



Updated March 16, 2020

Child Care and COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Providers

Note: This information will be updated frequently. Please check back regularly for updates.

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GENERAL

How do I get information about COVID-19 in Utah, including information about symptoms and efforts to prevent spread in my program?

Information about COVID-19 symptoms and preventative measures as well as who to contact about the virus are available at coronavirus.utah.gov.

What signs should I look for to determine if a child or an employee is sick?

Please use the information from the Utah Department of Health at coronavirus.utah.gov.

As a general rule, if anyone exhibits a fever, dry coughing or shortness of breath, they should contact their healthcare provider to make sure they are healthy enough to be present in child care. In many cases, those symptoms are related to other common illnesses or allergies, but a health provider should still be contacted before interacting with others.

What should I do if I am concerned about COVID-19 in my facility?

Contact your local health department and they will direct you with the appropriate steps to take. You can also visit coronavirus.utah.gov for information.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES)

What happens to subsidies if children are sick with COVID-19?

Child care subsidies will continue to be paid to providers based on the enrollment of children covered by subsidies. Providers should temporarily discontinue reporting a child stopped attending in the DWS Provider Portal so the payments can continue to be issued based on enrollment. Future payments will end if a parent reports a change in providers to Workforce Services.

Will my program be assessed an overpayment from Workforce Services if a child covered by child care subsidies comes to my program sick and I refuse to allow them to attend out of concern for my staff and other children in my care?

No. An overpayment will not be assessed in this situation.

Will the 8-hour rule apply during this time?

No. During this time, Workforce Services will temporarily waive the 8-hour rule and continue to pay providers for children who are covered by Workforce Services child care subsidies. However, if a parent enrolls a child in a new child care facility, the child is no longer considered enrolled at the first facility. The first facility will not be paid subsidy funds for that child in future months.

Will current Workforce Services child care subsidy cases close if parents are not working?

No. During this time, providers will still receive payment for families covered by child care subsidies even if they are no longer bringing children to your program as long as they are still enrolled. If the parent reports a change in providers, they are no longer considered enrolled. No payment will be issued the following month.

What happens if a parent already received a child care assistance payment (subsidy) for this month and needs to find a new provider?

The parent needs to contact Workforce Services to report the change in providers. An additional payment may be issued to the new provider for the remainder of the month.

What if a parent needs full time care for a child that is now out of school but their subsidy payment is only for part time afterschool care?

Payment increases may be available for children increasing from part-time to full-time care. You will not receive additional funds if the child is already receiving the maximum amount of care allowable on their case. For any child that changes to full-time, please report the child's full name, case number and a description of the changes in care to OCC@utah.gov. The parent may also contact Workforce Services to report this change.

How do these changes affect required actions in the DWS Provider Portal?

Providers are not required to report when a child is no longer attending. When a child stops attending, do not report the child's end-date in the portal. Child care subsidies will continue to be paid to providers based on enrollment of children covered by subsidies.

March 2020 Certification has been cancelled. Child care providers are not required to complete certification in March 2020. Please continue to report changes in the portal such as custom rates and credits in a timely manner to avoid payment errors.

What are the income limits and requirements to qualify for child care assistance?

Workforce Services has temporarily increased the income limits; making child care assistance accessible to more families. For example, a household of four with two parents and two children may qualify with monthly countable income up to \$5,458.

In addition to being income eligible, other requirements must be met including meeting minimum work requirements listed below:

- A single parent must work at least an average of 15 hours per week.
- In two-parent households, one parent must work at least an average of 15 hours per week while the other parent must work at least 30 hours per week. Child care may be used to cover overlapping hours of work.

The amount of child care assistance or subsidy is based on many factors including the type of provider selected, age of children and hours employed. It may not cover the full cost of care. Depending on the countable household income and household size, a copayment may also be assessed. For example, a household size of four with countable income of \$5,458 would have a copayment of \$484 for two children in care.

The income and copayment table based on household size is available at jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/incomeeligcopay.pdf.

To begin your application for child care assistance, go to jobs.utah.gov/mycase.

If my facility is forced to temporarily close and families choose other providers, I am concerned I will go out of business. Is the state considering the long-term effects this may have on the child care industry if programs are forced to close?

The Office of Child Care shares these concerns. Although we do not have any immediate solutions to address this scenario, we will regularly re-evaluate and explore options to minimize the fiscal impact on providers.

Who should I contact with questions about subsidy payments?

Questions for Workforce Services should be directed to the Office of Child Care Provider Helpline email at occ@utah.gov or call 866-435-7414, option 5 then 1.

Who should I contact with questions about licensing?

Contact your licensor or Child Care Licensing at 888-287-3704.

STAFFING & RATIOS

I have several employees who are either sick or at high risk because of their age and therefore, unable to work. What do I do if they decide to stay home?

For licensed child centers, Child Care Licensing has an Emergency Ratio Variance in place to assist you. Please consult the [center interpretation manual](#) for more information. The explanation of these variances are discussed on section 10, page 2 of the manual.

Family licensed centers have the ability to use an emergency substitute as it is also stated in rule.

Will I be able to use substitute teachers who have not received a background check or health and safety training if I have staff who are sick?

No. The background check will be done quickly to avoid this situation. You can, by using the emergency ratio variance, adjust ratios for older children until the individual is clear to become involved with child care.

Child Care Licensing is modifying its pre-service orientation requirements to expedite training. Contact Child Care Licensing if you have questions.

Will background checks still be processed by Child Care Licensing?

Yes. At this time, Child Care Licensing is processing background checks but these checks will be expedited. In addition, there will temporarily be no fees charged for background checks.

Can I increase ratios and groups sizes going over my approved capacity to help with the need for child care?

No. In order to better protect everyone, you need to stay within your approved capacity and ratios. We recommend keeping group sizes as small as possible and to avoid combining small groups into larger groups. This will help minimize the possibility of spreading any disease.

SCHOOL CLOSURES & DISMISSALS

Will Child Care Licensing close child care programs in areas in which a school or school district is closed?

Child Care Licensing is not currently closing any child care facilities. There are working parents in the healthcare system and other systems who need child care services today more than ever. Child Care Licensing and the Office of Child Care recommend that providers stay in contact with their local health department and follow their recommendations. You may call the Coronavirus Hotline for guidance at 1-800-456-7707.

Should I go over my approved capacity to care for children who are coming to my program seeking care if the school they attended has been closed?

No. Child care facilities should work within their approved capacity. Child Care Licensing will not issue variances to go over capacity or increase ratios and group sizes in programs to care for more children at this time. Children should not be attending child care in large group settings. That will increase public health risk for our communities. For all other families, it is suggested that they utilize resources in their communities and networks to meet this temporary child care need. The Office of Child Care will temporarily increase the number of children who can be cared for in the Family, Friend and Neighbor setting from 4 to 8 children. This may be a good option for children receiving child care assistance from Workforce Services.

CHILD CARE CENTER CLOSURES

I am worried about the financial impact to my business if there are extended quarantines and this is impacting my decision to close my program. What should I do?

Before making any decisions about closing your program, contact your local health department and they will direct you with the appropriate steps to take. You can also visit coronavirus.utah.gov for information.

If your program is temporarily losing enrollment and that is causing you to consider closing during this time, please contact your licensor or Child Care Licensing at 1-888-287-3704 before making this decision.

How do I know if I should close my child care center?

If you are contemplating closing due to health risks in your community or in your program, Child Care Licensing recommends that providers first contact their local health department to discuss those concerns.

If your program is temporarily losing enrollment and that is causing you to consider closing during this time, please contact your licensor or Child Care Licensing at 888-287-3704 before making this decision.

If I decide to close my child care center, am I required to report the closure?

Yes. If you are closing your center, please contact your licensor or Child Care Licensing at 888-287-3704 before making that decision.

SAFETY MEASURES

Can I deny access to Child Care Licensing and other agency visitors to protect our children from COVID-19?

No. As long as you are open for business, you are to be in full compliance with licensing rules. This includes permitting staff from Child Care Licensing to enter your program to conduct health and safety inspections.

The Office of Child Care and its partners will not be visiting programs or conducting observations at this time but are available to answer questions. Programs can contact the Office of Child Care Provider Helpline at 866-435-7414 or at occ@utah.gov.

What safety precautions should I be implementing in our programs to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19?

In addition to regular hand washing practices for children and staff, staff are encouraged to implement regular sanitation practices for the following areas:

- Door handles, crash bars and doorknobs
- Office counters and surfaces
- Handrails
- Sinks and drinking fountains
- Dispensers
- Desks and tables
- Bathrooms
- Anything else that is handled frequently by multiple children and staff

Additional guidance is available from the Center for Disease Control in their [guide on strategies for slowing transmission](#).

OTHER

Has the UAEYC Early Childhood Conference been cancelled?

Yes. Please contact UAEYC at 801-456-5794 if you have questions.