



**ANNOUNCEMENT: ELRC-20 #04
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF EARLY LEARNING CENTER OPERATIONS**

**ISSUE DATE: March 14, 2020
EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately
SUNSET DATE: April 30, 2020**

SUBJECT:	Child Care Works Payment Modifications Due to Impacts related to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
TO:	All Regulated Child Care Facilities; Early Learning Resource Centers; and OCDEL Early Learning Resource Center Program Representatives
FROM:	Tracey Campanini Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning

PURPOSE:

To provide additional information to child care programs participating in Child Care Works and the Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC) in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This is an updated policy, providing additional information and replaces ELRC-20 #03.

BACKGROUND:

COVID-19 is active in Pennsylvania. The information about managing COVID-19 is continually being updated. This announcement focuses on the clarification of payments for Pennsylvania's child care subsidy program, Child Care Works (CCW), for the duration of COVID-19.

On March 6, 2020 Governor Wolf signed a Proclamation of Emergency Disaster. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) is serving as the lead agency to coordinate information at the state and local level.

Information will continue to be shared and disseminated going forward to address questions and concerns that have been brought to our attention. We continue to monitor information from [the Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) and [the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Guidance developed by DHS will be centrally located on [this page](#), which will be updated as additional guidance becomes available. We encourage you to continue to consult these resources for updates on COVID-19, information on staying healthy, and updates on the situation in Pennsylvania.

PA DOH has routinely shared that Pennsylvanians should be prepared for the continued spread of the COVID-19 virus and is urging continued planning. As a result, child care programs serving children and families enrolled in CCW have inquired whether they would continue to receive CCW payments in the event child care facilities closed due to COVID-19.

On Friday March 13, DHS issued a policy announcement addressing CCW payment in the event child care was mandated to close by the Governor. In times of emergency, the commonwealth strives to support citizens to the greatest extent; therefore, processes and policies are evaluated and

updated to be responsive to community needs. As a result, this policy provides further flexibility for CCW payments for child care services.

DISCUSSION:

During this emergency period, child care providers are encountering complex challenges that exceed the scope of normal operations. DHS recognizes that providers may be faced with mandated closure for significant periods of time, or voluntarily close due to COVID-19 impacts. In order to support child care providers through facility closures resulting from COVID-19 impacts, the Department is updating its previously issued guidance involving CCW payments.

Effective March 13, 2020 through April 30, 2020 all CCW payments to child care providers will be made regardless of program operation or reason for closure. In addition, during this time period, child absences will not count toward the annual 40-day limit. CCW payment will not be made based on children's attendance in the program but will be made based on current enrollment.

If child care closes, the ELRC should **not** suspend children due to the closing of the facility but allow all children who are enrolled in CCW at the time of the closing to remain enrolled. ELRCs **may not** enroll a child with a new provider under any circumstances. The enrollment must stay with the closed provider.

OCDEL recognizes that families will also be impacted by changes to their own work schedule and income, during child care closures related to COVID-19. Child care providers will not collect the family co-pays for CCW for the period of the closure.

In consultation with DOH and the Governor's Office, these payment practices may be extended to support child care providers' return to full operating capacity.

This updated policy statement replaces in its entirety the recently issued ELRC-20 #03.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Child care programs
 - a. Share with staff completing CCW attendance reporting and invoicing.
 - b. Please direct any questions to your ELRC.
2. ELRCs
 - a. Review and share with appropriate staff.
 - b. Please direct any question to your program representative.
 - c. ELRCs will support child care providers with any transition after closures are lifted.