

Child Care Services Daily Update – December 31, 2020

The Tennessee Department of Human Services is committed to supporting child care agencies in providing programs that are safe, healthy and educationally rich. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges over the past several months and many opportunities to approach the delivery of services in different ways. Thank you for remaining flexible and attentive to health and safety protections, while also remaining responsive to family needs.

Child Care Payment Assistance through the Child Care Certificate Program

The Tennessee Department of Human Services will be receiving additional federal funds to support Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance in 2021. Because of this additional funding, the Department will be transitioning families currently receiving 2020 Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance into the 2021 Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance which runs until March 31, 2021. Families already approved for 2020 Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance are not required to take any action at this time for the child care payment assistance issued by the Department.

Please note that the Department will **NOT** issue new certificates but will simply change the end date from December 31, 2020 to March 31, 2021. Parents who are already approved for this payment assistance will not be required to take any additional action. They do not need to reapply.

The Department will continue to reimburse at the maximum state reimbursement rates based on the child's care level according to the Child Care Certificate Program Provider Reimbursement Rates found [here](#) for all child care payment assistance categories. If the tuition rate at your agency is higher than the state reimbursement rate, you may choose to charge parents receiving Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance certificates the difference between the state rate and your regular tuition rate. Be sure to notify parents receiving payment assistance about the cost difference, including what they will be expected to pay and when.

Important Update about New Applications for 2021 Pandemic Child Care Payment Assistance: Note that starting January 1, 2021, for new applications, the eligibility period for Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance will begin on the date the completed application with all required verifications is received by the Department. This is the same policy utilized with all other Child Care Payment Assistance Programs administered by the Department. This Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance category of care continues to have no income limits and is designed to serve children 6 weeks to age 13 in TDHS licensed or Tennessee Department of Education approved care settings.



Please Note: The Child Care Certificate Program will continue to waive all parent co-pay fees for all pay periods, for all categories of child care payment assistance, through March 31, 2021. We want to support families and child care providers during this time by paying up to the maximum Child Care Certificate Program Provider Reimbursement Rates established by the Department.

Additionally, TDHS will continue to make subsidy payments for all children enrolled in the certificate program as usual for participating providers who are open, even if the child is not attending, perhaps due to family impact. However, if you are aware that a child has been disenrolled with your agency, please indicate on your EAV the child has terminated with a "T" when submitting. This will allow the opportunity for another family who may be in need of child care to utilize the slot with your agency.