

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

**Reminder: Availability to Serve Children of Families who are Deemed as Essential Employees:**

Please reach out to your Licensing Program Evaluator if you are currently open to provide care and not appearing on the list to accept children of parents who are working as essential employees. We are working to keep this list current for families. The chart is posted to our website <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html> to support families in locating care and to support you in building enrollment.

**Child Care Payment Assistance for Essential Employees:**

The Tennessee Department of Human Services is very excited to announce additional supports available for essential employees. We have launched a new category of child care payment assistance to support families that are working in essential workforce positions. The COVID-19 Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance program will be available during this public health emergency. Essential employees are defined as:

Essential Employees include:

- Employees of a healthcare entity
  - Medical Personnel of hospitals, clinics, medical practices and services, mental health and substance abuse services, dental offices, pharmacies, public health entities, biotechnical company employees, medical research personnel, medical device and equipment personnel, medical transportation personnel including entities that transport and dispose of medical materials, medical manufacturing personnel, administrative personnel necessary to operations
  - Manufacturing and Distribution personnel producing and supplying essential products and services in and for industries such as pharmaceutical, health care, transportation, petroleum and fuel, defense and national defense
- Law Enforcement
- First Responders (EMS, Fire Departments)
  - Emergency Dispatchers including those who support 911
  - Paramedics
  - Firefighters
- Corrections Officers
- Military
- Activated National Guard
- Human and Social Services Workers
  - Government or government funded services through state-operated institutional, or community based settings, long-term care facilities, child care centers and homes,

residential settings and shelters for adults, seniors, children and people with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders, or mental illness, transitional facilities and home based facilities to serve individuals described above.

- Social Workers
- Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel
- Field offices to provide and help to determine eligibility for basic needs: SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Child Care, Voc Rehab, Rehabilitation services, developmental centers, adoption agencies, food banks, and shelters.
- Postal Workers
  - Mail, postal, shipping, logistics, delivery and pick-up personnel
- Transportation
  - Transportation personnel
  - Personnel who work at gas stations, travel centers and truck stops
  - Airport operations,
  - Services related to roads, highways, railroads, ports, public transportation
- Restaurant
  - Restaurant personnel for the purposes of food preparation and service for off-premises consumption
- Grocery Workers
  - Personnel who produce, distribute and sell food, including grocery stores, certified farmers markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, convenience stores, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage stores

This category of care has no income limits, and is designed to serve children 6 weeks to age 13 in **licensed** care settings. This is a time limited category for the period of April 15<sup>th</sup> – June 15<sup>th</sup> to meet an immediate need for the essential workforce. We ask that you encourage families to enroll. Once the family is approved, the children will show on your Enrollment Attendance Verification (EAV) for you to invoice the state.

This new category of child care payment assistance, the traditional categories of child care payment assistance (Child Care Certificate Program or subsidy) and the Disaster/Emergency Response and Recovery Grants have been designed to assist families with support and assist licensed child care agencies with funding for continued sustainability. If you are not currently enrolled with the Child Care Certificate Program, we encourage you to do so in order to provide these new supports for families of children who work in essential services and are enrolled in your care. We are prepared to expedite the Certificate Program enrollment to provide timely payment.

**Please Note: The children of the new essential employee category of care will be paid through the EAV method. If you receive a Certificate authorizing care under this category, which will show as EMEE, be certain to list that child on the EAV if the approval occurred during the pay cycle and are not showing as pre-populated.**

All information for this category of care will be on our website:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/covid-19/child-care-services-and-covid-19.html>

This child care payment assistance program is in addition to a network of temporary/emergency care locations that will be available through the YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs for essential workers with school-aged children. We greatly appreciate your participation in meeting the needs of all families during this time of uncertainty.

**Reminder: Child Care Payment Assistance Payments:**

The Department will continue to make subsidy payments for all children enrolled in the certificate program through the end of April 2020 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 continue to 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.

**Please Note:** The Child Care Certificate Program will also waive all parent co-pay fees for all pay periods through the end of April beginning with the 03/16/20-03/31/20 pay period. This means that providers will be paid the full rate without the parent co-pay fee being deducted for all children on the submitted EAV for the 03/16/20-03/31/20, 04/01/2020 -04/15/2020, and 04/16/2020-04/30/2020 pay periods or if you submit your EAV on a monthly pay cycle.

If your agency received co-pay fees from parents for the 03/16/20-03/31/20 pay period, the agency must issue a refund or a credit to the families. We want to support families and child care providers during this time. Many families have temporarily lost their jobs due to the impact of COVID-19 and we want these families to be able to retain their enrollment.

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

Please send any questions to [ChildCare.Certificate.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:ChildCare.Certificate.DHS@tn.gov).