



March 24, 2020

Dear Provider,

Important: Please read this entire email as there is action described at the end that you need to take.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has been working diligently to ensure that the child care needs of Ohioans are met during the COVID-19 pandemic. As information has evolved, email communications and updates to our website have occurred. This communication includes a summary of information to date.

Effective March 13, 2020 Ratio/ Group Size, Pandemic and Absent Day Increase

Amended rules were issued that include:

- ✓ Increased staff/child ratio and group sizes. This change was made to accommodate the families impacted by the Governor's direction to close K-12 schools in Ohio.
- ✓ Programs serving children in publicly funded child care (PFCC) have an increase in absent days, from ten to twenty per six month period.
- ✓ Programs serving children in PFCC who are closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic can receive twenty-one pandemic days.

Effective March 18, 2020 Pandemic Child Care Centers

An Executive Order issued March 17, 2020 required:

- ✓ The creation of pandemic child care programs.

Creation of Pandemic Child Care Rules:

- ✓ Pandemic child care center rule was created to define continued child care when an Executive Order is issued to close all child care programs in Ohio. This rule created the following licensing requirements for pandemic child care:
 - Only child care centers could become pandemic child care programs.
 - Child care will only be provided for children of health, safety and essential services workers as defined by the Governor's Office in conjunction with the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.
 - Emergency programs could begin operating to help ease the demand for child care for school age children.
 - These programs were to operate under the ratio/group size limitations outlined in the March 13, 2020 communication.

Effective March 26, 2020 Pandemic Child Care Expansion

Closure of Licensed Programs (non-pandemic) and Revisions to Pandemic License Requirements

An Executive Order issued March 24, 2020 required:

- ✓ All child care programs must close by 11:59pm on Wednesday, March 25, 2020.
- ✓ Only licensed or certified pandemic child care programs can provide child care beginning March 26, 2020.

Revision to Pandemic Child Care Rules:

- ✓ With guidance from the Center for Disease Control, and with the health and safety of Ohio’s child care workers and children in mind, the following rules will be effective:
 - Family child care home providers who are currently licensed and currently certified in-home aides can apply for a pandemic child care license. This is in addition to child care centers.
 - Child care center ratio and group size will adjust as outlined below:

Age Category	Ratio/Group Size
Infant	1:4 or 2:6
Toddler	1:6
Preschool	1:6
School Age	1:6

- Each family child care provider can care for no more than 6 children at one time with no more than 3 under the age of two.
- Each space used for child care should contain no more than six children. The staff member should not work with a different group at any time to avoid cross-contamination, whenever possible. Staff should not move from room to room and should only be in direct contact with their assigned group of children. This ensures a maximum group size of 7 people in one space (except for the infant room in a center).
- ✓ Recommendations to ensure safety:
 - It is recommended that children of parents of the same employer should be kept together, when possible.
 - Parent interaction at drop off and pick up time should be limited.
 - If a large space (like a gymnasium) is used to create several small spaces, temporary walls that are at least 6 feet in height or a similar temporary structure must be used to ensure adequate space between groups.

Prioritizing Families for Enrollment in Pandemic Child Care

Any parent that can find a safe and healthy alternative child care option during the pandemic that will keep their child(ren) out of a group setting and not with an elderly provider should do so. Pandemic child care programs should be a last resort for families.

Child care will only be provided for children of health, safety and essential services workers as defined below:

- ✓ **Priority Enrollment Now through Tuesday, March 24, 2020**
The following professionals without alternate care must be prioritized:
 1. Hospital and clinic staff
 2. Dentists
 3. Pharmacy staff
 4. Nursing home, elder care, and home health care workers
 5. Psychologists
 6. Psychiatrists
 7. Mental health counselors
 8. Developmental disability aides

9. First responders (police, fire & EMT)
10. Direct service workers (child care, children services, public assistance and adult protective services)

✓ **After Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

Enrollment of all other essential staff. For more information on who is essential please go to: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home/public-health-orders/directors-order-to-stay-at-home>.

Payment Guidance

Programs opened and licensed prior to March 26, 2020

- ✓ Programs with a provider agreement should use the Time, Attendance and Payment (TAP) system to record absent days for children authorized for PFCC who are absent from care. A program can receive payment for up to 20 absent days each six-month period. The current six-month period ends June 30, 2020.
- ✓ Programs with a provider agreement should use the TAP system to request payment for up to 21 pandemic days, if their program has closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Instructions for how to enter these days into the TAP system are located here: <https://ohiocctap.info/programs/covid-19/>
- ✓ If your program is operating and a child is absent prior to or on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 please submit an absent day for the child, if the child has remaining absent days.
- ✓ For Thursday, March 26 – Saturday, March 28, 2020, programs should submit for pandemic day payments.

Programs Closure Payments as of March 26, 2020 as a result of the Governor’s Executive Order

- ✓ For Thursday, March 26 – Saturday, March 28, 2020, programs should submit for pandemic day payments to make them whole for this week. Instructions for how to enter these days into the TAP system are located here: <https://ohiocctap.info/programs/covid-19/>
- ✓ ODJFS, in partnership with the Governor’s office, is working with the General Assembly to provide closed programs with ongoing payments equal to a historical weekly PFCC payment for the week starting Sunday, March 29, 2020. Additional information will be forthcoming as details are determined.

Pandemic Child Care Programs

- ✓ Temporary Pandemic Programs will be issued a weekly PFCC Pandemic payment as determined by the “Provider Agreement for Publicly Funded Pandemic Child Care Services “.
- ✓ The PFCC pandemic payment is based on the 5-star rates for the providers’ county, the number and ages of enrolled children whose parents are providing health, safety or essential services who are eligible for PFCC.
- ✓ In order to receive payment, providers must submit the spreadsheet, the enrollment forms and verification of the parent’s employment as providing health, safety or essential services to: PandemicChildCare@jfs.ohio.gov

- ✓ The PFCC pandemic payment does not include payment for private pay children. Programs should establish their own private pay rate structure. The PFCC pandemic payment is only for children who are eligible for PFCC.
- ✓ County agencies should continue to determine eligibility for families.
- ✓ Programs are not permitted to charge publicly funded parents for any care provided, this includes not collecting the co-payment.
- ✓ The PFCC pandemic payment will continue for services provided up to when the Executive Order is lifted.
- ✓ Payment for children eligible for PFCC will be based on the following categories of payment for a 5-star rated program:

County Category 1		County Category 2		Category 3	
Brown, Champaign, Crawford, Defiance, Fayette, Fulton, Gallia, Guernsey, Hocking, Mercer, Muskingum, Paulding, Putnam, Ross, Scioto, Tuscarawas, Van Wert, Vinton, Williams, Wyandot		Adams, Allen, Ashland, Ashtabula, Athens, Carroll, Clark, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Darke, Erie, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Highland, Holmes, Huron, Jackson, Lawrence, Licking, Logan, Madison, Meigs, Miami, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Union, Washington, Wayne		Auglaize, Belmont, Butler, Clermont, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Geauga, Greene, Hamilton, Harrison, Jefferson, Knox, Lake, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Medina, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Ottawa, Portage, Summit, Trumbull, Warren, Wood	
Child Care Center & Type A Family Child Care Home Rates					
Weekly Rate		Weekly Rate		Weekly Rate	
Infant	\$201.20	Infant	\$231.11	Infant	\$294.84
Toddler	\$173.35	Toddler	\$211.32	Toddler	\$264.02
Pre-school	\$154.39	Pre-school	\$184.72	Pre-school	\$230.97
School Age	\$86.35	School Age	\$105.61	School Age	\$131.22
Type B Family Child Care Home & In-Home Aide Rates					
Weekly Rate		Weekly Rate		Weekly Rate	
Infant	\$188.53	Infant	\$194.39	Infant	\$201.18
Toddler	\$174.74	Toddler	\$182.52	Toddler	\$201.88
Pre-school	\$161.01	Pre-school	\$167.78	Pre-school	\$173.34
School Age	\$141.45	School Age	\$140.40	School Age	\$140.40

Licensing Rule Guidance

- ✓ Background checks are still required by any staff working with children. If staff have an existing approval from ODJFS, then staff should keep a copy of the JFS 01176 or JFS 01177 on file at the pandemic child care program.
- ✓ Staff without a background check, as described in rules 5101:2-12-09 and 5101:2-13-09 of the OAC, have seven days from their start day to submit for BCI/FBI checks and

complete a request for a background check in the Ohio Professional Registry. More information on this change can be found on the attached document. Instructions on the background check process can be found here:

http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/Background_Check_Process.stm

- ✓ Attendance records must be kept daily on paper. The TAP system will not be used to track attendance for care provided on or after March 26, 2020.
- ✓ Clarification has been added around emergency procedures, including reporting requirements.
- ✓ If a child, parent or staff member in your program tests positive for COVID-19 please notify ODJFS by emailing ODJFS_childcare@jfs.ohio.gov, not through the OCLQS system. The email notification should include:
 - Subject Line – COVID-19 report
 - Body should include:
 - program name, address and license number
 - if the person tested positive for COVID-19
 - if the person is a child enrolled in the program or staff member at the program

Action Needed

Based on the information provided in this letter, you need to determine if you are interested in providing pandemic child care services.

- ✓ If you are not currently licensed as a pandemic program, but have an existing FCC or center license or IHA certificate, and wish to be licensed as a pandemic program, please submit your application to ODJFS_childcare@jfs.ohio.gov
- ✓ If you are currently licensed as a Pandemic Child Care Program and no longer wish to provide pandemic services, please email ODJFS_childcare@jfs.ohio.gov to request closure of your pandemic license.
- ✓ ODJFS licensed programs should NOT submit a temporary closure in OCLQS if they are closing due to the Governor's order. Programs with a temporarily closed status in the system cannot get the weekly PFCC payment for pandemic days if the program status is temporarily closed.

We appreciate all that you are doing for the children and families of Ohio during this unprecedented time.

For information for Families and Providers on Pandemic Child Care visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/childcare.stm>. The web page includes links to all rules and forms, the list of approved pandemic child care programs, Pandemic Q and A's, as well as resources for providers and families.

If you have questions about this email please contact the Child Care Policy Help Desk at 1-877-302-2347, option 4 or email at childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov.