



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

## **Guidance Related to COVID-19: Child Care Provider Closures and Public Funding**

### **Background**

As part of the District's response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, OSSE is sharing some updated guidance regarding closure procedures as well as payment processes for child care providers participating in public funding. In all decisions, OSSE will consider relevant federal and local requirements, and fairness to providers during this dynamic time.

### **Scope**

This document contains guidance regarding the requirements during closure for licensed child care providers and continuation of payments for participating providers during approved closures based on changed operating status due to public health actions, for the child care subsidy program, Quality Improvement Network (QIN) and Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP).

### **Date Issued**

This guidance was issued on March 13, 2020 and will remain in effect until further notice.

### **Guidance**

Based on the emergency executive order and the issuance of a public health emergency executive order issued by the Mayor, OSSE has activated the [District-wide Child Care Disaster Response Plan \(CCDRP\)](#).

*At this time, OSSE strongly encourages that child development centers follow [DCPS operating status](#) under which students will not be coming to school facilities through March 31.*

*If you choose to close your facility at this time, OSSE will continue to provide payments based on the program and requirements as described below.*

### **NOTICE:**

We also recognize that given the unprecedented nature of this public health matter, the families of our health care work force have critical needs as it pertains to child care; we are looking for ways to meet those needs and will be sharing additional details soon. Please also see item 6 below in the next section.

#### **I. Child Care Subsidy Program**

Payment will continue to facilities receiving subsidy. OSSE is suspending the normal requirements related to our subsidy payment policy, which is based on attendance. During the activation of CCDRP, payments will be made based on this guidance, as set forth below.

In order to receive continuing subsidy payments during the current public health emergency, all facilities must follow the following process:

1. Notify your designated OSSE education service monitor in writing prior to closing in order to receive approval;
2. Follow the existing procedures for filing an [Unusual Incident Report indicating the closure is due to either A\) the public health emergency or B\) possible exposure to COVID-19 \(see Potential Exposure and COVID-19 Reporting below\)](#);

For all OSSE approved closures, subsidy payments will continue during the activation of the CCDRP, and will not be based on actual attendance as long as the closure is approved pursuant to the process described above. Approved closures during the activation of the CCDRP must be classified as an approved closure (AC) on the monthly attendance submission in OATS. Providers should continue to submit attendance (even if it is zero) by the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of each month.

If a facility stays open, absence reporting for individual children who are sick or exhibit symptoms should continue to follow OSSE's existing attendance policy of 5 unexcused and 15 excused absences per month as outlined in the FY20 Provider Agreement for Subsidized Child Care Services in the District of Columbia.

3. Quality Improvement Network (QIN)

For closures during the activation of the CCDRP, payment will continue on its normal process. Payments continue to be based on enrollment, not attendance.

Providers who close must follow the existing procedures for filing an [Unusual Incident Report](#).

4. Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP)

For closures during the activation of this policy, payment will continue on its normal process. Payments continue to be based on enrollment, not attendance.

Providers who close must follow the existing procedures for filing an [Unusual Incident Report](#).

5. Providers not participating in public funding

Providers who close must follow the existing procedures for filing an [Unusual Incident Report](#).

6. Providers who are continuing to operate

Any providers who are continuing to operate should please contact Eva Laguerre, at [Eva.Laguerre@dc.gov](mailto:Eva.Laguerre@dc.gov) or (202)741-5942 regarding your willingness to provide services to the families of health care professionals and other essential personnel.

**Potential Exposure and COVID-19 Reporting**

If you believe the facility has been exposed to the COVID-19, the facility should follow the existing procedures for filing an [Unusual Incident Report](#). Child care providers who believe their community may have been directly exposed to COVID-19 and are seeking guidance on the potential need for closure should also contact the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) at (202) 727-5707 or [DME.DismissalAdvice@dc.gov](mailto:DME.DismissalAdvice@dc.gov). When contacting the DME, providers will be asked to share the

following information:

- Name, location of your child care facility, and direct contact information
- Details about the circumstances involving potential or confirmed exposure – who, contact with infected person/people and exposure to your facility
- What communications you have shared with your community to date

The District continually monitors all emergency situations and will issue additional guidance as circumstances change.

In the event you decide to close your facility, please remember to submit an [Unusual Incident Report](#) to [osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov](mailto:osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov) or to your designated licensing specialist. We are grateful for your ongoing patience, flexibility and cooperation as we manage the dynamic nature of this event. As we approach the next few weeks, we ask for continued patience and trust as the District navigates this unique situation.

### Questions?

If you have questions relating to this guidance please contact Eva Laguerre, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning and Director, Licensing & Compliance, Division of Early Learning, Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) at (202) 741-5942 or [Eva.Laguerre@dc.gov](mailto:Eva.Laguerre@dc.gov).

### Related Regulations

- CCDBG Act and its implementing regulations, 45 C.F.R. Parts 98 and 99, as administered by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- District of Columbia's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, current version;
- Child Development Facilities Regulation Act of 1998, effective April 13, 1999 (D.C. Law 12-215; D.C. Official Code §§ 7-2031 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Facilities Act");
- Day Care Policy Act of 1979, effective September 19, 1979 (D.C. Law 3-16; D.C. Official Code §§ 4-401 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Day Care Act")
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Grant, 42 USC 9801 *et seq.*
- Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015, (D.C. Act 21-231, D.C. Official Code § 4-415.)
- Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008, effective July 18, 2008 (D.C. Law 17-202; D.C. Official Code §§ 38-271.01 *et seq.*)