused absences per month before monthly reimbursements cease.

**14. How should a program code days the site is closed for cleaning?**

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- Providers who are instructed to close their sites by OSSE or DC Health should code the closed days as **Approved Closure (AC)** and submit the UIR as documentation.
- Providers who **choose** to close for cleaning should code the closed days as Unapproved Closure (UC).

**15. Will a child care program receive subsidy reimbursement for virtual attendance?**

- OSSE cannot reimburse child care programs for virtual attendance.
- A child must be present at the child care provider site to be counted as attending.
- Programs that are open should report absences for children who are not attending in person.

**16. Do the attendance policies apply to Out-of-School Time and School-Age programs?**

- Yes, the policy and information described in this document apply to all subsidized child care programs.

**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).