

March 15, 2020

COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions

For Providers

Q: Even though schools are closed, are child care facilities (home and center based) required to close?

No, child care centers and homes are not required to close, but are allowed to close. Early education programs in public and private schools *are* required to close while the schools are closed.

See further guidance here: www.inccrra.org/images/emails/Guidance-for-Child-Care-Centers-COVID-19-closures-3-15-2020.pdf

Q: Will I continue to be paid through the Child Care Assistance Program if I close or have low attendance due to the public health emergency?

Yes. IDHS is working to develop a simplified waiver process for the requirement that programs meet the 80% attendance threshold in order to be paid for all eligible days for all children. More information on this process is forthcoming.

Q: Parent co-pays for CCAP are a large part of my budget. Will families still need to pay co-pays, or will they be waived?

IDHS is working on a process to reduce family co-payments to \$1 for the months of April and May. This co-payment reduction is being implemented to support both families and providers.

Q: I serve mostly private-pay families. What financial assistance is available to providers to manage through this emergency?

Guidance is forthcoming about relief that may be available for small businesses. There are several provisions available in the federal package that is currently being considered by Congress that may be helpful to child care providers.

Q: What should I do if I think a child, their family, my staff, or I have been exposed to this virus?

Tell that person to watch for fever, cough or trouble breathing. If these symptoms develop, that person should stay away from others, and not go to work or school until 24 hours after symptoms resolve. COVID-19, like the flu, often causes mild illness. Not everyone who gets sick needs to visit a healthcare provider. People who become ill can call their healthcare provider to decide together if symptoms are severe enough that a medical visit is needed. It's very important that you call ahead before going to a clinic. That way the ill person and the clinic can put together a plan for the ill person to be seen in a way that avoids exposing others. See more guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>.

Q: Do I have to provide a refund to parents if I close my child care program?

Consult the agreement or contract you have with parents. The state does not regulate this area.

Q: What if I decide to close my child care center or licensed child care home?

Centers please visit <https://forms.gle/VKfM8AZn2q6dTF8PA> and licensed homes please visit <https://forms.gle/dpFnRq7k3N2DEHgm8> and complete the form to notify the state and the Child Care Resource and Referral System of program closure.

Q. My child care center is closing, but I want to make sure children still receive their meals. What can I do?

If your program closes, we strongly encourage you to develop a plan for ensuring that children in your program that receive free and reduced price meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) continue to receive meals. You may wish to reach out to your local school district to explore partnering with them to receive meals or contact the ISBE Nutrition Department at CNP@isbe.net to determine how to provide additional meals in the community.

Q. My license is expiring in the near future. Will I be penalized if DCFS is not able to renew my license while I am closed?

DCFS is developing guidance that will be available in the coming days.

Q. My CPR and First Aid certification is about to expire. Can I get an extension on completing this training?

DCFS is developing guidance that will be available in the coming days.

Q. I am (or am thinking about becoming) a license-exempt home child care provider, and there is a critical need for child care in my community to support essential workers. Can I serve more than three unrelated children?

DCFS is developing guidance that will be available in the coming days.

Q. I am considering opening/expanding a new child care program to meet critical needs in my community during this emergency. Will any exceptions to the normal licensing/exemption process be made?

DCFS is developing guidance that will be available in the coming days.

For Parents

Q: Even though schools are closed, are child care facilities (home and center based) required to close?

No, licensed child care centers and homes are *not required* to close, but *are allowed* to close. Parents should contact their provider to make sure they are operating. Early education programs in public and private schools *are required* to close while the schools are closed.

Q: Why are child care programs able to stay open when schools are required to close?

As long as parents are working, we want families to have access to a safe place for their children to receive care. That said, we should anticipate that these small businesses may experience the same operational issues as schools, if they haven't already, and anticipate many program closures.

Q: Is child care still safe?

We have instructed child care programs to follow the guidelines provided by the Illinois Public Health Department and the CDC. You can see these resources on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development [website](#).

Child care programs are experts in caring for children and meeting the needs of working families in our state. Licensed providers provide care that meets health and safety standards each day.

Q: What should I do if I need to find care for my child?

If you need child care because you are still working and your child care facility or school is closed, contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency. You can find their contact information at www.excelerateillinois.com/contact-us-menu.

Q: What if I want to open a child care program on-site for my employees?

If you are interested in opening a child care program at this time, please contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for guidance.