NJ Human Services Extends COVID-19 Child Care Assistance Programs Through End of School Year

Extensions Include Programs that Help Families During Remote Schooling & Support Child Care Sector

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(TRENTON) – New Jersey Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman today announced the state is extending several COVID-19-related child care assistance programs through the end of June as part of the Murphy Administration's continued effort to support families and child care providers impacted by the pandemic.

The extensions include programs that have helped families pay for child care during remote schooling and support the sustainability of child care providers.

"This has been a difficult time for everyone, but parents can now know that these critical child care programs will continue helping through the remainder of the school year," Acting Commissioner Adelman said. "We have worked hard to use all resources and means to help working families and the child care sector, and remain very concerned about the data that shows women have faced difficult choices to leave their jobs during this pandemic. With these extensions, we hope to provide families and the child care industry some peace of mind for the rest of the school year."

"We are very pleased to be able to extend these programs through the end of the school year," Human Services Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. "We know that child care is crucial to a strong economy, and we know that quality child care is crucial to strong childhood development. With these extensions, we are giving families and child care providers vital support during the ongoing pandemic."

The following COVID-related child care initiatives are extended through the end of June:

- **State Child Care Subsidy during School Day:** Extending state child care subsidies for child care during the school day for school-age children 5-to-13 years old. Under this initiative, currently enrolled and newly enrolled school-age children are eligible for state subsidy funding for child care services throughout the school day at licensed child care centers or registered family child care providers. Traditionally, school-age children receive the subsidy for before- and after-school care, but this initiative extends the program to the school day due to remote learning schedules.
- **Child Care Tuition Assistance for Children in Families Earning up to $150,000 and in Remote Learning:** Extending child care tuition assistance for families currently enrolled in this program. Tuition assistance has been made available to families with incomes up to $150,000 not eligible for the state Child Care Subsidy Program but in need of either full- or part-time child care due to their child's school's remote learning schedule. For families who have been approved for this assistance, Human Services will continue to pay their selected providers for their school age children 5-to-13 years old in child care due to remote learning.
- **Supporting Child Care Centers:**

o Continuing to pay child care providers a supplemental payment of $300 per subsidy-eligible child, including infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children.

o Continuing to pay child care providers based on the number of enrolled children who receive state assistance in their program, rather than attendance.

The extensions are being funded with federal funding provided by the latest COVID-19 relief law.

Human Services also continues to waive parent copays in the child care subsidy program for parents who request it due to impacts from COVID-19.

Before the pandemic, Human Services reduced copayments by 50 percent for parents who receive state assistance paying for child care, saving New Jersey families $23 million per year.

Human Services also recently invested $12.6 million in the child care subsidy program, which helps families with lower-to-moderate incomes who are working, in training or in school afford child care. The increase was effective Jan. 3, helping child care centers implement the Jan. 1 minimum wage increase, boosting subsidies by 3 percent for infant care and 2.5 percent for other age groups. Before the pandemic, the Murphy Administration had already invested nearly $100 million into New Jersey's child care assistance program - after child care subsidy payment rates had remained relatively flat for a decade - and worked to improve quality and access to child care.

For more information on the state's child care program please visit childcarenj.gov.

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