

Child Care Services Daily Update - May 22, 2020

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.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Decision Tree for Programs Who are Currently Closed:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Childcare-Decision-Tree.pdf?deliveryName=USCDC_1191-DM28568

Expansion and Extension of Child Care for Essential Employees:

The Tennessee Department of Human Services is excited to announce we are expanding our support for essential workers who are serving their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. All categories of essential workers identified in Governor Bill Lee's Executive Order 22 are now eligible for the COVID-19 Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance Program (EMEE).

Additionally, the program has been extended to provide payment assistance until mid-August, 2020. For children already approved and currently enrolled in your child care agency, we will be extending the eligibility in our system from mid-June to mid-August. You will not receive an updated certificate reflecting this new date, however, these children will continue to show on your Enrollment/Attendance/Verification (EAV) form so you may continue to submit attendance and receive payment through mid-August. All new eligibilities moving forward will have the mid-August date reflected on the Certificate. Regardless of when an application was submitted or approved, the benefit will be effective on the first day of the program, April 15, 2020, if the child was in care at that time.

We ask that you share this information with families enrolled in your program and encourage those who meet the expanded definition to apply. The application is available on-line:

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

Please Note: The Child Care Certificate Program will continue to waive all parent co-pay fees for all pay periods through the end of **August** 2020. 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 to support continuity for their child enrolled in your care.

Emergency Grants-Operational Costs Category: Agencies who are open may continue to apply for financial relief through the Disaster/Emergency Response and Recovery Grants. This opportunity supports you as well as provides additional relief for families receiving child care payment assistance. Many families have lost employment or have been subject to lay-offs during this time and are struggling to pay above the State Reimbursement Rates. This is causing some families to withdraw their child from the licensed care program. We certainly want to avoid this from happening so the family may retain their child's slot. The COVID-19 operations costs relief grant allows you to apply for costs associated with operating under the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand there may be a "cost difference" above the maximum state rate that families are required by your policy to pay. We ask that you apply for this "cost difference" amount under the operations cost category. This will provide relief for the family and support you in recouping that revenue.

The stipulation under this grant, is that once the money is received, if you have already charged and received payment from the parent, you refund or credit their accounts. If you have not received payment from the family, this grant amount will cover the full cost of care for children enrolled through subsidy.

Learn about grant opportunities and apply online by visiting www.childcaretennessee.com.

If you are not already enrolled in the Child Care Certificate program and wish to participate, we will be happy to assist you with enrollment. Please submit your agency contact information including name of agency, name of person to contact, and telephone number in the request for enrollment to ChildCare.Certificate.DHS@tn.gov. You will then be contacted by a Child Care Services staff member to discuss participation and complete the contract for enrollment. This one on one contact will allow the opportunity to discuss the procedures and answer any questions you may have about the program and the benefit for families, the community and you.