

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Subject: COVID-19 Health and Safety System Supports
To: OCDEL Staff; Early Learning Resource Centers; PA Key; Preschool Program Specialists; Preschool Supervisors; EITA
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PURPOSE

To provide information on Pennsylvania's COVID-19 Health and Safety System Supports available to child care providers and the role OCDEL staff and business partners have in supporting early care and education providers.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), the Pennsylvania Key (PA Key) and the Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC) have a successful history of connecting systems in support of early childhood education (ECE) programs. The PA Pre K Counts (PKC) and Program Quality Assessment (PQA) teams have a long-standing relationship with ELRC staff in the quality improvement process, through STARS assessment planning, PKC monitoring, and program support. All teams have established consistent, ongoing communication practices, and collaboration efforts in order to provide non-duplicative services to ECE programs. In leveraging existing human capital and team strengths, OCDEL and its partners will provide much needed support and resources to ECE providers during COVID-19. OCDEL recognizes that every region of the state has varying strengths as it relates to health and safety support and the creation of regional task force teams will help to triage these supports. It is the intention of this Health & Safety system of support to create regional, collaborative task force teams so that the strengths of every system can be leveraged and accessed.

DISCUSSION

COVID-19 Health and Safety Systems of Support

As the Governor's Stay At Home order has lifted, OCDEL has received requests for supports in planning healthy and safe care through the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to provide support to child care and other early learning programs during these uncertain times, this announcement is intended to describe the coordination and role of various members of the OCDEL staff and partners.

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The goals of this process are to ensure consistency in messaging, coordinate responses to the ECE provider requests, maximize resources, and ensure that there is no “wrong door” for community based ECE providers to reach out and connect with technical assistance, training, and support services.

Senior Health Manager will:

- Serve as the overall contact and coordinator for the Health & Safety work.
- Meet with Bureau of Certification Regional Managers and Supervisors to discuss training material development and the work happening through the regional task force teams.
- Serve as the Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the development of the training materials but also as a resource to the PQA team, the Quality Coaches and the PKC Specialists.
- Identify links and needed supports from the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) team and coordinate with the Director of Cross Sector IECMH Initiatives.
- Manage the communication to and from the regional task force teams.
- Report to OCDEL monthly on status, challenges, successes of the regional task force teams’ implementation.

Regional Task Force Teams will:

- Meet regularly, as determined by each team, to discuss activities, requests, findings, challenges and needs.
- Triage requests from providers and deploy staff and resources as appropriate.
- Work to ensure services and supports are not duplicated.
- Provide information to the PQA team lead that can be reported up to the Senior Health Manager.
- Consist of Certification Reps, ELRC staff, PQA staff, IECMH staff, PKC Specialists, Infant Toddler Contracted Slots staff, Early Intervention (EI) Advisor regional rep, and any other regional representation the group believes is needed.

Bureau of Certification Supervisors/Representatives will:

- Support new providers seeking to open child care facilities.
- Serve as SMEs related to Child Care Facility Regulations.
- Share information related to health and safety citations related to complaint and annual renewal inspections.

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- Identify supports needed by child care providers to be responsive to operations during COVID-19.
- Have representation on the regional task force teams.

Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Team will:

- Be informed regularly on the status of the supports provided to the field, especially when there are social and emotional implications.
- Have discussions with the Senior Health Manager regarding implications, challenges and success as they relate to social and emotional implications.
- Be solicited for guidance and will provide support on social and emotional needs.
- Have representation on the regional task force teams.

Early Learning Resource Centers/Quality Coaches will:

- Be trained on the health and safety content created by Senior Health Manager and expert consultants.
- Designate a point of contact for all matters of health and safety for providers.
- Assess ELRC capacity for request and triage to either an ELRC Quality Coach or to the PQA team (currently determining the ability to do so in the current PA PACT system).
- When determined appropriate, provide technical assistance to providers on matters pertaining to health & safety.
- Have representation on the regional task force teams.
- Collaborate with PQA team and PKC Specialist team to leverage staff capacity and avoid duplication of efforts.

Program Quality Assessment/Health & Safety TA Team will:

- Be trained on the health and safety content created by Senior Health Manager and expert consultants.
- Coordinate and facilitate the task force meetings regularly.
- When needed, offer training opportunities for providers on health & safety related content (content developed by Senior Health Manager).
- Provide technical assistance, resources and supports to providers on health & safety matters.
- Have representation on the regional task force teams.

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- Collaborate with ELRC team and PKC Specialist team to leverage staff capacity and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Update Senior Health Manager regularly on task force activities, challenges, successes.

Preschool Program (PK) Specialist Team will:

- Be trained on the health and safety content created by Senior Health Manager and expert consultants.
- When needed, offer training opportunities for PKC and HSSAP grantees on health & safety related content (content developed by Senior Health Manager).
- Provide technical assistance, resources and supports to PKC and HSSAP grantees on health & safety matters.
- Have representation on the regional task force teams.
- Collaborate with ELRC team and PQA team to leverage staff capacity and avoid duplication of efforts.

Early Intervention (EI) Advisors will:

- Be trained on the health and safety content created by Senior Health Manager and expert consultants.
- Serve as SMEs related to Infant Toddler (IT) EI and Preschool (PS) EI operations and regulations.
- Share OCDEL health and safety resources with Early Intervention programs upon request.
- Have representation on the regional task force teams.

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Consultants will:

- Be trained on the health and safety content created by Senior Health Manager and expert consultants.
- Serve as SMEs related to IT EI and PS EI coaching and consultation.
- Be contacted for guidance and support on inclusive practices, positive behavioral interventions and children's social and emotional needs.
- When needed, offer technical assistance on health & safety related content (content developed by Senior Health Manager) in support of IT EI and PS EI programs' partnerships with ECE programs.

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- Have representation on the regional task force teams.

EITA Family Support (FS) Consultants will:

- Be trained on the health and safety content created by Senior Health Manager and expert consultants.
- Be contacted for guidance and information on available Family Support/Home Visiting programs.
- Share OCDEL health and safety resources with FS programs upon request.

TRAINING:

Recognizing that there are many systems of support under OCDEL's purview (Certification, ELRC's, Program Quality Assessment, Preschool Program Specialist, EI) and that those systems are all offering expertise and support in various ways around health and safety best practices, OCDEL would like to provide additional training and information across all systems to support child care providers consistently and comprehensively. Beginning the week of July 13, 2020, a series of five- 1.5-hour Health and Safety trainings will be offered over a 5-week period to Certification Staff, Quality Coaches, Program Quality Assessors and PKC Specialists. These sessions will be recorded for future on demand access. In order to ensure consistency and understanding of our current approach to support providers, all Certification, all technical assistance consultants, program representatives and specialists and quality coaches must view the webinars Each session will be followed the next day by a Q&A session with the Senior Health Manager. The sessions will be organized into five key topic areas:

1. CDC Guidance for Child Care
2. Parent, Family and Community Engagement
3. Implementation Considerations
4. Re-Imagining ECE Environments
5. Supporting the Social Emotional Well-Being of ECE Professionals, Children and Families

Registration information will be made available soon based on the schedule listed below. All trainings will be recorded. Offering these trainings across all systems will set the foundation for informed, collaborative and consistent health and safety supports for child care providers

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statewide. Each training will offer a follow-up session the next day for a live question and answer period with the Senior Health Manager.

Health and Safety Training Schedule:

- July 15 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Webinar 1
- July 16 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Open Space for Discussion Webinar 1
- July 22 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Webinar 2
- July 23 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Open Space for Discussion Webinar 2
- July 29 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Webinar 3
- July 30 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Open Space for Discussion Webinar 3
- August 12 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Webinar 4
- August 13 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Open Space for Discussion Webinar 4
- August 26 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Webinar 5
- August 27 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Open Space for Discussion Webinar 5

Process:

1. Communications will be developed and disseminated to ECE providers describing health and safety supports, resources and technical assistance are available to them. There is no wrong way for providers to request these supports. They may reach out to their Certification Representative, ELRC, PKC Specialist or the PQA team. Additionally, the communication will describe the impacts to Keystone STARS for the 2020-21 program year.
2. Once a request is received by any system support team, they will determine if the request is within their capacity to address or if they need to coordinate with the other regional task force members.
3. Services offered will include foundational training, technical assistance, resources and other supports as determined by the regional task force teams. If training is needed, providers will first be directed to the previously recorded webinars created by the Senior Health Manager. If additional training is recommended, the PQA team will work closely with the Senior Health Manager to develop and provide those trainings.

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4. Concurrently, Regional Task Force team meetings will occur regularly. The Health & Safety Task Force Teams were modeled after the PKC process for connecting with the ELRC's on all matter's PKC and STARS. The intent is to include all parties who support providers at a regional level to ensure everyone is on the same page and there is little or no duplication of efforts. The PQA Supervisors are happy to coordinate these meetings and facilitate as needed.
5. Leadership from each of the systems of support teams will collaborate with one another and the Senior Health Manager to coordinate the services and support to providers.
6. The Senior Health Manager will report monthly to an OCDEL Health & Safety leadership group on activities, successes, challenges and recommendations.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review and share with appropriate staff.
2. Please direct any question to your supervisor or program representative