



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Child Care and Early Learning Provider COVID-19 Update

Dear Child Care and Early Learning Providers,

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for all of you and your efforts to protect the health and safety of yourself and others while ensuring the availability of stable and quality care for Washington's children. Thank you for all you do. We recognize you are facing many uncertainties at this time as a result of the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19). We want to update you on a few things to help you continue to serve children and families.



Click the image to watch Secretary Hunter's latest video message

In the video above, Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Secretary Ross Hunter addresses updates related to the Working Connections Child Care eligibility rules and payments for families, as well as what providers can expect with their Early Achievers tiered reimbursements and quality improvement awards.

Secretary Hunter previously shared a [COVID-19 agencywide response update](#) on all the work the agency is doing to support the young people in our care and our agency partners, including Child Welfare and Juvenile Rehabilitation.

WCCC Family Copayment Waived, Reauthorization Eligibility Rules Relaxed

Washington State is waiving family copayments for the months of April, May and June 2020 for families receiving Working Connections Child Care (WCCC).

DCYF will pay the family's copayment requirement to the provider through the normal invoice process. For example, the family's April copay will be included in the provider payment made for April services.

Additionally, DCYF is adding flexibility in approved activities for families reapplying for WCCC in March, April and May. Families may maintain eligibility when they are not in an approved activity due to COVID-19. Families still need to reapply when required to access this flexibility. DCYF encourages families to reapply to maintain eligibility so families can access child care when it is needed in the future.

Families may reapply online at www.washingtonconnection.org or by calling the Child Care Subsidy Contact Center at 844-626-8687.

Enrollment Based Subsidy Payment Extended

Licensed providers are now allowed to claim for their Child Care Subsidy payment based on enrollment rather than attendance from March 16 through June 30, 2020, extending enrollment-based payment past the originally announced end date of April 30, 2020.

Enrollment based pay means that providers are able to claim the total amount of care that a family was eligible for and provider was authorized to provide, regardless of the eligible child's attendance.

Early Achievers Timeline Requirements Temporarily Suspended

On March 26, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee issued a proclamation to temporarily waive and suspend specific statutes related to Early Achievers in order to minimize barriers for early learning programs. This proclamation lifts the Early Achievers timeline requirements through April 25, 2020. This means that more providers may be able to offer subsidized child care for essential workers during this unprecedented time. In order to accept subsidy, a provider must enroll in Early Achievers but there is no requirement to complete that task within any timeframe.

Additionally, there are no timelines to complete any of the other steps, such as Level 2 activities or completing an initial rating. Currently rated providers must maintain their rating. To do this, they simply submit a request for on-site evaluation and once data collection resumes their community liaison will help sites have a smooth experience scheduling their data collection to renew their rating.

There is no need to worry about missing your Tiered Reimbursement (TR) or Quality Improvement (QI) Award because your site temporarily closes due to COVID-19. DCYF will continue to issue QI awards to Early Achievers participants. DCYF will also continue TR payments for care that is authorized and claimed on your invoice to early learning sites through this state of emergency, even if those sites have temporarily closed due to COVID-19.

Information and Resources

Many child care employers are asking about relief aid and assistance information for small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. DCYF has compiled a list of [resources for small business owners](#) including health and unemployment insurance for workers, coronavirus emergency loan applications and tax relief requests.

We know there are other questions that still don't have definitive answers to help providers stay in business and provide critical services through this emergency. Please know we are working to support you through this unprecedented time.

You can continue to stay up to date by checking [DCYF's COVID-19 webpage](#), where frequently asked questions are regularly updated. If you have further questions, please email dcyf.covid-19@dcyf.wa.gov.

Thank you again for your commitment to caring for Washington's children and families.

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