



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Virginia Child Care Subsidy Program Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19

Updated March 19, 2020

(This information will be updated as additional information becomes available.)

Child Care Subsidy Program FAQs - Families:

- 1. How can essential personnel in need of child care apply for the Child Care Subsidy Program?**
Essential personnel can apply for Child Care Subsidy in two ways, which include [CommonHelp](http://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov/), (<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](http://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov/).
- 3. Has eligibility criteria for the Subsidy Program changed?**
No, eligibility criteria remain in place. This information is available on the child care microsite (www.childcareva.com) or [CommonHelp](http://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov/).
- 4. 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 CareSubsidy Program has been temporarily waived.
- 5. 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.
- 6. 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. This does not apply to children that are currently on the waitlist.

7. 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.

Child Care Subsidy Program FAQs - Providers:

8. What if a child in the Child Care Subsidy Program is quarantined or otherwise unable to attend? Can I be paid for that absence?

The Child Care Subsidy Program has increased the total number of paid absences to 76, which can be used within the fiscal year. This should allow families the flexibility to use absences when children are not able to attend regularly scheduled days of care. The new absence limit should cover children who may already have used all of the previously allotted 36 absences. The ability to be paid for absences is available to both Level 1 (unlicensed) vendors and Level 2 (licensed and license-equivalent) vendors.

However, 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.

9. Will my center receive absence payments if we are temporarily closed?

No, Child Care Subsidy payments will not be made for days that the vendor was closed.

10. What about unexplained absences?

In a public health crisis, it is more important than ever for parents to be informing providers if their children are attending on a daily basis. Providers should work with parents to ensure timely communication of any absences so they can be 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.

11. Can I receive reimbursement for subsidized children if I temporarily close my program?

Virginia is not reimbursing programs for subsidized children if the program is closed. Child Care Subsidy payments will not be made for days when the vendor is closed and unavailable to parents, with the exception of the holidays listed in paragraph 8.6 of the Child Care Subsidy Vendor Agreement.

Providers may be faced with challenging decisions regarding COVID-19 related closures, and families may also be impacted by changes to their work schedules, income, and child care closures. Decisions about implementing closures should be made locally in collaboration with local health officials who can best advise regarding local conditions.

12. 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.

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.