

ECE Provider Conference Call #5  
June 3, 2020  
1:30pm

The call began at 1:30 p.m. by Sam, the conference operator. Sam informed the callers to press \*1 if they wished to ask a question and # if they wished to remove their question from the queue.

**Kimberly Krzanowski, Executive Director of the Office of Early Learning, DOE:** Kim welcomed everyone, thanked them for joining the call and expressed appreciation for their commitment and dedication during this time. She noted the goal of these calls is to keep everyone in Delaware's early learning industry informed and to provide an opportunity to ask questions. She noted that now, more than ever, the work early childhood providers are doing is vitally important.

She noted that state agencies and external partners have been working on guidance to assist with the reopening of child care programs in Phases I and II of Governor Carney's reopening plans. She indicated that a guidance document would be sent out in the near future, as well as webinars and technical assistance to provide ongoing support to providers.

She indicated that the following individuals would provide updates today:

**Jon Sheehan, Office of the Governor**

**Kim Klein, Director of Finance, DOE**

**Betty Gail Timm, Administrator, DSCYF, Office of Childcare Licensing**

**Meredith Seitz, Chief Policy Advisor, DSCYF**

**Thomas Hall, Deputy Chief, Division of Social Services, POC Office**

**Jamie Mack, Division of Public Health**

**Jon Sheehan, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor:** Jon thanked providers for their work and noted that we could not get through this pandemic without them. He also thanked state agency staff for their efforts to keep everyone informed. He noted Phase I began this week on June 1 and that in this phase child care remains the same with only designated emergency child care providers being open to serve children of essential workers.

Phase II will begin on June 15 as noted by the Governor yesterday. In Phase II, child care facilities will be able to accept all children within their licensing capacity, as long as they are operating within the limits of the OCCL guidance distributed on June 2, 2020. Once in Phase II, they will no longer accept applications for emergency child care sites. He reminded everyone that if families can keep children home that is preferred. Enhanced Reimbursement (ER) will continue to be available in Phase II as we want to support child care providers.

**Kimberly Klein, Director, Director of Finance, DOE:** Kim explained that applications for June Enhanced Reimbursement should be submitted using Phase I status, which is the status of the child care provider as of June 14<sup>th</sup>. The system will automatically calculate your June payment based on the first two weeks at the status on your application and the last two weeks with the open status. Additional details were provided as listed below:

- June's application will be available at 8:00 a.m. on June 15. If you go there early and it is not available, please check back after 8:00 a.m.

- If closed/paying staff as of June 14, the system will calculate the payment for the period June 1–14, and auto-calculate the payment as open for the last two weeks of June.
- If you are not opening back up on June 15, when you receive the confirmation call from DE Stars, you will need to let them know so your payment amount can be updated.
- You can only submit one application per month, per site. Please do not submit duplicates if you find an error on a previous application. If you make a mistake on your application, send an email to: [enhanced.reimbursement@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:enhanced.reimbursement@doe.k12.de.us). Please be sure to include your Application ID number so we can track your application.
- Be sure you are submitting your application for the correct month (June). If you do not see the month you are attempting to apply for, please check back later. Do not submit for the incorrect month.
- If you have a question, please do not contact any phone numbers that may have called you in the past during the validation period. We have had staff using their personal cell phone numbers. We ask that you contact us via email at the address above.
- We are still accepting applications for April and May, but please apply as soon as possible.
- We have no information as to when the ER funding will end, but will advise providers if there are any changes to ER funding.

## OCCL Update

**Betty Gail Timm, Administrator of the Office of Childcare Licensing, DSCYF and Meredith Seitz, Chief Policy Advisor, DSCYF:** Betty Gail advised that providers should have received an email notice from OCCL last evening outlining child care requirements for Phase II. If you have not yet seen that, please check your emails. If you do not have it, please contact your OCCL office so we can verify your email address and resend it to you. Phase II requirements for child care providers will begin June 15. Until that date, all other emergency child care provisions are still in place. Beginning June 15, previous temporary changes made to regulations will no longer be in place, and only the guidelines contained in last night's email and in DELACARE regulations will be applicable. Again, until June 15, the emergency child care requirements are still in place. Refer to earlier emails regarding those requirements and contact your licensing specialist with questions. You can also find these materials on the state's coronavirus website under the child care tab.

Effective June 15, child care is no longer restricted to emergency child care sites only. If you are currently closed and want to reopen, you do not have to submit an application to do so. It would be helpful to call your licensing specialist to let them know that you are reopening, *but this is not required*. However, you are not required to reopen as of June 15, if you do not wish to reopen at this time.

As of June 15, child care may be provided to any family seeking care. Families who may be new to your facility should complete your regular enrollment materials and follow DELACARE regulations.

All providers who are open as of June 15, whether you were an emergency child care site or not, must have a written plan to address the Phase II child care requirements found in the email sent to you. Consult that email for details and for a template that you could use to create your emergency plan.

As of June 15, drop off and pick up of children remains the same. Unless the classroom has its own exterior door, adults are to be met at the exterior door and not enter the facility. Children are to be escorted to their classroom by staff.

Temperature checks or a verbal check of actual temp checks will continue for staff and children as of June 15. Also, the basic health screening questionnaire of staff and children each time they enter the facility will continue. See the document sent to you for details but they are the same as in place now.

As of June 15, maximum group size will increase to 15 for children 2 years and older. DELACARE regulations apply to younger age groups. Groups should consist of the same children and staff each day, and mixing of groups should be restricted as much as possible. Groups must be kept at least six feet apart if using shared spaces. Family child cares and large family child care programs should follow DELACARE regulations regarding the number and ages of children, and practice social distancing to the extent practical given the ages, ability and social/emotional needs of children in care.

As of June 15, aides and interns may no longer be alone with children -- other than those limited occurrences found for interns in OCCL center regulation 24 K. The prohibition on using outside contractors and entertainment continues as of June 15. Outside contractors may not be used. However contractors may do work outside of child care hours provided proper cleaning/sanitizing is done before children re-enter the facility in areas where they work was done. Having your cleaning contractors continue to do their work is important, but not during child care hours.

Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants are permitted in the facility during cc hours.

As of June 15, there are still additional cleaning and sanitizing requirements. See the Phase II requirements document for details. However, upon further guidance from Public Health, use of sprinklers is permitted as long as social distancing can be maintained. OCCL will send that update to providers soon.

Regarding cloth face coverings, please adhere to the current requirements per Division of Public Health:

- All providers and staff must wear them while at work
- NOT PERMITTED for children under age 2
- REQUIRED for children ages 12 and over
- Recommended for children ages 2-4, when feasible
- Strongly recommended for children ages 5 and above as long as there is no health risk based on a child's medical condition; there is additional information on this in the Phase II document that was sent to providers
- No one over age 12 may enter the facility without a face covering

I appreciate all the work you have done to keep children and your staff safe during this time. I appreciate that you are working to follow the requirements put in place to help support the health safety of everyone.

On another note, I am hopeful that you all saw the announcement from the Governor's Office and DOE Secretary Bunting regarding the creation of an Associate Secretary of Early Learning in DOE. What a wonderful validation for our profession.

## **DHSS Update**

**Tom Hall, Deputy Director, Division of Social Services (DSS):** Thank you for allowing me this time, and for your commitment to Delaware's families. DSS continues to provide updates to providers through our Provider Portal, Listserv, and the MyChildDE.org website, as well as provide direct assistance to providers through the Resource mailbox (POCResource@delaware.gov), and POC helpline (302-255-9670).

A total of \$9.7 million was awarded to Delaware through the CARES Act. The CARES Act was the second large piece of legislation passed to support states and citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic and included special funding to support childcare infrastructure. DSS spent an average of \$2 million more each month (March, April, and May) plus approximately \$1.8 million in copays (April, May, and June). Going into June, we are on pace to expend approximately \$8 million of the \$9.7 million, which does not include additional spending for DE Stars tiered payments and the ER spending. I mention this so that you know how we are using those funds, but to also mention the CARES Act memo that was sent to POC providers last week. A copy of that memo is attached to these minutes.

For POC providers, the primary takeaways from the memo is that your records must be maintained for six years, and that providers must be honest and truthful when reporting their status (for example, your status as open, closed and paying staff, or closed and not paying staff). Providers are also obligated to quickly correct any error they discover so that funds are spent appropriately. If you have any questions about the memo, please call the POC Helpline at 302-255-9670.

The following is a quick review of POC/Tiered Reimbursement for this month while we are in Phase I and Phase II in the second half of the month:

POC and tiered payments continue to be paid based on enrollment as was the case for the months of March, April, and May.

For the month of June:

- Current emergency designated sites and sites that open in June will be paid 100% of June enrollment. June enrollment is defined as June POC authorized children at 100% attendance
- Closed sites paying full staff are being paid 100% of February enrollment
- Closed sites not paying staff are being paid at 20% of February enrollment

There is a two month lag in the issuance of Tiered Reimbursement payments. April Tiered Reimbursements will be issued this month. It is anticipated those payments will be paid on their regular issuance schedule.

1. April emergency designated sites will have their April Tiered Reimbursements calculated based on April enrollment, which is defined as April POC authorized children at 100% attendance.
2. Closed sites paying staff Tiered Reimbursements will be based on February enrollment, which is defined as February POC authorized children at 100% attendance
3. Sites closed not paying staff will be paid based on 20% of February enrollment.

DSS will continue covering the cost of parent co-pays for the month of June.

Finally, I understand some providers have questions about the children currently listed on your POC roster. Any provider that has children authorized to their site that should not be authorized should send the child's name and MCI# to the POC Resource mailbox @ [POCResource@delaware.gov](mailto:POCResource@delaware.gov).

DSS and the POC staff are on duty and ready to accept calls, as well as able to accept POC questions via the POC Helpline at 302-255-9670 or via email at [POCResource@delaware.gov](mailto:POCResource@delaware.gov).

As always anyone that would like to speak to me directly can call me at my office which is 302-255-9605.

**Jamie Mack, Chief, Health Systems Protections, Division of Public Health, DHSS:** Jamie noted he has been working with DOE and DSCY to provide guidance for the phased reopening, especially with respect to group sizes of children in child care programs.

### **Questions and Answers**

*(Some questions edited for ease of reading; apologies for any wrong name)*

Q. Erica – I have an in-home day care. There is a child in my program that is under two years old and cannot wear a mask. The child is sneezing and coughing, which is related to allergies not COVID-19. Some of the parents are concerned about this child being in the home. What can I do?

A. Jamie – I would suggest that if this is not COVID-related, that you recommend proper hand washing, use tissues to wipe nose and do all you can to minimize any fluid transmission.

Betty Gail – I would refer you to DELACARE regulations (Regulation 41) to see if any of the exclusions from care pertain to this child. You might also want to see if there is a policy on this within your policy handbook.

Q. Teri – I am a family child care provider who remained open as an emergency child care site. I have a child who was at home with parents (who were deemed essential) who now wants to return to care. Am I able to receive that child back into my program now?

A. Betty Gail - Beginning June 15, any child will be able to attend your program. Up until June 15, child care is only open to essential workers and newly reopened business as noted in Governor Carney's updated Emergency Order. *(Note: In this case, yes the child of the essential worker can come back now to childcare, but would need documentation that the parents are essential.)*

Q. Linda – I have an in-home day care. Is ER going to continue to July, and can a POC child be withdrawn before then?

A. Jackie – For POC children, the parent has the choice to withdraw their children at any time. School age kids may need to be changed in the POC system. Follow up with Tom Hall for further guidance.

Kim – As for ER, we outlined today what the process is for June. We will forward guidance for July when it is available.

Q. Tina – Large family child care homes must follow DELACARE regulations related to number and age of children served. Considering practicing social distancing, what does this mean for child care?

A. Jamie – The guidance is to social distance as much as you can. For example, at lunchtime try to space out children as much as you can; if its group play, we understand that may be difficult and this is why screenings are in place. It is very important to wash hands and sanitize surfaces. Be sure toys are wiped down at the end of day, and make sure we aren't rotating children in and out of groups.

Q. Heather – Regarding children with a fever above 99.5 not being admitted back into daycare, how long do they have to be out of child care?

A. Betty Gail – A temperature of 100.0 is the cutoff temperature for a child to be in a family child care, and 99.5 is the screening value for COVID – 19. If child's temperature is above 99.5, they would need to be further evaluated. Once documented by a healthcare provider that it is something else, the child could return to child care setting according to DELACARE regulations.

Q. Cindy – I have two children who dropped off my POC roster in May. Is it still okay for them to attend and when will I see them back on my POC roster?

A. Tom – There are a couple reasons children dropped off the POC attendance list. We will need to discuss further to determine the reason. Please contact Tom at 302-255-9605.

Q. Bonnie – Regarding ER, if we are closed/paying staff, but are not able to open until end of June, we would be paid at the same rate we were paid for April/May? Also, if we do open with reduced enrollment, is there going to be any ER to bring up to what a normal enrollment would be?

A. Kim – If you do not open in June, you would be paid at same rate as it was for April and May. When you do receive your confirmation call, please share your status so we can confirm it is correct. The way we calculate vacant slots remains unchanged. Vacant slots are determined by taking your licensed capacity minus your enrollment (which includes anyone on your POC roster and any private pay clients). June's ER payment will be based on this formula.

Q. Coco – We are a large family child care program. Regarding ER, do we continue to take attendance the way we have always done it? If we don't have kids that have returned by June 15, we would still fill it out based on the attendance as of June 15, correct?

A. Kim – Yes you will submit whatever your enrollment is as of June 15.

Q. Coco – So just to confirm, we can take any and all kids back into our program as of June 15, regardless of the parent's being essential workers or non-essential workers?

A. Betty Gail - Yes, that is correct. Kids are eligible to return to child care regardless of the parents' work situation.

Q. Lisa – How will POC pay for July if it will still be based on February enrollment, given we are coming back in Phase II.

A. Tom – If you have POC kids authorized for your site, your POC numbers should look similar to February enrollment. The plan is for POC to pay 100% enrollment to open sites in June. Essentially you will be paid for June like you were for February, at 100% attendance.

Q. Angela – When we have parents who are also employees are they not allowed to take their own children to their classrooms?

A. Betty Gail – The general protocol is for staff to meet parents at the front door in order to limit the number of people in and out of the classrooms. If your staff is coming into work and bringing their own children, they are permitted to take their own children to the classroom given they are following requirements like temperature checks, etc.

Q. Debra – How soon can we expect inspections to resume for licensed exempt camp providers? How soon can we expect the trainings required for POC to be available online or available in person to comply with POC requirements?

A. Kim – Regarding required training, Veronica Commodore is working on having those available online by June 9.

Tom - For inspections for POC, those will start when camps are ready, so as soon as you know you would be ready for inspection, just reach out to the POC Office. We anticipate more guidance to be forthcoming.

Q. Bill – After June 15 when providers can take in all, are we able to fill our full licensed capacity as long as we follow social distancing and other DPH requirements?

A. Betty Gail – Yes you may accept as many children as you can given reduced group size and social distancing requirements. Also, you must be sure to still follow DELACARE regulations.

Q. Tammy – We are a large center. Do we know how long ratios will be in effect? We may lose 27 children, so how do I determine which kids to take back?

A. Betty Gail – Please contact the OCCL office to see if any exception can be made to your program.

Q. Ms. Davis – When the licensing specialist come to do inspections, will they be required to wear masks and are they allowed to be among the building during operating hours? Also, is it okay for workers to take their mask off once the maximum number of people are in the center/home?

A. Betty Gail - Yes OCCL staff will be required to wear masks while conducting inspections and while in the center/home. Providers are required to wear masks all day, at all times regardless of the number of people in the building.

Q. Caller - If a provider cannot wear mask for health reason, do they need a doctor's note and can they still provide care?

A. Betty Gail - If they cannot wear a face mask, they do not have to, but must have a doctor's note in order to provide care. You may wish to require more frequent temperature checks or other means to ensure the staff person is healthy.

Jamie – Perhaps the provider would consider wearing a face shield instead of a mask, as this shouldn't restrict breathing.

Q. Shannon – Regarding summer camps, when are we allowed to take children outside to state parks, playgrounds, etc.?

A. Betty Gail - I don't have information on that at this time. It will be released when available  
Jamie - Some guidance is being developed at this time. The main obstacle is transporting children safety from the child care site to the park while maintaining social distancing, maximum group size, etc.

Q. Caller – Should we cancel large group activities like circle time, story time and singing?

A. Betty Gail - I am not aware of any guidance on those specific activities. Programs should do their best to ensure social distancing is occurring.

Jamie - Guidance is being developed on this, as we understand singing can't be done with face masks, etc. DPH would likely recommend against any singing activities.

Q. Tina – I am a family child care home. Are we allowed to take kids on walk to the parks?

A. Betty Gail – Yes, but it must be done safely with social distancing in place.

Jamie - Parks/playground are not closed, but we recommend not using them. You may need to check locally to see if parks and playgrounds are open.

Q. Jennifer – Regarding the recommended maximum group size of 15 individuals, does that include teachers?

A. Betty Gail - You are allowed 15 children max, but this does not include teachers/staff.

Q. Connie – I will have eight kids out of sixty return to my program in July, so I am hoping ER continues through July. When you said if a child has a fever that the child must be evaluated it's not COVID-19. Does that mean the doctor will require a COVID-19 test, and doesn't that take a few days to get the results?

A. Jamie – The doctor would evaluate the child for any condition. The doctor would need to document the fever is not COVID-related. At that point, the child could return to child care. If the doctor suspects it is COVID-related, then the child should remain out of daycare until test results are received.

Q. Denise – I have a licensed capacity of nine, with two shifts and three at night. How do I submit my numbers for ER?

A. Kim – For ER, you would still use your licensed capacity minus your enrollment. For some providers with double shifts, they may not be eligible for ER. This would remain the same in June.

Q. Kim – If we have families that want to come back part time and you have two children that mirror reach out, does that equal to one child enrolled when calculating our ER numbers?

A. Kim – For ER, you would consider each child enrolled, as it doesn't matter if they attend part-time.

Q. Caller – If I already submitted an ER application for April, will I have to submit one for May now, and another on June 15?

A. Kim – Yes, you must submit an ER application each month. You are still able to submit for May. After you have completed May's application, then go back in and submit a separate application choosing June (and using June 15 enrollment numbers) from the dropdown menu.

Q. Caller – For POC parents who will bring their children back to child care on June 15, will we charge them their copay for the month?

A. For June, no copay should be charged to parents. POC will be picking up that copayment.

Again, ER payment questions can be sent to [enhanced.reimbursement@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:enhanced.reimbursement@doe.k12.de.us). Any additional information will be sent out when it is available.

The call concluded at 2:32 pm.