



## COVID-19 CHILD CARE PAYMENT POLICIES

*Issued April 3, 2020; Updated December 1, 2020*

These policies apply to licensed or regulated child care facilities for the months of April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December 2020 (subject to the availability of funding) related to:

- 1) Bonus payments to child care teachers and staff providing services during the COVID-19
- 2) Emergency School-Age Family Support Program,
- 3) Subsidized Child Care program payments,
- 4) Operational Grants to open providers,
- 5) NC Pre-K Program payments, and
- 6) Emergency Child Care Subsidy program payments.

### **1. BONUS PAYMENTS TO CHILD CARE STAFF PROVIDING SERVICES DURING COVID-19**

**Purpose:** All child care employees working on-site at a child care facility that is approved to provide child care in November and December 2020, as well as teachers and assistants in NC Pre-K and Head Start programs who are serving children face-to-face during November and December, will receive a bonus for their service during the COVID-19 crisis.

**Eligibility:** Bonus payments are available for both child care centers and family child care homes and to both teaching and non-teaching staff, full and part-time, working on-site at the child care facility. All teachers and assistants working in NC Pre-K and Head Start programs who are serving children face-to-face are eligible for the bonuses.

- Teaching staff includes lead, assistant, and other resource teachers working directly with children in the classroom.
- Non-teaching staff includes administrators, directors, cooks, and janitorial staff.
- An employee is considered part-time for the purpose of these bonuses if they are working on-site at a facility 20 hours a week or less.

#### **Process:**

- DCDEE will pay bonus payments directly to child care programs and public school systems.
- All child care programs approved to operate have attested that they will provide teachers and staff with bonus pay, at no less than the amounts funded by DCDEE.
- Providers must pay staff prorated amounts of the monthly bonus payment at regular employee pay periods. Providers have the flexibility to make payments to their employees after receiving the bonus payment amounts from DCDEE.
- Child care programs that reopen in the middle of November and/or December will also be eligible for bonus payments for employees. These programs will receive prorated bonus payments.
- Child care programs have the flexibility to offer additional bonuses to staff using their own funds.

- NOTE: Some GS-110 religious sponsored programs operating under the Emergency Child Care guidelines have requested to be exempted from all COVID-19 related funding. If a GS-110 program has chosen to be exempted, staff will not receive these bonuses.

**Recording Attendance:**

- Providers and school systems must submit employee attendance for the month of November by 9:00pm on December 5, 2020, and December attendance by 9:00pm on December 18, 2020. Inaccurate, untimely, or incomplete reporting may result in delayed bonus payments.
- Bonus payments for November and December will be calculated based on employee staffing data reported by providers and school systems that month.
- Providers will need to track attendance for employees and submit through the [Provider Portal](#) for the Emergency School Age Family Support Program and Employee Bonus Provider Portal.
  - DCDEE has published a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions on how to record and submit attendance for employees.

**Rates:** As of October 2020, the bonus payment amounts are as follows for those employed at the **same program for November and December:**

	<b><u>Full-Time Employees</u></b>	<b><u>Part-Time Employees</u></b>
<b><u>Teaching Staff</u></b>	<u>\$450 per teacher – November</u> <u>\$600 per teacher – December</u>	<u>\$225 per teacher – November</u> <u>\$300 per teacher – December</u>
<b><u>Non-Teaching Staff</u></b>	<u>\$250 per staff – November</u> <u>\$325 per staff – December</u>	<u>\$125 per teacher – November</u> <u>\$165 per teacher – December</u>

As of October 2020, the bonus payment amounts are as follows for new employees or those **not at the same program for November and December:**

	<b><u>Full-Time Employees</u></b>	<b><u>Part-Time Employees</u></b>
<b><u>Teaching Staff</u></b>	<u>\$450 per teacher for</u> <u>November &amp; December</u>	<u>\$225 per teacher for</u> <u>November &amp; December</u>
<b><u>Non-Teaching Staff</u></b>	<u>\$250 per staff for</u> <u>November&amp; December</u>	<u>\$125 per teacher for</u> <u>November &amp; December</u>

- Staff are eligible for the full bonus payment amount shown in the chart above if they are not absent from work for more than 10 days during the month not related to COVID-19 closures. For new hires or staff missing more than 10 days not due to COVID-19 closures, the bonus payment will be prorated using a daily rate. (To calculate the daily rate, divide the bonus amount by 21.67 then multiple that by the number of days the employee worked.)
- Bonus payments are subject to payroll taxes, which would be partially paid by the employee through payroll reductions and partially paid by the provider. Providers and school systems will receive an additional 10% for bonus payments to cover costs associated with payroll taxes and other administrative/overhead costs.
- You will be able to log into the [Provider Portal](#) to confirm the accuracy of payments and reconcile your bank statements.

Payment Schedule: Bonus payments for November 2020 will be paid in mid-December 2020, while the bonus payments for December will be paid in late December 2020.

## 2. Emergency School-Age Family Support Program

The Emergency School-Age Family Support Program provides financial assistance for child care to parents/primary caregivers who have school-age a child/ren who is attending a licensed child care center or home or a registered community-based organization for remote learning as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. This program will operate beginning October 1, 2020 and will continue for the months of October and November 2020. Due to the success of the program and the number of children and families that applied, DCDEE is no longer able to accept new applications. Providers that registered children in the Emergency Provider Portal prior to 9:00pm on Thursday, November 5, 2020, are eligible to receive payment based on attendance that was recorded in the portal.

The Emergency School-Age Family Support Program is intended for children and families who are NOT already receiving assistance with child care costs. Parents/caregivers with children with an active voucher for the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program (SCCA) should not complete a parent application for this emergency program.

Children are considered school-age if they were 5 years of age before August 31, 2020. Children age 13 years and older are not eligible for this program unless the child has a special need, is under court-ordered supervision, or is receiving child protective services or foster care services.

If a family who is already enrolled in the child care program submits an emergency application for October services and they have already paid the provider for the month of October, the provider should either reimburse the family for the October service month or provide the family with a credit for a future month.

### Facility Eligibility

- All licensed or regulated facilities, regardless of star rating and regardless of current participation in the Subsidized Child Care Program, are eligible to participate in the program.
- All unlicensed community-based organizations (CBO) registered with DCDEE are eligible to participate in the program.

### Family Eligibility

For a family to be eligible for the Emergency School-Age Family Support Program, it must have:

- A school-age child/ren attending a licensed child care center or home or a registered CBO for remote learning AND
- A household income below 200 percent of the poverty line (please see chart below).

Persons in Household	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Income Limit	\$33,820	\$42,660	\$51,500	\$60,340	\$69,180	\$78,020	\$86,860

*\*For household size greater than 8 people, add \$4,420 for each additional person starting with the 9<sup>th</sup> person.*

### **Facility Application Process**

Licensed or regulated facilities currently participating in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program must:

- Accept parent application for Emergency School-Age Family Support Program
  - Child care providers are NOT expected to determine or verify whether a family is eligible for financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the parent/primary caregiver to self-attest to meeting the eligibility criteria
  - Child care providers should, review the Parent Application form to ensure it is complete and [store the Parent Application](#).
- Register school-age child/ren in the emergency portal using your current NCID and password; a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions is available.
- [Store the parent application](#).
- Record and submit attendance in the emergency portal; a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions is available.

Licensed or regulated facilities **NOT** currently participating in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program must:

- Accept parent application for Emergency School-Age Family Support Program
  - Child care providers are NOT expected to determine or verify whether a family is eligible for financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the parent/primary caregiver to self-attest to meeting the eligibility criteria
  - Child care providers should, review the Parent Application form to ensure it is complete and [store the Parent Application](#).
- Create an NCID and password; instructions are available [here](#).
- Contact DCDEE Subsidy Services Section at 919-814-6380 for assistance setting up payment for this program.
  - If the facility participated in DCDEE's emergency subsidy program for essential workers in April and May 2020, direct deposit may be used for this program.
  - If the facility did not participate in DCDEE's emergency subsidy program for essential workers in April and May 2020, additional paperwork will need to be completed by the facility to process payment.
  - Contact DCDEE at 919-814-6380 to confirm the payment process and have the facility linked within the portal.
- Once the payment method has been established with DCDEE, register school-age child/ren in the emergency portal using your current NCID and password; a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions is available.
- [Store the parent application](#).
- Record and submit attendance in the emergency portal; a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions is available.

Unlicensed community-based organization (CBO) registered with DCDEE must:

- Accept parent application for Emergency School-Age Family Support Program
  - Child care providers are NOT expected to determine or verify whether a family is eligible for financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the parent/primary caregiver to self-attest to meeting the eligibility criteria
  - Child care providers should, review the Parent Application form to ensure it is complete and [store the Parent Application](#).
- Contact DCDEE Subsidy Services Section at 919-814-6380 for assistance setting up payment for this program and gaining access to the emergency online portal for this program.
- Once payment has been established with DCDEE, register school-age child in the emergency portal using your current NCID and password; a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions is available.
- [Store the parent application](#).
- Record and submit attendance in the emergency portal; a [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions is available.

### **Family Application Process**

Families must complete a COVID-19 Parent Application for Financial Assistance for Emergency School-Age Family Support Program, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and submit the application to their chosen facility.

- Child care providers are NOT expected to determine or verify whether a family is eligible for financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the parent/primary caregiver to self-attest to meeting the eligibility criteria.
- Child care providers should review the Parent Application form to ensure it is complete and [store the Parent Application](#).

### **Emergency Child Care Subsidy Rates**

Child care providers will receive the following rates for school-age children served through the Emergency School-Age Family Support Program for October and November 2020:

Rate	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Homes	Community-Based Organizations
	\$870	\$645	\$516

\*Rates were established using the state average for 75th percentile of the 2018 market rates for each group.

### **Payments**

- Providers will be paid the full reimbursement rate for the month for each child enrolled in the Emergency School-Age Family Support Program if the child attends at least one day during each month. These emergency subsidy payments will be paid outside of the NC FAST system.
- Although payments will not be impacted by attendance, each child's attendance must be recorded for each month in order to receive payment.

- You will be able to log into the Provider Portal for the Emergency School-Age Family Support Program to confirm the accuracy of payments and reconcile your bank statements.

#### **Copayments**

The Emergency School-Age Family Assistance Program does not have parent copayments.

#### **Recording Attendance**

- Providers should submit child attendance by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the following month. Inaccurate, untimely, or incomplete reporting may result in delayed emergency school-age family assistance payments.
- Providers will need to track attendance for children receiving Emergency School-Age Family Support payments and submit through the Provider Portal for the Emergency School-Age Family Support Program.
  - Attendance can be submitted beginning Saturday, October 31, 2020, and providers must finish entering and submitting all attendance by 9:00pm on Thursday, November 5, 2020.
  - A [Job Aid](#) with detailed instructions on how to enter children for whom they have received completed Parent Applications for Emergency School-Age Family Assistance, as well as how to record and submit attendance for children is available.
  - Providers should only use this portal to record children who are enrolled in the Emergency School-Age Family Support Program. Providers enrolled in regular subsidy should record attendance for children enrolled in regular subsidy as they normally do

#### **Uploading Parent Applications**

- Providers can begin uploading completed COVID-19 Parent Applications for Emergency School-Age Family Support Program on Monday, October 26, 2020. Please ensure that all Parent Applications are submitted either through the Emergency School-Age Family Assistance Provider Portal or by fax to DCDEE at 919-715-0970 by no later than Monday, November 30, 2020.
- Instructions for how to upload parent applications are included within the Provider Portal. Providers should begin uploading the parent applications as soon as possible
- If providers are unable to upload the applications, they should fax the forms to DCDEE, Subsidy Services Section, at 919-715-0970
- All applications must be uploaded or mailed to DCDEE no later than Monday, November 30, 2020.

### **3. SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROGRAM PAYMENTS**

#### **Payments:**

- March through May 2020: DCDEE will make Subsidized Child Care Program payments to ALL subsidized child care providers for March, April, and May service months, regardless of whether the facility is open or closed. The payment for March will be based on providers entering attendance for all subsidy children as present for all service days during the month of March. The

payment amount for April and May will be consistent with the March payments for February services for all providers (as recorded in NC FAST). DCDEE is paying the parent fees for April and May service months and these totals will be added into the April and May payments.

- June, July, and August 2020: DCDEE will also make Subsidized Child Care Program payments only to providers that are open in June.
- Beginning with the service month of September 2020, child care facilities are asked to enter true attendance into the NC FAST Provider Portal and payment for services will be calculated based on this attendance only. There will no longer be a differential amount calculated. Child care facilities who remain closed will not receive payment for any subsidized children.

**Copayments:** DCDEE covered the cost of all parent copayments for the child care subsidy program for April and May 2020. For June, July, and August 2020, DCDEE covered the cost of parent copayments for the child care subsidy program for providers that were open. Child care programs were instructed not to collect parent copayments for the listed months.

Beginning with the service month of September 2020, each family receiving subsidized child care with a parent fee assigned will be responsible for paying this parent fee directly to their chosen child care facility. DCDEE will no longer cover the cost of these parent fees.

**Payment Schedule:** Subsidized child care program payments and parent copayments were paid on a modified schedule during the months of March, April, May, June, and July 2020 to support child care programs during this crisis.

Beginning with the service month of September, subsidized child care program payments have resumed the normal payment schedule.

**Recording Attendance:** Child care subsidy providers who remain open and have children with a subsidized child care voucher attending their facility should record ACTUAL attendance for these children in August. Child care subsidy providers who remain open and have children with a subsidized child care voucher who are not attending their facility should record Not Scheduled for these children in August. Child care subsidy providers who are closed should not record any attendance in the NC FAST Provider Portal for August.

In the event that a provider's August subsidy payments would be higher than February, DCDEE will pay the additional payment owed in the next mid-month payment. For the August 2020 calculation, school age children will be calculated at the full-time rate rather than the blended rate. However, if the February service month payment is still higher, no additional payment will be issued.

Beginning with the service month of September 2020, child care facilities are asked to enter true attendance into the NC FAST Provider Portal and payment for services will be calculated based on this attendance only. There will no longer be a differential amount calculated. Child care facilities who remain closed will not receive payment for any subsidized children.

Although DCDEE is returning to the usual payment cycle, DCDEE understands that many child care facilities will have periods of time in which they are closed or have classrooms that are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic or there will be subsidized children who are not able to attend a full month due to the need

to quarantine. DCDEE will continue to pay subsidized child care providers for days that they are either closed or a child cannot attend due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Detailed instructions on how to record attendance in the NC FAST Provider Portal have been provided through the Provider Portal Email Listserv.**

#### 4. OPERATIONAL GRANTS

The North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has provided monthly operational grants to open child care providers the months of April - July. These grants helped providers with monthly fixed operating costs during the COVID-19 crisis.

As outlined in Session Law 2020-97, DCDEE will provide \$35 million in operational grants to licensed, private child care facilities that are open or have reopened for in-person programming. Per legislation, DCDEE is using the same formula which has previously been used. Based on that methodology and historical costs of the operation grants provided, funding will be awarded over the next three months according to the following design:

- August, the provider will receive 75% of the amount received in previous months.
  - Awarded in mid-October
- September, the provider will receive 50% of the amount received in previous months.
  - Awarded in mid-November
- October, the provider will receive 25% of the amount received in previous months.
  - Awarded in mid-December

Who will receive operational grants?

- Private child care programs open for all or part of the grant award month
- Programs that have completed reopening documents
  - Reopening Application
  - COVID-19 Child Care Provider Survey

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

- The same formula as previous months will be used to determine grant amount
  - Final awards will be based on:
    - Days open (prorated for programs reopening)
    - Total number of children served in February 2020
    - Star rating
    - Infant and toddler enrollment
    - Serving subsidy children\*
    - Subsidy density\*
- \*Because subsidy stabilization ends in August, these two factors will only be calculated for the August grant award and will be eliminated for the September and October awards.



To find out the amount of the operational grant awarded to your facility, call or email. Please have the facility name and license number available:

- [dcdee.communications@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dcdee.communications@dhhs.nc.gov)
- Alamance through Forsyth Counties, contact Arlette Lambert at 919.703.5262.
- Franklin through Orange Counties, contact Laura Hewitt at 919.703.7916.
- Pamlico through Yancey Counties, contact Theresa Rodersheimer at 919.703.6947.

## 5. NC PRE-K PAYMENTS

**For the 2020-2021 school year, DCDEE will provide payments to NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies based on their *contracted number of slots* for the 2020-2021 school year.** DCDEE will provide payment for all contracted slots to provide stabilization to NC Pre-K programs during the COVID-19 pandemic when overall child care enrollment has been low, as families have opted to keep children at home.

Payment during the 2020-2021 school year will not be based on attendance. Payments will be generated based on the assigned teacher rate and the number of slots allocated to each classroom. Therefore, Contracting Agencies must allocate the maximum number of contracted slots to their NC Pre-K sites, as all slots will be funded regardless of attendance.

Please read [Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs](#) for more detailed information regarding the goals, health and safety guidance, remote learning requirements, and reporting requirements related to the NC Pre-K program.

## 6. EMERGENCY CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM PAYMENTS

**Purpose:** The Emergency Child Care Subsidy program provides financial assistance for child care to parents/primary caregivers who are essential workers (as defined by [Executive Order 121](#)). The Emergency Child Care Subsidy program operated beginning April 1, 2020, and continued for the months of April and May 2020. The Emergency Child Care Subsidy program ended on May 31, 2020. Providers may not enroll children after May 8, 2020, at 5:00PM but will receive emergency child care subsidy payments through the month of May for any children who were enrolled in the program as of May 8, 2020, at 5:00PM.

- *All licensed or regulated facilities, regardless of star rating and regardless of current participation in the Subsidized Child Care Program, are eligible to accept families for the Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program for essential workers.*

**Family Eligibility:** Parents or caregivers can receive financial assistance for emergency child care if they:

- are essential workers,
- have no other safe child care options,
- and have a household income below 300 percent of the poverty line (please see chart below).

Persons in Household	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Income Limit	\$51,720	\$65,160	\$78,600	\$92,040	\$105,480	\$118,920	\$132,360

*\*For household size greater than 8 people, add \$4,480 for each additional person starting with the 9<sup>th</sup> person.*

**Application Process:** Families must complete a [COVID-19 Parent Application for Financial Assistance for Emergency Child Care](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) and submit the application to their child care provider.

- Child care providers are NOT expected to determine or verify whether a family is eligible for financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the parent/primary caregiver to self-attest to meeting the eligibility criteria.
- Child care providers should, however, review the Parent Application form to ensure it is complete and store the Parent Application (guidance about this process is [here](#)).

**Emergency Child Care Subsidy Rates:** Child care providers will receive the following rates for new children served through the Emergency Child Care Subsidy program in April and May:

Age Group	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Homes
Infant	\$ 1,200	\$ 905
2 Years Old	\$ 1,125	\$ 830
3-5 Years Old	\$ 1,070	\$ 780
School Age (6+)	\$ 870	\$ 645

*\*Rates were established using the state average for 75th percentile of the 2018 market rates for each group and adding an additional \$200 per child per age group.*

**Payments:** Payments for children who are served under the Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program in April and May will be made in addition to the Subsidized Child Care Program payments detailed in Section 2.

- Payments for Emergency Child Care Subsidy will be based on attendance of children in April or May. These emergency subsidy payments will be paid outside of the NC FAST system.
- Providers will be paid the full reimbursement rate for the month for each child enrolled in the Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program unless the child is absent from the facility more than ten service days in a month.
  - If a child's absences exceed ten days during a service month, the provider will be paid for the actual days that care was provided. Calculation of the payment will be determined using the daily rate. To calculate the daily rate, divide the reimbursement rate by 21.67 then multiply that by the number of days the child attended.

- You will be able to log into the Provider Portal for Emergency Child Care Subsidy to confirm the accuracy of payments and reconcile your bank statements.

**Copayments:** The Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program does not have parent copayments.

**Payment Schedule:** Payments for Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program for April and May services will be paid on May 15<sup>th</sup> and June 12<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

**Recording Attendance:**

- Providers should submit child attendance by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the following month. Inaccurate, untimely, or incomplete reporting may result in delayed emergency child care subsidy payments.
- Providers will need to track attendance for children receiving Emergency Child Care Subsidy and submit through the [Provider Portal](#) for Emergency Child Care Subsidy.
  - Providers may begin entering child attendance starting Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and must finish entering all attendance by 9:00PM on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
  - DCDEE has published a [job aid](#) with detailed instructions on how to enter children for whom they have received completed Parent Applications for Financial Assistance for Emergency Child Care, as well as how to record and submit attendance for children.
  - Providers should only use this portal to record children who are enrolled in the Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program and for employees receiving bonuses. Providers should record attendance for children enrolled in regular subsidy as they normally do.
- DCDEE has provided a [weekly child attendance log](#) to assist providers in manually tracking attendance of children receiving Emergency Child Care Subsidy prior to the portal being available for tracking attendance.

**Uploading Parent Applications:**

- Providers can also begin uploading completed COVID-19 Parent Applications for Emergency Child Care on Thursday, April 30, 2020. Please ensure that all Parent Applications are submitted either through the [Emergency Child Care Subsidy Provider Portal](#) or by mail to DCDEE by no later than May 25, 2020.
- Instructions for how to upload parent applications are included within the Provider Portal. Providers should begin uploading the parent applications as soon as possible.
- If providers are unable to upload the applications, they should mail the forms to DCDEE, Subsidy Services Section, 2201 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2200.
- All applications must be uploaded or mailed to DCDEE no later than May 25, 2020, in order to receive payment for May services.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- If you have general questions, contact DCDEE at 1-800-859-0829.
- If you have questions about the [COVID-19 Child Care Reopening Application](#) or [COVID-19 Child Care Provider Survey](#), contact your child care consultant.
- If you have questions about the Subsidized Child Care Program or the Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program, contact your Subsidy TA Consultant.

- If you have health-related questions or concerns, contact your [child care health consultant](#).
- If you need additional help accessing food, cleaning supplies, or other essential resources needed to provide care during the COVID-19 crisis, contact your [local Smart Start partnership](#).