

ECE Provider Call
Friday, April 3, 2020
10am Conference Call
(notes updates as of 4/3/2020 at 7pm)

Meeting started by at 10:07 am by Jessica, the conference operator. Jessica informed the callers on how to ask questions. 435 lines were connected as of that time. Remarks were made by the following:

Jon Sheehan, Office of the Governor: Thank you for the work that you do and your advocacy and communication on this issue. On Monday, in his 8th modification, Governor Carney stated that as of April 6, 2020, childcares will be reserved for personnel working at essential businesses. The guidance we released yesterday is three-fold: ensure those on the front lines have access to childcare; ensure you and your staff members are being paid; and invest in critical infrastructure of the childcare system. This is a herculean effort; we are moving very fast. Very possible that some of your questions won't be answered today as we are still working on answers, but please bear with us as we work through this in a short period of time. Behind the scenes, KIDS/OCCL, OMB, DHSS, and DOE have been working continually, and I want to thank all of them for their work.

Kim Krzanowski, Director of the Office of Early Learning, DOE: As a reminder, the call is being recorded and we will send minutes after the call for anyone not able to join. We updated the financial guidelines document you received yesterday to make it as clear as possible. Our priority is to keep childcare programs open to serve families on the front lines but also to make sure those caring for our children are cared for themselves. DIEEC trainings are being held virtually and your Stars TAs are available. There will be no Stars verification visits until further notice. We are working to develop a system to get temporary workers to programs that need help; if your staffing situations change, we will do our best to help you meet staffing needs. For any concerns regarding childcare during this time, Tina Shockley at DOE is taking all calls and will work to get you responses as quickly as possible. Her email is tina.shockley@doe.k12.de.us

Ms. Betty Gail Timm, Administrator of the Office of Child Care Licensing, DSCYF: Like the rest of state government, most of our team is telecommuting. However, we have someone at each of our offices for phone calls. If you know the name of your specialist, please give us that, as we can more quickly connect you. During this time, OCCL will not conduct license renewals or regular compliance and health visits. However, OCCL will investigate complaints involving the health and safety of children. All licenses due to expire will receive extensions. Nearly half of the providers have already signed up to be emergency providers – as of yesterday, 550 providers had applied for emergency status.

Meredith Seitz, Chief Policy Advisor, DSCYF: OCCL has really adapted and shifted their day-to-day to fulfill new responsibilities and we are grateful for their work. We are still working to refine answers to questions, so if we can't answer your question here, we will get to it. Regarding the procedure if you have submitted to be an emergency center is this: if you are already a licensed program in good standing (doesn't apply to exempt programs), are operating

today, submitted online and agreed to follow all of the additional requirements, you should plan to operate on Monday, April 6, 2020 as an emergency site and believe your written approval is forthcoming. It is a manual process for verification, so it may take a few days, but if you are in good standing, assume you will be receiving kids on Monday, April 6th. Regarding questions on half-walls in centers: there is new guidance from DPH that half-walls are appropriate for separating rooms. Specific questions may be answered by your licensing specialist. What should a provider require from a parent if they are essential and cannot work from home? From guidance including shelter-in-place, beginning April 6th, childcare is reserved for those deemed essential that have no other option available. We don't want providers to have to be the police to enforce those parents; we need parents to comply with giving you the appropriate certified information. When we say providers must receive/review those documents, we aren't looking to penalize anyone for trying to provide care for the children of essential employees. Regarding those asking if you are required to take "new" children: you do not have to take on additional children as long as those currently in care meet requirements. If you are able to, however, we would ask you to consider taking extra children. Finally, there is a clarification forthcoming about professionals offering tele-medicine from home; we will allow professionals practicing tele-medicine from home with children under a certain age to access essential childcare. Finally, the application process to apply for emergency care ends at noon today, April 3, 2020. If you don't submit by noon, you cannot provide childcare until the Governor lifts the restriction.

Tom Hall, Dep Dir, DSS: Purchase of Care (POC) is here to help and the POC helpline number is 255-9670. We extended POC certifications for March, April and May – there will be no renewal until 12 months from their expiration date. Our intention is to release frequent updates so you are kept up-to-date on changes or questions. We will work with non-POC providers for expedited services. DSS remains open and POC staff are on duty to accept calls and questions. Increase in office/online applications of people needing assistance. We are working through how essential payments will be issued to sites, working with non-current POC providers to get them contracted/MOUd to receive payments. March billing guidance will be added, in general, for those providers who remained open will be reimbursed based on enrollment; those that chose voluntarily will have separate guidance. For March, families are responsible for their copays. For POC billing for March, guidance will be posted on www.mychildde.org for how to enter March billing. You will be paid based on Feb enrollment. We also posted assistance for those that voluntarily closed prior to March. Check the site often, as DSS will use that site plus the POC listserve to provide updates.

Opened for questions at 10:30am

(some questions edited for ease of reading; apologies for any wrong names)

Q. Crystal (owns a family center in Sussex): If we end up with no children (we have 2), where will that leave family child cares on the financial guidelines? Do we close and pay ourselves, or close and do not pay staff (since staff won't be working)?

A. Kim Krzanowski: If you aren't serving families, but decide to remain open and enroll new families, you could be eligible for financial supports. Please refer to the Financial Guidelines document.

Q. Laura Holmes: If one parent is essential and the other is a teacher but working from home, what do we do? Can we still charge them full pay? Teachers still have to work from home with small children – what are we supposed to do?

A. Kim Krzanowski: We would need more clarification on the type of K-12 educators to determine if they are essential.

UPDATE: Teachers who are working from home are not eligible for child care starting Monday

Q. Jessica: Since you are basing this off of February enrollment, how do we get paid for new, emergency enrollments?

A. Tom Hall: In the financial guidelines, we address how you will be paid.

Q. Irene Carrigan: In regard to license extensions and medication certifications due by July 1 – are those deadlines also extended? How about online classes?

A. Betty Gail Timm: Online classes are being developed. If someone is currently licensed to admin medication, they can continue.

Q. Kim: Can I have clarification on health checks? On the form we received, we have the option to ask a parent if they took their child's temperature or to take the child's temperature. So, do we take or ask and have parents initial? Do we have to use the form daily?

A. Betty Gail Timm: The form is optional; you are not required to use it. You can simply ask the parent if they have taken the child's temp or you may take it. As long as the questions are verbally asked, you don't have to provide written documentation but you must ask the questions.

UPDATE: Included in the updates guidelines are checking for a child's temperature, which can be done by asking the appropriate questions of the dropping-off parent/caregiver, or by using a thermometer. Other safety precautions include the child being escorted by staff into the center rather than the parent/caregiver. For your convenience, the additional guidelines provided by DSCYF in the Governor's March 30th press release are at this link:

<https://governor.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2020/03/DSCYF-Emergency-Child-Care-Site-Requirements.pdf> We are keeping a close eye on the information being presented by the CDC, and will continue to update our protocols as the CDC's guidelines evolve.

Q. Tammy: If approved, and in 2 weeks we have to close for cleaning – can we reopen or do we have to wait to have the order lifted?

A. Betty Gail Timm: This is a conversation for OCCL to have with providers.

Q. Tammy: We are asking parents for certification that they are essential. We got a call from Bayhealth saying they won't sign the confirmation form: is their ID good enough?

A. Meredith Seitz: If, as a provider, you are comfortable accepting documentation or an ID confirming their job, that is fine. You need to emphasize to parents that the stay-at-home order is in effect.

Q. Michelle Blantenberger: how do we ensure open spots are available/known to the department?

A. Betty Gail Timm: There is not a mechanism to share available spots, parents will have to make calls. If you need workers, there is a listing of providers to get on an emergency list.

Q. Michelle Blantenberger: I do have sanitizing supplies, but I will need more. Is there anyone that can help?

A. Gabriella Kejner, DHSS: Tina Shockley sent a release on how community members can help, and you can visit de.gov/coronavirus. If you click this link ([Supplies](#)) you will fill out a form for what you need and we will reach out to connect with you.

Q. Lisa Peel: Are we free to enroll families now?

A. Betty Gail Timm: yes.

Q. Name not given: as it relates to availability of accepting new children, should we be notifying someone or just waiting for parents to call?

A. Kim Krzanowski: You can do both. You can advertise to families that you are enrolling children, but as Betty Gail mentioned, families will need to call programs from the approved list.

Q. If you want to alter or change your opening and closing times, do we just submit the change?

A. Betty Gail Timm: You would need to call OCCL to work with you.

Q. Lynn Jezyk: When you say parents will be able to see a list, where will that list be?

A. Meredith: the list is here: <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/child-care/>. When you submit your information to us, this is where it goes. It includes a search function for parents to locate available providers.

Q. Tony: Guidance said we needed to submit an active staff roster. What is it, where do I find it and how do I submit it?

A. Kim Krzanowski: more guidance coming.

Q. Tammy Abraham: If we have to shut down to sanitize, what would the financial guidelines be for a center that does that?

A. Kim Krzanowski: It would depend on the amount of time you are closed. Communication with OCCL would be helpful so a determination could be made. We know cleaning will need to happen, so we can be flexible. OCCL needs to know if you aren't open for care but finance question would be directed to DHSS.

Q. Linda: I have an in home center. I am licensed for 6 children based on Feb enroll; 4 are POC. I applied to be an emergency center. These 4 kids won't be in attendance, I will still mark them as here and be paid, correct? And my 2 available slots – will I be reimbursed for 2 empty spots or none at all?

A. Tom Hall: we will send you info on how to bill this morning. It should answer all of your questions. If not, call me directly at 255-9605.

Q. No name given: A normal day is M-F, 6-5, 7-5. If we take essential medical personnel, they usually work 12 hours. Are we allowed to work 12 hours? On the list that will be circulated – can it be just our name and phone number instead of hours?

A. Betty Gail Timm: We will list your hours of operation. Meredith Seitz: Remember that essential personnel are not exclusively health care workers, so your times may suit your needs. We will list hours of operation because parents need the information. You are allowed to extend

your hours and we can work with you to update information. We just want to avoid having to continually change hours. Work with OCCL to update.

Q. Jamie: As POC and private pay who aren't attending – do they still have to pay if their kids aren't attending?

A. Betty Gail Timm: That is up to the provider.

Q. Staz? For the enhanced reimbursement – we get reimbursed for any vacant spot? How is that defined? Parents are disenrolling their kids; does that make spots vacant?

A. Tom Hall: That is total licensed capacity minus enrollment. We may need to provide more guidance, but if you have parents that have disenrolled their kids, the spots are vacant. We will provide guidance on how to bill for that.

Q. Name not given: What about licensing applications due in April that need a notary?

A. Betty Gail Timm: You may submit without a notary.

Q. Name not given: With potential parents wanting to send their children, do we have to allow them in for a tour vs. taking kids at drop off?

A. Betty Gail Timm: right now, parents will have to enroll without a tour since access to buildings is limited.

Q. People who are essential but work at night and want to use POC during day – can we still accept their child?

A. Meredith Seitz: We are emphasizing that according to the stay-at home order, childcare is reserved for a parent that has no other option. It is a parent's responsibility to comply.

Q. Delores: If we were changing POC plus, are we still able to charge that as an essential childcare?

A. Tom Hall: We will be paying POC as we normally do. We will not be doing POC plus.

Q. Kim: Regarding the list for employees (subs), are they being paid the rate we offer or by something else?

A. Betty Gail Timm: If someone is willing to go out and work, they are paid at rate the center pays.

Q: No name given: If someone in the daycare gets COVID-19 is there any way we as a provider can be held liable and what protection do we have?

A. Betty Gail Timm: I don't know the answer; that is a legal question.

Q. Kimberly: You are encouraging us to wait until you give out today's direction before we file anything for POC?

A. Tom Hall: Yes, if possible, but if you have filed, don't worry – we can fix it. You're welcome to call me 255-9605.

Q. Kimberly: According to the grid you released yesterday, can you clarify if those are weekly amounts or not?

A: no answer.

Q. Kimberly: If we are agreeing to pay our employees, when do we get the funds? Is it monthly?

A. Tom Hall: discussion in guidance – more frequently. More guidance to come for that.

Kim Krzanowski ended to Q&A session by saying we are continuously preparing guidance for this every-changing situation. We appreciate your time and hope this was helpful.

Betty Gail Timm: If you have any questions for OCCL – just call or email us. We will work to answer some of the questions we couldn't answer on this call. Let us know if you need anything else.

The call was disconnected at 11:10am.