



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Child Development and Early Education

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) have shared a significant amount of information throughout the past several weeks as North Carolina's COVID-19 response evolves. To help you navigate all the updates and information, a summary has been compiled for you.

Shipments of Personal Protective Equipment & Cleaning Supplies

In late July 2020, DCDEE announced it would provide each open child care provider with a 4 to 8 week supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies. DCDEE has ordered the following supplies: touchless thermometers with batteries, 10 reusable cloth face coverings per child care employee, disposable masks, bleach solution, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer. The thermometers and cloth face coverings are one-time purchases, as these are reusable items. The supply of disposable masks, bleach solution, and paper towels is expected to last for about 8 weeks, while the supply of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer is expected to last about 4 weeks. How long supplies last will vary by center depending on usage.

Child care centers and family child care homes should expect to receive most of these supplies in multiple shipments over the next few weeks to cover the months of August and September. All shipments will be delivered to the address of the child care facility as recorded in the DCDEE Regulatory database.

To date, many child care providers have confirmed receipt of the touchless thermometers and batteries. DCDEE has received notification from the vendor supplying disinfectant wipes that these supplies are in short supply and are on backorder; anticipated delivery timeframe is late September/early October.

DCDEE is currently working to place another order to cover the months of October and November 2020.

If there are questions about the PPE and/or cleaning supply shipments, please contact Arlette Lambert at (919) 703-5262 or Laura Hewitt at (919) 703-7916.

Operational Grant Information

DCDEE has provided monthly operational grants to child care providers that were open in April, May, and June. DCDEE will continue to provide operational grants for the month of July to licensed, private child care facilities that are open or have reopened for all or part of July. The operational grants are designed to help providers cover monthly fixed operating costs during these this month of the COVID-19 crisis, recognizing that revenues from parent fees are significantly lower as non-essential workers have kept their children home with them.

Who will receive operational grants?

Private child care programs who are open or have reopened for all or part of July will be eligible to receive an operational grant for that month. In order to qualify for the grant, DCDEE required providers to submit either an Emergency Child Care Provider application (between April 1 and May 8, 2020) to remain open OR a Reopening Application, as well as complete a COVID-19 Child Care Provider Survey to report daily whether they were open or closed and to report occupancy/vacancy for children.

How much will child care facilities receive from the operational grants?

Private child care centers will receive between \$500 and \$30,000 per month. Private family child care homes will receive between \$359 and \$2,500 per month. The amount of the individual grants will vary based on the following factors:

- Total number of children served prior to COVID-19: Programs serving more children will receive larger grants.
- Star rating: Programs with a higher star rating will receive larger grants because of the higher cost to meet higher standards.
- Infant toddler enrollment: Programs serving infants and toddlers will receive larger grants to account for higher staffing and fixed costs associated with caring for infants and toddlers.
- Serving subsidy children: Programs that have served subsidy children in the past 12 months will receive smaller grants than programs that do not serve families and children receiving child care subsidy. Federal Child Care Development Funds are intended to increase access to quality care for families and children with low incomes. However, because of the unique challenges programs are facing as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, all programs will receive some level of grant support.
- Subsidy density (the percentage of children enrolled who receive child care subsidy): Because DCDEE is continuing to stabilize child care subsidy monthly payments to child care providers based on February enrollment, programs that have higher percentages of children on subsidy are getting more of their typical monthly revenue covered than programs that have lower percentages of children on subsidy and rely more heavily on private fees from parents. Therefore, programs with lower percentages of children on subsidy will receive larger grants.

When will the operational grants be awarded?

If the private child care facility was open prior to July 1, 2020, the operational grant will be issued in mid-August.

If the child care facility reopened in July, the operational grants will be prorated based on the date of reopening and will be issued beginning mid-August. Please remember that deposits can take up to five business days to reach provider's accounts.

How can child care facilities find out how much their grant awards will be?

To find out the amount of the operational grant awarded to your facility, please call the appropriate telephone number listed below. When contacting the Division of Child Development and Early Education, please have the facility name and license number available:

- If the child care facility is in Alamance through Forsyth Counties, contact Arlette Lambert at 919.703.5262.
- If the child care facility is in Franklin through Orange Counties, contact Laura Hewitt at 919.703.7916.
- If the child care facility is in Pamlico through Yancey Counties, contact Theresa Rodersheimer at 919.703.6947.
- If the child care facility would like to receive the grant amount via email, please send that request to dcdee.communications@dhhs.nc.gov.

Updated ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit

DCDEE has updated the [ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit](#) to reflect new changes from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other updates. Please pay special attention to the following updates:

- Page 4 - provides new guidance on Exposures - what to do with children and staff who have been in close contact with someone who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms or develops symptoms during the day
- Page 5 and 13 - updates Return to Child Care guidance for people who have been in close contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19 or diagnosed with COVID-19
- Page 11 - provides link to NCDHHS Interim Guidance for Safe Application of Disinfectants
- Page 12 - updates symptom screening question #1 to ask about whether people have been in close contact in the last 14 days with someone with symptoms of COVID-19 or diagnosed with COVID-19
- Page 12 - clarifies that if a child has COVID-19 symptoms, household members (i.e., siblings) should also quarantine for 14 days since last exposure to symptomatic person, unless the symptomatic person is cleared as a result of a negative test for COVID-19

If you have questions about these updates, please reach out to your Child Care Health Consultant.

Subsidized Child Care Information

Many people have been impacted by COVID-19 and DCDEE wants to make sure that families in North Carolina do not experience a negative impact on their subsidy services. Therefore, DCDEE is not requiring families to pay their parent fees for August 2020. The State will make the parent fee payments to open providers as part of the regular subsidy payment for August. Each family has received a notice by mail informing them of this short-term change.

Also, DCDEE will only pay providers who are open in August and the subsidy payment will continue to be based on March payments for February services.

For additional information, please review the [COVID-19 Child Care Payment Policies](#).

For questions, please contact the Subsidy Section at DCDEE at 919.814.6380.

Options for School-Age Care

With the start of the new school year fast approaching, school districts are reopening under either a Plan B (hybrid) or Plan C scenario (full remote learning). DCDEE recognizes that families are searching for a safe place for their children to engage in online learning during the typical school day while they are at work.

In North Carolina, any setting where children receive care where they do not reside is governed by federal law (which sets minimum health and safety requirements), state law (which further defines health, safety, program, and staff requirements), and state regulations. State law defines child care to be any program that serves 3 or more unrelated children and operates more than 4 hours a day. As the regulatory agency for licensed child care providers, NCDHHS has been exploring options for families who need child care during periods of remote learning for their school-aged children who are enrolled in public schools (ages 5 to 12).

Those options are as follows:

- **Option 1 - Licensed Child Care:** NCDHHS has set up a child care hotline (1-888-600-1685) where families can call to get information about local options for infants through children age 12. The hotline is open Monday through Friday 8AM to 5PM. When families call the hotline, child care referral specialists will provide referrals to licensed child care programs that are open and have vacancies for the age of the child(ren) for whom care is being requested. As of the beginning of August, there are currently about 30,000 slots available for school-age children in licensed child

care across the state, but availability varies from community to community. Flyers to promote the hotline are available to be shared with parents and families in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

- Option 2 - Remote Learning option at Public Schools: Public schools across North Carolina have the option to provide a remote learning environment to school-age children on site in their public school buildings during periods of remote learning, overseen by support staff or a third party. Pursuant to NCGS 110-86(2), Public Schools are exempt from the definition of child care, and therefore exempt from licensure requirements. If public schools choose to provide a remote learning environment for students during the school day in public school buildings, this is considered to be public school and exempt from child care licensure. Similar to operating in-person instruction, schools choosing this option would be responsible for ensuring adequate staff and supports (including but not limited to meals and transportation) and manage any enrollment processes for families. Any care for school-age children provided in a public school building would be subject to the health and safety requirements of the [StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K - 12\)](#) guidance under Plan B.
- Option 3 - Remote Learning option at Community Based Organizations through contracts with Public Schools: At this time, child care rules require that community-based organizations (e.g., Parks and Recreation programs, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, non-profits) have a license from the NCDHHS Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) in order to provide school-age child care. On August 5, 2020, DCDEE brought a rule-change recommendation to the Child Care Commission to allow public schools to enter into contractual agreements with community based organizations to establish Remote Learning Facilities for school-age children which would meet the definition of "Public Schools" under NCGS 110-86(2). Under this option, the remote learning supervision and support would be provided on-site at the community-based organization. The Child Care Commission has voted to adopt the emergency rules, and our expectation is that this rule change will become effective August 13.

NCDHHS currently recommends that families call the NCDHHS child care hotline (1-888-600-1685) if they are seeking daily support for their children aged 12 or below, until other options are available to them locally.

State of Emergency Rules for School Age Care

The NC Child Care Commission has adopted [emergency rules](#) and is proposing temporary rules to comply with the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to enact protective measures to help prevent the spread of the disease. This disease can result in serious illness or death to the public. The public health emergency, and the resulting closure of public schools, has impacted North Carolina school-age children and their families. To the degree that it is able, the North Carolina Child Care Commission is implementing emergency rules in order to give public schools options to provide care outside, or in addition to, the traditional school building, as well as give licensed facilities some flexibility to create and fill additional slots for school-age children to receive care while attending remote/online learning programs. The emergency rules will become effective on August 13, 2020 and will be published in the NC Register on September 1, 2020.

Pursuant to [G.S. 150B-21.1A](#) when the Commission adopts emergency rules, they must simultaneously begin the temporary rulemaking process to replace the emergency rules and hold a public hearing on the rules to solicit comments. The comment period will be August 12 through September 2. The public hearing will be held on August 19, 2020, from 9:00 am until 10:30am. The meeting will be held by WebEx and the public is invited. Additional information regarding how to participate in the public hearing will be forthcoming.

Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for ALL NC Pre-K Programs Now Available

On August 3, 2020, DCDEE released its [Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs](#), which applies to all NC Pre-K providers - regardless of whether they are located in in public schools or nonpublic or private sites, and provides information on the following:

- Goals for the 2020-21 NC Pre-K Program Year
- Mode of Classroom Instruction
- Health & Safety Guidance
- Remote Learning Requirements
- Payment Policies
- Reporting Requirements

Sites should contact their Contracting Agency if they have questions about the guidance. Contracting Agencies should contact their NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant with questions about this guidance.