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BUREAU OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT & HEAD START COLLABORATION

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December 10, 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE: POLICY CLARIFICATION
Information Regarding Payment for COVID-19 Pandemic Related Absences

Dear Child Care Provider:

You are receiving this notice regarding an important update to the "Payment for COVID-19 Pandemic Related Absences" temporary policy change, as follows:

- *The policy period end date has been extended from Sunday, November 29, 2020 to Sunday, December 27, 2020.*
- ***All invoices for absences due to COVID-19 up to and including December 27, 2020 must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 28. Invoices received after the deadline will not be paid.***
- *For children receiving NH Child Care Scholarship, regular web billing (including for absences) resumes on Monday, December 28, 2020.*

DHHS reserves the right to change this policy at any time based on changes in circumstances due to the pandemic. All changes will be in writing. For your convenience, the previous notice about this policy is included below. No changes were made to the October 29, 2020 notice.

October 29, 2020 Notice

You are receiving this notice to inform you of a temporary policy change to pay for COVID-19 pandemic related absences for children in your program. This change will benefit programs, children, and families for (a) children receiving Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) NH Child Care Scholarship Program (NHCCSP) support, and (b) **children who are not receiving NHCCSP support receiving care from a CCDF-enrolled provider OR a provider who has begun the process of enrolling as a CCDF provider.** This policy is effective from **August 3, 2020 to November 29, 2020.** However, DHHS reserves the right to change this policy at any time based on changes in circumstances due to the pandemic. All changes will be in writing.

Overview of Absentee Policy

1. For *children participating in the CCDF NHCCSP*: DHHS will temporarily waive its absentee policy by not using the child's absentee hours and pay the full amount for the authorized service level for up to 10 days in which children meet the criteria in number 3 below.
2. For *children not participating in the CCDF NHCCSP*: DHHS will temporarily pay for hours children are scheduled to attend but are absent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Payment will be made for up to 10 days for weeks in which children meet the criteria in number 3 below.
3. Criteria for COVID-19 pandemic related absentee payments:
 - The child has been exposed directly to another child or adult with a diagnosed case of COVID-19 and the parent/guardian is instructed to contact the child's healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing; and
 - The child is not able to return to child care until one of the following conditions is met:
 - a) The child has a DHHS Public Health-approved COVID-19 test, the result is negative, and the child's symptoms are improving. The child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours and off any fever-reducing medications.
 - b) For children exposed directly to someone with a positive COVID test, the family and program follow the DHHS Public Health guidance for returning to the program.
 - c) The child's healthcare provider documents a chronic/stable condition that accounts for the symptoms, there are no new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19, and the child is able to return to child care. The provider may invoice DHHS for up to 10 days that the child was not able to attend while awaiting documentation from the healthcare provider. In this instance, *it is recommended that the documentation and information are included in the child's personal record.*
 - To best protect the children and families we serve, the staff that support them, and our communities, all providers are strongly encouraged to follow the Public Health Guidance for Child Care.
NH DHHS Public Health guidance may be accessed at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#SocialDistancing>.
DHHS Public Health Guidance includes the following link to CDC guidance for child care:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>.
4. This temporary policy change *does not apply* to the following circumstances:
 - The parent opts to take the child out of state and the child care provider requires the family to isolate after returning.
 - The program instructs the family to contact the child's healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing, the parent decides against having the child tested and instead chooses to keep the child home until symptom free for 24 hours and off any fever-reducing medications.
 - The New Hampshire Attorney General's Office determines that the program engaged in practices that violate an executive order.

5. Parents are responsible for paying the child care provider the balance and any co-pay or program fees for the week(s). Child care providers need to ensure that parents know about and understand the above COVID-related policies at the time parents are making these decisions.

Payment Rates

1. *For children participating in the CCDF NHCCSP:* The CCDF current rates for children aged 1 month to 155 months apply. *DHHS will pay the family's cost share for up to 10 days of absences due to COVID-19.* Current rates will be included with the invoice packet.
2. *For children not participating in the CCDF NHCCSP who receive care from a CCDF Program-enrolled provider or provider who has begun the CCDF provider enrollment process:* DHHS will pay the same rates for children (aged 1 month to 155 months) who are not eligible for NHCCSP as are paid for children receiving CCDF. Please note that different rates apply according to the type of program (licensed center, license-exempt center, licensed family home, license-exempt family home). Current rates will be included with the invoice packet.
3. *To enroll as a NHCCSP (Child Care and Development Program, or CCDF) provider,* please contact Marlene Burton at marlene.burton@dhhs.nh.gov or 603-271-4228.

Payment Process

1. **DHHS will make payments to providers via an electronic invoicing process**, *not* via the CCDF web billing system. To obtain an invoice packet, please send an email to DHHS.AbsenteeInvoice@dhhs.nh.gov with a subject line of "Request COVID-Related Absentee Invoice." If you do not receive your packet within two business days of your request, please call or email Provider Relations (see contact information in the "Questions" section below).
2. **October 2, 2020 update:** For children not participating in the CCDF NHCCSP, you will need an updated invoice packet that calculates prorated payments based on days/hours absent. You will also need to resubmit invoices using the new form for any children for whom you have already billed DHHS. We apologize for the inconvenience.
3. **Providers need to have a vendor number** from the State of NH in order to receive payment. This number is different from your CCDF RID. If you do not have a State of New Hampshire vendor number, please follow the instructions at the end of this notice.
4. **The child care provider must submit the following** to DHHS weekly:
 - *Children receiving CCDF NHCCSP support:* An invoice that includes the dates and hours the child was absent **due to COVID-19 for all or part of a week**, and the NHCCSP authorized service level for the child.
 - *Children not enrolled in the CCDF NHCCSP:* An invoice that includes the dates and hours the child was absent **due to COVID-19 for all or part of a week**, and the number of hours the child was scheduled to attend.
 - *For all children:* A signed (both parent and provider) self-attestation stating the child meets the COVID-19 pandemic related absentee guidelines described in number 3 of this notice.

5. Where to submit invoices:

- *Children receiving Preventive and Protective services through the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF):*
Email your invoices to: DCYFproviderrelations@dhhs.nh.gov.
- *For all other children:* Email your invoices to: DHHS.AbsenteeInvoice@dhhs.nh.gov.

6. Approved invoices will be submitted to our Fiscal Unit and Accounts Payable for processing. It is our goal to process invoices and make payments just as quickly as possible. Given the large volume of invoices for all of DHHS COVID-related programs and policy changes, however, payment may take up to three weeks. Please note that incomplete or incorrect invoices may delay the payment process.

State of New Hampshire Vendor Number

If you do not already have a State of New Hampshire number, you must apply to receive one. This is not the same as your NH Child Care Scholarship Resource number. If you received ECCP staff Incentive or CCRSP payments, you can use the same vendor number. You cannot receive a check from the State of New Hampshire unless/until you have a vendor number. Apply at [NH Vendor Number Application click here](#) or go to <https://das.nh.gov/purchasing/vendorregistration>. Typically, applicants receive a vendor number in less than a week of applying.

Questions about this Notice

If you have questions about this notice, please contact the following:

Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration
Provider Relations at Sarah.Nelson@dhhs.nh.gov or (603) 271-4242

For children receiving DCYF Preventive and Protective Services: DCYFproviderrelations@dhhs.nh.gov

Warmest Regards,



Debra Nelson, Bureau Chief