

ANNOUNCEMENT

ELRC – 20 #13



Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Bureau of Policy and Professional Development


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Subject: Updates to the Child Care Works School-Age Blended Rate Payment Policy for the 2020-21 School Year

To: All Regulated Child Care Facilities; Early Learning Resource Centers; and OCDEL Early Learning Resource Center Program Representatives

From: 
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Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning

PURPOSE

To inform child care programs participating in Child Care Works (CCW) and the Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs) the blended rate payment policy has been modified for the 2020-21 school year. This policy will take effect on Aug. 31, 2020.

BACKGROUND

School districts across Pennsylvania are developing reopening plans to limit COVID-19 exposure for students, teachers and staff. How students return to school will look different from school district to school district.

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care issued [guidance](#) to states on Monday, Aug. 10, 2020, clarifying supporting school-age children not receiving in-person instruction during schools' response to COVID-19. Use of Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) can be used to support school-age children and their families' need for care during the modified 2020-21 school year.

Because some children will not return to a five-day-a-week, in-person school schedule, child care providers may provide additional hours of care during the school year.

OCDEL typically reimburses child care provider using a blended rate. Under the modified school year calendars some school districts are implementing, child care providers that accept the blended rate may not be compensated fairly because they may be caring for children for more full-time days than the blended rate is intended to cover.

A blended rate combines full- and part-time rates for the school year. It is intended to cover full-day service during school closings and holidays for school-age children. Providers decide if they wish to accept the blended rate or a straight part-time rate. Providers cannot ask for a full-time rate for any full-time days during the school year if they do not accept the blended rate. Providers indicate if they accept the blended rate when they complete and return the Appendix C-1 of the Provider Agreement to the ELRC.

The blended school year rate is calculated by adding together 25 days at the provider's full-time standard rate and 180 days at the provider's part-time standard rate, divided by 205 days (the total number of days in a school year).

DISCUSSION

For the 2020-21 school year, the calculation of the blended rate will not change. It will still be based on 25 full-time days and 180 part-time days.

If a child attends a school district where students will not return to school for in-person, five-day-a-week instruction, a child care provider who accepts the blended rate will receive a part-time blended rate for the days the child attends school in-person and attends child care part-time. The provider may receive a full-time payment rate on the days the child is not scheduled to attend school in-person and attends child care full-time.

Paying the part-time blended rate, instead of a part-time rate, will compensate for any days the child was supposed to attend part-time but may need to attend full-time because of a school closure, such as staff in-service days or professional developments, holidays and snow days.

EXAMPLE: A child will attend school, in-person, on Mondays and Wednesdays and will need child care part-time on those days. A provider who accepts the blended rate will be paid the part-time blended rate on Monday and Wednesday. The child will attend school virtually on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and will need child care full-time on those days. The provider will be paid a full-time rate on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

EXAMPLE: A child attends school five days a week, in-person, and needs part-time care before and after school. If the provider accepts the blended rate, the provider will receive the blended rate for all five days.

EXAMPLE: A child attends school virtually five days a week and needs full-time care five days a week. If the provider accepts the blended rate, the provider should receive a full-time payment rate for all five days.

NOTE: If a provider does not accept the blended rate, the provider will receive a part-time rate for school age children whether they attend part-time or full-time as per standard blended rate policy.

If school districts change how school instruction will be administered throughout the school year, related to COVID-19, the child's schedule will be updated to reflect the school's current schedule.

EXAMPLE: A school district starts the year with a hybrid model where students attend in-person two days a week and virtually three days a week. The school district then decides to move to five days a week of virtual learning. The child's schedule will be updated to reflect the change in need for care. The provider's payment will change from 2 part-time blended rate days and three full-time days to five full-time days.

NEXT STEPS

1. Child care programs
 - a. Share with staff completing CCW attendance reporting and invoicing.
 - b. Please direct any questions to your ELRC.
 - c. If your program is interested in participating in CCW, complete Appendix C-1 of the Provider Agreement and return it to the ELRC serving your region.
2. OCDEL Program Representatives
 - a. Run the HQ 207 Location Rate Summary Report for each ELRC, which will indicate whether a provider accepts the blended rate.
 - b. Work with the ELRC to operationalize this policy.
3. ELRC
 - a. Review and share with appropriate staff.
 - b. Implement this policy using the guidance in Policy Communication 20 #08 Operationalizing Updates to the Child Care Works School-Age Blended Payment Rate Policy for the 2020-21 School Year.
 - c. Please direct any questions to your program representative.