

ANNOUNCEMENT

ELRC 21 #09



Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Bureau of Early Learning Policy and Professional Development

Issue Date: Oct. 4, 2021

Effective Date: Oct. 1, 2021

End Date: Oct. 31, 2022

Subject: Child Care Works (CCW) Payment During the Ongoing Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

To: All Regulated Child Care Providers; Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs); and The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Early Learning Resource Center Program Representatives

From:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tracey Campanini'.

Tracey Campanini
Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning

PURPOSE

To provide updated guidance regarding Child Care Works (CCW) payment to child care programs participating in CCW and to ELRC staff.

This updated policy obsoletes the following announcements in their entirety effective **Sept. 30, 2021**:

- *ELRC Policy Announcement 21 #06 Restoring Child Care Works Invoicing, Attendance and Payment Policies*
- *ELRC Policy Announcement 21 #04 Child Care Works Payment During the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19); and*
- *ELRC Policy Announcement 20 #17 Child Care Works Payment During the Proclamation of Disaster Emergency*

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Act 73 of 2021, the suspension of various regulatory provisions under the state disaster emergency declaration that are currently in effect and which were set to

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expire on Sept. 30, 2021, are now extended until further notice. In a communication issued Sept. 30, 2021, OCDEL indicated that communication would be issued related to payment provisions for Child Care Works (CCW).

DISCUSSION

Effective **Oct. 1, 2021**, CCW payments to child care providers will continue to be based on their **current enrollment**, with the exception of the following:

- Providers who have been closed by Certification due to a negative sanction will not be paid.
- Providers who have reported permanent closure will not be paid.
- Providers who temporarily closed more than 14 consecutive business days due to COVID-19 exposure, *please reference **CCW Payments for closure or absences related to COVID-19** guidance below.*

While child care providers will receive payment based on current CCW enrollment, the usual eligibility and attendance policies will continue. Attendance of children must still be tracked and reported on invoices. Beginning with the submission of Oct. 2021 CCW invoices, child care providers will mark COVID-19 related absences as “CA” (COVID absence) to distinguish it from a non-COVID related absence on a paper invoice or include a note on an online invoice. When an enrollment ends, the provider will no longer be paid for the enrollment if any of the following takes place:

- The child transfers to a new provider;
- The child is no longer eligible for CCW;
- The family voluntarily withdraws from the CCW program;
- The child for whom an adverse action is issued which becomes effective during the 14-day closure;
- A child does not attend more than five consecutive days due to a reason not related to COVID-19, who is suspended from CCW, per standard practice under 55 Pa. Code § 3041.19; and
- The provider temporarily closes for more than 14 consecutive business days. (*Please reference **CCW Payments for closure or absences related to COVID-19** guidance below.*)

Child care providers that close for COVID-19 mitigation or to fulfill quarantine recommendations will **not** collect copayments from families for CCW for the period of the closure but will receive CCW payments based on the children’s enrollment. If a provider is partially shut down, the provider may only collect copayments from CCW families whose children are actually in care.

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Child care providers who are eligible will continue to be paid based on their current enrollment for children who remain eligible for CCW through normal invoicing and payment methods.

CCW Payments for closure or absences related to COVID-19

Child care providers must report the positive COVID-19 case to the Department of Health or local health department, depending on the county, and the OCDEL Bureau of Certification as described in [Announcement C-21-07](#). The ELRCs will verify with the OCDEL Bureau of Certification that the closure is due to a positive COVID-19 case. If the child care provider must completely or partially close because of COVID-19 exposure, the provider will be eligible for payment based on their current CCW enrollments on the first full day of closure for all CCW children enrolled during the time period of the closure.

NOTE: In addition to daily screening, all child care providers should have COVID-19 screening procedures in place to assess children before accepting a new enrollment. This could include family health discussion but should also include whether the child was previously enrolled in a child care that may be temporarily closed due to COVID-19 confirmed or suspected cases.

If an entire child care provider must close due to COVID-19 exposure, CCW payment will be made based on the current enrollments effective the first full day of the closure. This payment will not exceed 14 consecutive business days from the first full day of closure. If a child becomes ineligible for CCW or transfers to a new provider during the closure, the enrollment will end, and the provider will no longer be paid for the child. If the provider does not reopen on the 15th business day, the provider will be considered temporarily closed. At this time, all CCW children who remain enrolled with this provider will be suspended by the ELRCs and CCW payments will cease.

If an early learning classroom must close due to COVID-19 exposure, but the child care provider remains open, CCW payment will be made based on their current enrollments for the children in that classroom, effective the first full day of the closure, for a period not to exceed 14 consecutive business days. If a child becomes ineligible for CCW or transfers to a new provider during the closure, the enrollment will end, and the provider will no longer be paid for the child. If the classroom does not reopen on the 15th business day, the children in the classroom, who remain enrolled with this provider, will be suspended by the ELRCs and the provider will no longer be paid for those children. If the classroom reopens and a child does not return to care by 15th business day, the child will be suspended by the ELRCs on the 15th business day of the closure.

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If a child is absent due to COVID-19 exposure, the child will not be suspended by the ELRC until the 15th business day if the child is absent for more than 14 consecutive days.

If a child is absent due to other reasons, not related to COVID-19, their CCW enrollment will be suspended by the ELRCs if the absence is expected to last more than five consecutive business days, as required by 55 Pa. Code § 3041.19. If the child's enrollment is current, and the absences are intermittent, the provider will continue to be paid based on the child's enrollment status.

Child care providers **may not** collect copayments from families, if the copayment is assigned to a child who is not attending due to a COVID-19 related absence, classroom closure or child care provider closure.

NOTE: If the child attends even one day during the week, the provider may collect the copayment for that week. Only a full week of absence/closure would result in the copayment being waived.

NEXT STEPS

1. Child care programs
 - a. Share with staff completing CCW attendance reporting and invoicing.
 - b. Report the positive COVID-19 case to the Department of Health or local health department, depending on the county, and the OCDEL Bureau of Certification as described in [Announcement C-21-07](#) in order to receive CCW payments
 - c. Mark COVID-19 related absences as "CA" (COVID absence) on paper CCW invoice or add a comment to the online invoice to distinguish COVID absences from non-COVID absences
 - d. Direct any questions to your ELRC.
2. ELRCs
 - a. Review and share with appropriate staff
 - b. Monitor and track CA (COVID related absences) as outlined in ELRC Policy Communication 21 #19 Child Care Works Payment During the Ongoing Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - c. Direct any question to your program representative.