Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy, Commissioner Johnson Announce New Amendments to Child Care Subsidy Program in Response to Spread of COVID-19New Jersey Expands COVID-19 Call Center Options

03/18/2020

Revised Program Will Help Provide Access to Critical Child Care Subsidies While Eligible Parents Attend Jobs

TRENTON – Today, Governor Phil Murphy and New Jersey Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson announced new amendments and resources for the New Jersey's Child Care Subsidy Program. The modifications to the Subsidy Program will implement temporary flexible enrollment policies and robust payment policy amendments to support New Jersey families and providers that have been impacted by the spread of COVID-19.

"New Jersey child care providers are a vital part of our response infrastructure to the spread of COVID-19," **said Governor Murphy**. "My Administration is committed to helping individuals on the front lines of this public health crisis – our first responders, law enforcement, health care professionals, janitorial and custodial workers, and the women and men working to keep our groceries stores open and stocked – with child care needs. These changes are meant to help those eligible for child care subsidies to attend to their jobs."

"Many families across our state have parents with lower or moderate incomes who need to continue to work in this difficult time. Health care providers, social service providers, public health officials, first responders and many others are on the front lines of this response," **said Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson**. "Child care providers are a critical part of the response infrastructure, and we thank them for the role they are playing during this emergency. We are taking action to help families in need of child care who are eligible for our child care subsidy program and those centers that are able to remain open by waiving co-pays in our child care subsidy program if parents are unable to pay because of COVID19, providing enhanced payment to providers who serve children receiving subsidy during this emergency, paying subsidy based on enrollment not attendance, continuing to pay subsidies to those centers that are forced to close, and creating flexibility in our program rules so it is easier for eligible parents to enroll their children in our child care subsidy program."

The Child Care Subsidy Program, administered by the Department of Human Service's Division of Family Development, provides financial assistance to low-to-moderate income families in New Jersey in order to help them afford quality child care services. This program also provides funding to more than 5,000 providers statewide, including child care centers, family child care homes, and school-age programs.

The Department of Human Service's Division of Family Development will implement the following policies, effective immediately:

- Continue to pay child care providers for an extended period of time encouraged for those required to close by the health department, school district, or county executive related to COVID-19;
- Ensure providers commit to clean at the highest level of disinfection cleaning during this period of time;
- Waive parents/caregivers' child care subsidy co-payments for parents who request it due to impacts from COVID-19;

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- Provide child care providers who remain open during this critical time a differential of $100 per child each month above the state reimbursed rate for children enrolled in the child care subsidy program;
- Compensate providers who remain open even if children are absent due to COVID-19;
- Give extended time to working parents to submit verification of works hours for the initial application process;
- Extend recertification timelines for at least three months in order for child care services to remain open;
- Allow parents or caregivers to continue their child care subsidy if their hours are reduced or if they are laid off due to COVID-19; and
- Make grants available for child care providers who participate in the child care subsidy program, including family child care providers, to clean and sanitize their facility or home; or to purchase additional supplies or services necessary to keeping centers and homes safe and sanitary.

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