



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share the District of Columbia's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan (CCDF Plan) for fiscal years 2022-24 (FY22-FY24), as submitted on July 1, 2021, to the federal Office of Child Care (OCC), within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the Department of Health and Human Services. As the CCDF Lead Agency for the District of Columbia, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is responsible for developing and implementing the District's CCDF Plan, which is available on the [OSSE website](#). Following ACF approval, the final plan will be posted on OSSE's website in English and Spanish.

The CCDF Plan describes the District's implementation of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) of 2014 and use of federal CCDF funds to support low-income families to access child care and improve quality and supply of child care for all District families. It also provides information on the District's strategies to support family outreach and communication, ensure health and safety in child care settings, recruit and retain an effective child care workforce and provide stable child care assistance to families. It will go into effect on Oct. 1, 2021, and remain in effect through Sept. 30, 2024.

This plan was developed through extensive engagement with stakeholders, including membership associations representing child care providers and early educators (D.C. Family Child Care Association, District of Columbia Association for the Education of Young Children, Director's Exchange, Washington Association of Child Care Centers, DC Head Start Association and Multilingual Spanish Speaking Providers Association), advocates (DC Action and DC Early Learning Collaborative), the State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council, the Child Care Recovery Working Group, OSSE grantees supporting quality and early childhood workforce initiatives, other District government agencies and individual child care providers.

A draft of the CCDF Plan was shared publicly on May 3, 2021, and OSSE received public comment in writing and via a public hearing conducted virtually on May 25, 2021. Stakeholder engagement (both formal and informal) surfaced several key themes, which informed the plan submitted to OCC:

- Commenters called for increased **subsidy payment rates** to reflect costs of care.
- Stakeholders provided specific feedback on the assumptions and methodology OSSE uses to estimate the **cost of care**, many of which were incorporated in the DC Cost Estimation Model.
- Stakeholders emphasized the need for higher compensation for **early childhood educators**, as well as supports to complete degrees and credentials and help for

child care providers in recruiting staff. While some stakeholder recommendations go beyond what OSSE can feasibly do, given its authority and current resources, OSSE's plans for federal coronavirus (COVID-19) relief funds and Mayor Bowser's FY22 budget prioritize funding for workforce investments.

- Commenters requested increased **business supports** for child care providers, which OSSE is already working to implement with federal COVID-19 relief funding.

Many of these comments are reflected in the CCDF Plan, and Mayor Bowser's proposed FY22 budget includes investments to support some of these key priorities. While other comments are outside the scope of the CCDF Plan or raise complex issues beyond OSSE's authority and resources to address, we take all of the feedback that we received seriously—and look forward to working with the community to advance progress. We will also continue to seek opportunities to increase transparency and supports, resources, and information accessibility for parents and early childhood educators in languages other than English.

As part of the CCDF Plan process, OSSE updated the District's estimates of providers' costs to deliver child care in the District of Columbia, using the DC Cost Estimation Model. OSSE will publish a report detailing the process used and sharing updated cost estimates in August, in accordance with CCDF requirements, and will widely disseminate that report. OSSE will also promulgate regulations to update child care subsidy rates, informed by the cost model analysis and stakeholder input, as well as parent copays, to take effect in October 2022. Members of the public and other stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed regulations before they are finalized.

As many of you are intimately aware, the COVID-19 public health emergency has had dramatic effects on young children, families and businesses in the District of Columbia, including child care providers. OSSE has made a number of changes in policies and practices related to child care licensing, subsidy and quality improvement activities in response to the public health emergency, some of which remain in effect and are reflected in the current CCDF Plan.

While the District continues to move through recovery from the public health emergency, many effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are ongoing and our youngest learners are not yet eligible for vaccines. As a result, full recovery may take some time. OSSE is in the process of distributing federal relief funds that will not only help to sustain child care providers through COVID-19 recovery but can also help providers build stronger businesses and strengthen the District's child care sector for the future. OSSE, our partners across public and private agencies and the District's child care sector have learned things during the public health emergency and recovery that should inform changes in how we conduct our work to support young children, families and the early childhood workforce going forward.

In light of this, we anticipate that changes will need to be made in some aspects of the CCDF Plan as the District and our early learning sector continue to recover from the public health emergency, as well as in response to other developments in our community. We look forward to continuing to hear from and work with stakeholders across the community to

understand the needs of children, families and early learning programs and inform policies and practices to enhance our early care and education system and its results. We are committed to transparency and will publish any amendments to our CCDF Plan or waivers of CCDF requirements on OSSE's website in English and Spanish.

Thank you for your interest in the CCDF Plan and your ongoing work to support early learning in the District. Our youngest learners have incredible potential and your work plays an important role in helping them fulfill that potential. OSSE could not do our work without engagement and partnership from the communities we serve, and we are so grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Sara Mead

Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning