

Child Care Services Daily Update – June 1, 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.

Enrollment in the Certificate Program:

The Department of Human Services is recruiting child care providers to participate in the Child Care Certificate Program also known as the Child Care Payment Assistance Program. This is such a critical time to meet the child care needs of families and children within your community. There are countless benefits for participation; child care providers are reimbursed by enrollment, not attendance; child care reimbursement rates have increased for all participating child care providers; bonus rates are awarded for offering care during non-traditional hours and serving areas identified as child care deserts or distressed counties. Enrollment also will meet the needs of serving families identified as Essential Employees under the Child Care Payment Assistance designed specifically to serve these families who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic each day.

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.

Reminder: Additional Clarification When Applying for Operational Costs through the COVID-19 Relief Grant

As we continue to explore opportunities to support child care agencies and families during this public health emergency, we want to provide additional clarification on existing resources that are available.

The Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance program is for the period of April 15, 2020 through mid-August. When a family is approved for this child care category, we will back date the certificate authorizing care if the child was attending effective April 15th or will begin the Certificate after that date for the child with the actual date of enrollment if after April 15th. We understand that you may have already filed for the Disaster/Emergency Grant Operational Cost category. Under this category you may apply for the cost difference above the State Reimbursement Rates.

We will provide you with additional information on how to recoup the cost difference above the maximum State Rate so that you may refund or credit the family approved under the Essential Employee

Child Care Payment Assistance program if you have already applied for the Disaster/Emergency Grant for Operational Costs for April. Additional guidance will be made available during the month of June to provide information on how to reconcile this cost difference through the grant application.

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.

Please Note: There is a new method implemented for agencies to learn the status of their grant applications or ask specific questions about the application in process. Community Foundations of Middle Tennessee has created one easy form for you to complete. This enables a quick feedback process and routes your request into one easy system so that everyone gets an answer in an orderly manner. Please allow adequate processing time before requesting a status update.

Early applicants received a pop-up when applications are completed. The process is now improved:

1. An email is received upon submission of the application.
2. An email is received when the application is approved by DHS field supervisors and sent to the next processing step.
3. An email is received when the application is sent to DHS for invoicing. There are several steps between invoice and receipt of funds by your agency.

Submit any status requests about Support and Enhancement Grants and Disaster/Emergency Grants to <https://childcareoftennesseeillc.formstack.com/forms/helpdesk> and you will be provided this feedback form to complete for a status response.

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