Child Care Subsidy Program FAQs - Families:

1. **How can families in need of child care apply for the Child Care Subsidy Program?**

   Families can apply for Child Care Subsidy in two ways, which include CommonHelp, (http://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov/) a web-based app that allows Virginians to screen for eligibility, apply for benefits and services, and obtain other information; or by submitting an application directly to their local department of social services. A listing of all local departments is available from the Virginia Department of Social Services website (www.dss.virginia.gov) under “Find your local department” on the home page.

2. **How will local departments of social services maintain contact with families should offices “close”?**

   In most instances, if a local department is closed to the public, staff remain working either remotely or on site. Families are also encouraged to apply for assistance through CommonHelp.

3. **Has eligibility criteria for the Subsidy Program changed?**

   Yes. House Bill 2206 (HB2206) established temporarily expands eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy Program.

   The bill temporarily increases the income eligibility guidelines to 85% of the State Median Income for families with young children. In order to be eligible for the increase in these guidelines, the family must include at least one child who is five years of age or younger that has not started kindergarten and meet all other non-financial eligibility requirements until July 31, 2021.

   HB2206 also includes two other provision that apply to all families enrolled or applying for child care subsidy:

   1. Adds job search as an approved activity for all families until July 31, 2021.
   2. Permanently eliminates the Division of Child Support Enforcement cooperation requirement as a condition of eligibility.

   You can find more information on temporary eligibility changes for the Child Care Subsidy Program here.
4. Will I need to pay my monthly copayment?

Any family with a copayment assessed for the service period of April, May and June 2021 will have their copayment obligation temporarily waived.

If the recipient has already paid their April copayment to the vendor, the recipient and child care provider should work together to apply April’s copayment to July services, or the provider should consider issuing a reimbursement to the recipient.

5. Will the Child Tax Credit Payments impact my Subsidy case?

Child Tax Credit Payments will be disregarded when determining eligibility and family copayments for the Child Care Subsidy Program.

6. Do I need to participate in a face-to-face interview to apply for Child Care Subsidy services?

No. The requirement for a face-to-face interview as part of the eligibility determination process for the Child Care Subsidy Program has been temporarily waived.

7. My school-age child participates in the Child Care Subsidy Program and is approved for only part-day care. While schools are closed, can my child be approved for full-day care?

Yes. Local departments can authorize a full day of child care for the time public school is not available to children. Parents should communicate their need to their case worker in the local department of social services, who will process the appropriate authorization.

8. Can siblings of children currently receiving Child Care Subsidy services be authorized during the period of school closure?

Yes. Children that are eligible for Child Care Subsidy but do not have a current authorization, may receive services during school closure, if needed.

9. How can I find another child care provider if my provider closes?

When a Child Care Subsidy vendor closes, families participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program should seek assistance from their case worker at the local department of social services. They can also search for child care on www.childcareva.com, or contact Child Care Aware of Virginia at http://www.vachildcare.com or by telephone at 866-481-1913.

10. Where can I find instructions for recording absent days?

The Parent Guide for Recording an Absence from Any Phone is available at childcareva.com on the COVID-19 response page. You may also contact your local department of social services for assistance with recording absences.

Child Care Subsidy Program FAQs - Providers:

11. Will I need to collect a monthly copayment from Subsidy families for April, May and June 2021?

Any family with a copayment assessed for the service periods of April, May, and June 2021 will have their copayment obligation temporarily waived.
If the recipient has already paid their April copayment to the vendor, the recipient and child care provider should work together to apply April's copayment to July services, or the provider should consider issuing a reimbursement to the recipient.

12. Will additional absent days be made available to open Level 1 and Level 2 vendors?

The Subsidy program made additional absent days available to open Level 1 and Level 2 vendors as of March 12, 2020. Absence units have been increased in the system to 180 units per child for the remainder of the fiscal year and for the new fiscal year beginning June 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

If the vendor has decided not to bill private pay families for absent days, the Subsidy program should not be charged for these days. Vendors must apply comparable payment practices for private pay families and those families who are eligible for Subsidy assistance.

Parents must enter absences for the provider to be paid for the absent day. Parents may use any phone (not just the phone onsite at the provider’s business site) to utilize the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) option to record the absent day. Parents can dial 877-918-2322 to access the IVR option to enter an absence.

13. Can I receive reimbursement for subsidized children if I must temporarily close my program due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

Level 1 and Level 2 vendors who must temporarily close due to a COVID-19 outbreak may be paid for absent days during the required closure period. Vendors must follow the guidance provided in the COVID-19 Reopening Child Care Phase III Guidelines and Information document. If providers choose to remain closed beyond the required closure period, absent days may not be claimed during the period of optional closure.

If the vendor has decided not to bill private pay families for absent days, the Subsidy program should not be charged for these days. Vendors must apply comparable payment practices for private pay families and those families who are eligible for Subsidy assistance.

Parents must enter absences for the provider to be paid for the absent day. Parents may use any phone (not just the phone onsite at the provider’s business site) to utilize the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) option to record the absent day. Parents can dial 877-918-2322 to access the IVR option to enter an absence.

14. What about unexplained absences?

In a public health crisis, it is more important than ever for parents to be informing providers each day if their children are attending. Providers should work with parents to ensure timely communication of any absences so children can be accounted for and documented correctly. Please ensure that parents understand the importance of communicating about attendance during this time and are clear on their obligation to report all absences.

15. How should manual attendance be submitted during the COVID-19 episode?

Manual attendance forms will be accepted by email as an Adobe PDF attachment and sent to vendor.services@dss.virginia.gov. Email is the preferred method of receipt. Manual attendance forms will also be accepted via United States Postal Service mail if you are unable to email the manual attendance. For questions regarding manual attendance, please email Vendor.Services@dss.virginia.gov.
16. Will new emergency child care or child watch programs at public school facilities be eligible to participate in the Subsidy program?

These programs will not be eligible to participate in the Subsidy program.

17. Are any resources available to schools that provide child care in communities where the private market cannot meet the demand?

Yes. Public schools are encouraged to collaborate with local leaders to plan for and provide emergency child care on an as needed basis for the children of essential employees. Public schools considering offering emergency child care should email superintendent@doe.virginia.gov.

For the latest news and updates related to the Child Care Subsidy Program, please visit www.childcareva.com. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact your local department of social services.