

Child Care Assistance Program Provider Memo

Date: March 24, 2020

To: Child care providers registered with the Child Care Assistance Program

From: Department of Human Services, Child Care Assistance Program Staff

RE: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Information for Child Care Providers Related to COVID-19

Per Executive Order 20-12 the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is temporarily modifying some policies to support families and providers in response to COVID-19. This memo provides information for child care providers about temporary policy modifications, along with reminders of existing policies.

These policies:

- Allow more flexibility and expanded use of medical exemptions to pay more days when children are absent, if you remain open.
- Allow for payments if you close, for up to one month, unless the child needs to attend care at another provider who remains open and can be paid by the Child Care Assistance Program.
- Clarify that school-age children can have their hours increased.
- Extends provider registrations that are due to end within the next three months.

Temporary policy changes outlined below are effective March 20, 2020.

1. What if a child is absent from care due to COVID-19 concerns?

What is standard policy?

The Child Care Assistance Program can pay for up to 10 consecutive absent days, up to 25 absent days per calendar year per child. Payments can be made for additional absent days if the child, the child's parent, or the child's sibling living in the same home has a documented medical condition.

Absent day exemptions are granted using the [CCAP Medical Condition Documentation Form \(DHS-4602\)](#). For COVID-19 requests, see below.

What are temporary changes for requesting an absent day exemption?

If a child is absent from care, an absent day exemption must be granted if requested by the family or provider. To allow more flexibility, the following options can be used to request the exemption:

- A family or child care provider can verbally request the exemption from the family's CCAP worker.
- A family or child care provider can submit the request in writing and return it to the CCAP agency.
- A child care provider can complete the [CCAP Medical Condition Documentation Form \(DHS-4602\)](#) and return it to the CCAP agency.
- A family can have a medical professional complete the [CCAP Medical Condition Documentation Form \(DHS-4602\)](#) and return it to the CCAP agency.

What other temporary changes are allowed?

- Licensed family child care providers, licensed centers, and certified license-exempt centers can submit the request.
- Providers can submit requests for all children with absences, not just those who were sent home from care (under standard policy providers can only complete the form if they sent the child home).
- As long as you remain open and providing child care, requests can be made for all children with absences, including those who are not ill but choose to stay home as a precaution.
- Requests can be made verbally or submitted in other written formats, not just using the medical condition documentation form.
- The exemption can last longer than two weeks (two weeks is the current maximum length of the exemption when submitted by a child care provider). Right now, exemptions will last until June 30, 2020.

When do exemptions begin and end?

Absent day exemptions under the temporary policy can begin no sooner than March 20, 2020. The exemption end date for all requests related to COVID-19 is June 30, 2020.

What else should I know about this temporary change?

The absent day exemption policy only applies when the child care provider is open and available for care.

If you are open to care for any children you must mark children not attending as absent on the billing form.

If you are only open to care for children of emergency personnel:

- You must mark children not attending as absent.
- You can be paid for children of non-emergency personnel using absent days, as long as the child has absent day remaining or has been approved for the exemption using the guidance above.

2. What if I close due to COVID-19? Will the Child Care Assistance Program still pay me?

What is standard policy?

The Child Care Assistance Program does not pay providers when they are closed or when care is unavailable, unless the day meets payment criteria for a holiday. If a child changes providers, CCAP pays the original provider during a 15-day notice period, unless the original provider waives the 15-day notice period or care is unavailable.

The Child Care Assistance Program cannot start paying the new provider until the 15-days is done or care with the original provider is unavailable, whichever happens first.

The Child Care Assistance Program cannot pay two providers for the same period of time.

Temporary policy changes allowed for COVID-19

If you close due to COVID-19 **and** a child does not need care with another provider, the Child Care Assistance Program can continue paying you **for up to one month**. This payment will be based on children’s scheduled and authorized hours of care at the time of your closure.

If you close due to COVID-19 and the child needs care with another provider, CCAP can continue to pay you until the date that care is needed with another provider (not to exceed one month).

What do I need to do to keep getting paid by the Child Care Assistance Program?

If a child does not need care with another provider while you are closed, you should:

- Contact each county or tribe where you are registered to inform the agency of the closure.
- Bill for the child’s same scheduled and authorized hours as what you would have billed prior to the closure.
- Enter a note in the Billing Form’s Comment section regarding the closure on each bill submitted.
- Indicate a “C” for each day closed when submitting paper bills. *NOTE:* If you are a provider who bills electronically via MEC² PRO, you are unable to enter a “C” and only able to include a note in the Billing Form’s Comment section regarding the closure.

This policy applies to all provider types, including legal nonlicensed child care providers.

What else should I know about this temporary change to pay closed providers?

This guidance is only for providers who are closed for all children.

If a child starts care with another provider while you are closed, the child’s Service Authorization with you will close. You will receive a 15-day notice from the Child Care Assistance Program, but child care assistance will not pay you once the child starts care with their new provider. Families are responsible to pay costs that are not covered by the Child Care Assistance Program; this is standard policy.

3. Can I be authorized to care for school aged children while schools are closed?

School-age children who need care on days when school is not in session can have care authorized and paid by the Child Care Assistance Program. If a child’s school has closed for any reason, including COVID-19, the child’s family needs to contact their child care assistance worker to request care be authorized or to request the amount of care currently authorized be increased.

These actions for school-age children are all allowed under standard Child Care Assistance Program policy and include no temporary policy modifications.

4. What if I have a provider renewal due?

What is standard policy?

Providers must complete the registration process at each renewal. Renewing your registration is how CCAP agencies reauthorize you to continue receiving CCAP payments. Providers must complete their renewal at least every two years.

What temporary policy changes are allowed for COVID-19?

Providers whose renewals are due between March 20, 2020 and June 17, 2020 can/will have their renewal due dates pushed out three months.

What do providers need to do?

If you have already received a renewal packet and:

- You completed all renewal requirements by the due date, it will be processed as normal.
- You have not yet completed all renewal requirements, you have three additional months to complete your renewal process. You should receive a notice from the agencies you are registered with regarding the additional three months. The service authorizations currently in effect should remain in effect unless the child's authorized hours are changed or the child starts with a new provider. You will receive new service authorizations in those situations.

If your renewal is due before June 17, 2020 and you have not yet received a renewal packet, your renewal due date will be pushed out three months. A renewal packet will be sent to you when your renewal is due.

5. Who do I contact with questions?

Child Care Assistance Program questions

Contact your local Child Care Assistance Program agency (county, tribe or other agency that administers the program) with any questions. Local agencies must handle all specific case and payment actions, such as extending absent days or payments during closures.

For general policy questions, contact the Department of Human Services' Child Care Assistance Provider Line at 651-431-4848 or email DHS.CCAP@state.mn.us.

Licensing questions

Call the Child Care Center Provider Hotline: 1-888-234-1268

- Option 1: Child Care Centers and Certified Child Care Providers
- Option 2: Family Child Care Providers