COVID-19 Provider FAQs

GENERAL:
Are profiles still supposed to be submitted?
Yes, please continue to work on and submit the 2020-2021 profiles.

When do we start working on VPK Applications & Contracts as well as School Readiness (SR) Contracts?
Not yet, however, we will share these timelines when it is time to begin this process.

When following the CDC group size of no more than 10 in a group, what if I do not have enough staff or space?
We strongly recommend that you follow the CDC guidelines. If you are unable to meet the recommended CDC group sizes, please contact Child Care Licensing. Remember you must always maintain licensing ratios.

Are child care centers responsible for conducting full day lessons for school-age children?
No, centers are not responsible to set up computers or conduct lessons for school age children.

Are both VPK and SR assessments not required for the remainder of the year?
At this time the Office of Early Learning (OEL) has suspended VPK Assessment, SR child screenings, SR child assessment, and SR program assessment. As the coalition gets more information on this, we will pass it along.

ATTENDANCE:
Will SR children be paid for even if they are absent due to COVID-19?
Yes. Providers will be paid for these unanticipated absences beginning March 1, 2020, without additional documentation.

Child absences due to coronavirus concerns should be marked as “absence due to disaster” which will appear as a D in your attendance roster. You do not have to enter a comment or a supporting document.

Will providers be reimbursed for absences (active enrollments) during temporary closures?
Yes. Providers will be reimbursed for current/active enrollments during temporary closures without additional documentation.
Will school-age children be paid as FT after spring break if school remains closed?
Yes, Providers should select full-time (FT) on the attendance roster for school-age children who are currently attending your SR Program full-time.

Do sign-in/ sign-out sheets (SISO) need to be uploaded regardless? Will the deadline to submit attendance be extended? Do we need to submit SISO sheets even if we are closed?
Yes, please make sure to submit sign in and out sheets we will use them for reimbursement verification for the beginning of the month. Do not worry if a parent hasn't signed, simply write “parent unavailable to sign” at the end of the month.

How should parents be documenting their absences?
If a parent keeps a child home, it is recommended that you get written documentation for why and how long they will be out.

SCHOOL READINESS
What occurs when a parent suspends their childcare through School Readiness?
The parent’s School Readiness is placed on “suspension” (or on hold) until the client reenters the program. During this time, co-payments are not paid to the provider and the provider is not reimbursed for the child.

Are we still going to get paid for children that suspend their School Readiness care and will we be notified of their suspension?
If a child is suspended they are no longer enrolled in a site and therefore a site cannot be reimbursed for their care. This would still be reported to providers through the OEL portal.

Are providers still required to collect parent copayments for SR families?
Starting April 1, providers should not collect SR parent copayments and will be reimbursed for these copayments.

How are parents being recertified if they lost their jobs currently due to closure from the COVID-19?
No SR families will be terminated at this time. This includes those that are up for redetermination or families that have had a job status change due to COVID-19. Redetermination dates have been extended for 60 days.

Should coalitions’ review of SR families’ eligibility and their redetermination of eligibility continue?
No. ALL terminations of SR families’ eligibility have been suspended effective March 15th. Redeterminations of eligibility is extended an additional 60 days. No families should be removed from the program.

Do we still need to notify if a BG1 child is absent?
Yes, please continue to notify the appropriate agencies if a BG1 child is absent.
What happens if they still owe a balance to the previous center?
We are still waiting for guidance from OEL on how this will be handled.

Are the 2019-2020 School Readiness Program Assessments (CLASS) still be required to be completed by June 30, 2020 for contracting for the 2020-2021 contract year?
No. The deadline for completing program assessments will be extended.

VPK
Can we do VPK online for children?
At this time, VPK cannot be conducted online, however, we are awaiting further guidance OEL. Programs may choose to provide this option to VPK families, however it will not count as VPK instructional hours. Many programs are providing online or virtual supports for children who are staying home while they are continuing to deliver the program on site to children as well.

Will we need to make up the VPK days and submit a new calendar?
Currently we are still waiting for guidance from OEL regarding the numbers of days that will be allowed for this emergency closure and if VPK days missed will need to be made up by 6/30/2020.

How many absences will be paid for VPK children that are absent due to concerns about COVID-19? Is it through a certain date?
We are currently still waiting on guidance from OEL on how many VPK absences will be paid going forward. As of now, all of March will be paid for.

If we do not finish the all the VPK instructional hours, can these children apply for Summer VPK to finish the hours?
Once a child has started the fall program, they cannot be enrolled in a summer program unless granted an extreme hardship reenrollment. At this point in the year, many children have already completed a substantial portion of the VPK program (70%) and therefore do not qualify for a reenrollment.

Can VPK classes be combined if count is low?
Yes, classes can be combined if counts are low. Providers should refer to the CDC guidance for maintaining group sizes of less than 10 people. At this time, do not change anything in the OEL Portal until we receive more guidance from OEL.

Do AP3’s need to be completed this year and put into Bright Beginnings? How will this affect our readiness rate for next year?
Providers who are still offering VPK may complete the AP3’s to track a child’s learning gains. However, AP3’s will not be mandatory and do not have to be entered into Bright Beginnings. There will be no Readiness Rates for 2019-2020.
If there are no Readiness Rates, how will this effect providers on probation and deadlines/requirements?
At this time, we are still waiting for guidance from OEL on how this will affect providers on probation. At this time, we anticipate that providers needing a completed improvement before the Fall of 2020-2021 will still need to meet established deadlines.

Are applications for Good Cause Exemption available to VPK providers on probation for three years (POP3) still required to be completed by March 23, 2020?
No. The timeline for these is extended to April 15th.

What do we do for substitute tracking forms if an aide is teaching the class? Can an aide teach the class?
We understand that it is a difficult time with staffing, although it is best practice to keep a lead or substitute teaching VPK. If that is not possible just make sure to use the tracking form and list the aide.