

Child Care Services Daily Update- March 23, 2020

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) will continue to provide you with the most current information pertaining to Adult and Child Care programs. We will continue to remain diligent in keeping this site current.

Now, as always, Child and Adult Care Services play a critical role in their communities, particularly for parents who work in the health care industry or other essential roles. Each child care provider must make the decision whether to remain open or close, based on their unique situation and the needs in their community.

TDHS has discretion to relax child care rules as needed, so that currently licensed and temporary child care operations can appropriately respond to the situation and serve their communities. TDHS encourages any provider affected by COVID-19 to contact their licensing program evaluator, so they can understand the provider's situation and determine how best to support them.

Child care facilities that currently receive subsidies will continue to receive them, regardless of a closure or child absence resulting from COVID-19 through the end of March. Further, DHS is working to make available disaster/emergency response and recovery grants to facilities affected. More information on that will be available in the coming days, and we will share that with you as we have it.

Reminders:

1. We have heard from several licensed agencies of their intent to remain open and their current availability to accept children. We are working closely with our Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) partner to assist us with collecting information from you on your available slots and to share this information with families within the community of your location who are seeking child care.

If you are open and available to accept additional children, please contact the CCR&R agency in your area with how many children you are able to serve. The numbers are below:

East & Upper East CCR&R	865-974-7750 (may have to leave a voice mail)
Mid Cumberland CCR&R	931-648-3695; 101 (may have to leave a voice mail)
Shelby County CCR&R	901-287-4748
South Central CCR&R	931-548-9835
Southeast CCR&R	866-296-3422
Southwest CCR&R	731-394-6626

2. Consistent with prior communications, please continue notifying your program evaluator about how COVID-19 is impacting your agency.

If your agency is impacted by COVID-19 (such as confirmed case of a child or educator), we ask that you contact your Licensing Program Evaluator via email. The email should include the following:

- Agency Name and Address
- Contact Name and Contact information
- How your agency has been impacted by COVID-19
- Plan of action for your agency
 - For example: if an educator is sick, will you engage a substitute? Close the agency? If your agency is closed due to known contact; how will your agency clean to reduce further risk? Policy in place to prevent/mitigate future risk? How long you will be closed, if applicable?

3. If you are struggling with accessing some basic supplies such as paper products or milk, please reach out to Pat Lawson, plawson@cfmt.org for assistance. Mr. Lawson is with Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee and supports the child care bulk purchasing program.

Guidelines for Programs participating in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- If you are unable to find enough milk or the correct type of milk, you are allowed to claim the meals.
 - With all other food shortages, CACFP is requesting that the child care provider document the shortage and continue to serve meals, but they are likely not going to be able to reimburse centers for meals that are missing components. Centers are allowed to substitute different foods as long as the meal meets all of the meal pattern requirements.
 - If you have specific questions, please reach out to your assigned CACFP program specialist.
 - The CACFP will continue to update participating CACFP programs if/when they receive information from USDA
4. For children enrolled in the Child Care Certificate Program, the Department will continue to make subsidy payments through the end of March as usual for all participating agencies, including those agencies who are closed due to the impact of COVID-19 or where children are not attending, perhaps because of family impact. Please submit your Enrollment Attendance Verification forms as per your normal payment cycle. If your agency was closed on certain days, mark with a "C" on your EAV as usual.

If the children are not attending your program but are still enrolled with you, continue to mark them as absent, according to regular procedures.

At the end of March, we will reassess all of these temporary measures to determine how we can support you moving forward based on the effects of COVID-19.

For those agencies who are accepting children from a child care agency that may be currently closed, we will pay for those children receiving subsidy and who are being enrolled with your agency. Our Certificate Program staff will be working to get the enrollments completed so that you will receive payment. In these instances, please contact La'Priscia Howlett at 615-532-4245.

Should you have immediate questions, please contact us at the email address below:

childcareservices.dhs@tn.gov