

# COVID-19 and Child Care Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## Child Care Licensing

### CPR/First Aid

**Q:** All of the in person CPR and First Aid classes have been cancelled, what do we do?

**A:** The Red Cross in Anchorage and Matsu have reported they are still doing in-person CPR courses. To sign up please visit [The Red Cross website](#).

Regulation allows for a temporary exemption to the in-person CPR and First Aid requirement when a course is not available within 60 miles by road of the facility. When there are no in-person certification courses available, the facility can allow an individual to:

Complete an online or distant learning first aid and age-appropriate CPR course and receive a certificate; and take and pass the first in-person course available, once these resume.

Resources for on-line course:

- **(American Heart Association) [Heartsaver® Pediatric First Aid CPR AED Online](#)**
- **(American Red Cross) [Child and Baby First Aid/CPR/AED Online](#)  
(They have a Spanish language pediatric reference guide)**

### Training

**Q:** If we hire employees from other closed child care facilities, will they have to retake their Health and Safety Training, or Mandated Reporter Training?

**A:** Health and Safety training does not expire, and does not have to be repeated. If you hire an individual who has already completed their health and safety training, you will just need to maintain a copy of their training(s) in their personnel file.

**Q:** If we hire a new employee, can they work without the required health and safety training?

**A:** A new caregiver has 3 months from their date of hire to complete the required health and safety training. A caregiver without the training will be required to be supervised by another caregiver until they have completed their orientation and training requirements.

### Background Checks

**Q:** Fingerprint vendors in Alaska are closed, how will we get a background check clearance?

**A:** The Background Check Program is directing you to:

- Electronically submit applications and fees online.
- Email the BCP with the applicant's name (this is so the BCP knows to transfer the person to their queue to be worked).
- The BCP will then work the case (check registries, etc. to get a provisional clearance) without fingerprints.
- They will request fingerprints once vendors are reopened. No final clearance will be issued until fingerprints are received and checked.

**Q:** Can we still apply for General and Background Check Variances?

**A:** Yes. You can still apply for variances. For General Variances: these will be expedited for consideration by your local licensing office. Background Check Variances: The Background Check Variance Committee Chari has notified us they will still be processing Background Check Variances, however hospital workers, direct health care workers, and first responders will be the set at a higher priority for expediting variance requests.

## Supplies

**Q:** What if we are running out of supplies, such as milk, gloves, and/or cleaning supplies?

**A:** For milk and food supplies, you are required to follow the Alaska child care food program requirements. The CACFP Coordinator, Ann Marie Martin sent out guidance to all providers asking that everything served is written down, and to do the best you can to meet the meal pattern requirements. Documentation during this time is important, noting COVID-19 for the reason you can't meet a requirement at this specific time will help with monitoring later.

**A:** As for gloves, regulations requires the use of gloves for universal precautions and cleaning surfaces contaminated by a blood and other bodily fluids. Using gloves does not substitute for handwashing. Ensure handwashing supplies are available and all staff and children are washing their hands.

**A:** Other cleaning supplies - we understand you are doing the best you can do during this critical time. Stores are reporting they are restocking supplies with each shipment they receive.

**A:** thread, Alaska's Resource and Referral agency has additional Community Resources including information on Emergency Food Assistance on their [COVID-19 Community Resources page](#).

## Mandates

For the most up to date guidance please visit the CDC and State of Alaska Public Health websites:

- State of Alaska, Division of Public Health  
[COVID-19 Homepage](#)
- CDC Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs  
[Schools & Child Care](#)

At this time there is no mandate for child care facilities to close, or to remain open. It is your business decision to determine if you can safely meet the needs of the children, families, and staff, and if you will remain open, re-open, or temporarily close. We appreciate all of you that have stayed open and want to continue to provide resources for you. We also understand those that had to make the difficult decisions to close. We ask that you continue to communicate with us and provide your questions to us, so we can continue to keep you posted with the most up to date information.

**Q:** Do we providers face the potential of a) being forced to close or b) to remain open solely for medical personal?

**A:** Answered above.

**Q:** If one of my parents has a critical job, do I have to remain providing care for that child even though I would like to close?

**A:** Answered above.

**Q:** Can you give us "Best Practice" answer for when is the right time to close business since the Mat Su Borough does not have jurisdiction over "Health Powers" to mandate us?

**A:** Answered above.

## Ratios

Child to caregiver ratios need to be maintained at all times. For an allowance for your specific situation to be considered, you can apply for a general variance from your local child care licensing office.

**Q:** Do providers of home based facilities that have children younger than the age of 13 now need to count them in their ratios or are expectations being made?

**A:** Answered above.

**Q:** Hi, I run a childcare facility with 6 full time, non-related children and 2 school age children of my own. Since the schools have closed, I have been running at capacity with a maximum of 8 children I know some states have made changes allowing childcare providers to accept children beyond the maximum number of children allowed to ensure more families have childcare for their school age children. My question is if the municipality has already considered doing the same and when will it be done. Some of my families with enrolled preschoolers and toddlers have school age children who also need care. I'd like to assist them if possible.

**A:** Answered above.

## Reporting Changes

**Q:** When you reduced your hours, do you send in a report of change? Or at this time, is it ok to change hours without notice to CCL?

**A:** Anytime you have a change to your policies, you need to report your change to your parents and your local licensing office.

## Inspection & License Questions

**Q:** My license is expiring soon. My bi-annual inspection is scheduled in April. What happens if the inspection cannot happen?

**A:** We will be working with each facility on a case-by-case basis. We are currently working on plans for alternative methods for conducting inspections for facilities who are still open, and other considerations for those who are not currently open. For additional information, please contact your local licensing office.

## Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

The CCPO has received numerous questions regarding how payment will be determined for the month of March and future months, for providers who are open as well as those who have closed and whether or not children are in care. Some providers have closed, others remain open. Some children stopped attending child care, while others attended more than planned due to school closures or families working from home, or at home for other reasons related to COVID-19.

At this time all governing federal rule and state regulations are still in place so the current payment rules will be followed.

We do hear you and understand your needs. We want to be able to assist both providers and families as much as we can during this time and are working with the Federal Office of Child Care and our Division and Department Leaders to identify federal rules and state regulations that if temporarily waived could allow for changes to our current practices. This process does take time and we are working through it as quickly as we can.

FAQs for this section regarding how providers will be paid for:

- *Children with a full month authorization month authorization;*
- *Children with a part month authorization;*
- *Children who attended more, less, or not at all due to school and provider closures, and*
- *Children who attended less or not at all because their parents are working from home, or cannot work, or have chosen to remove children from care for other reasons related to COVID-19*

**Q1:** If the city does a mandatory shutdown of every business except the critical ones for saving lives and keeping the muni open, will childcare facilities get paid their normal contracts of enrolled children even if we can't work?

**Q2:** Our program is located in a school, thus we had no choice but to close as of 3/16/2020. How will March be paid; our participants attended 1 week part time and 1 week full time?

**Q3:** If kids on childcare assistance are not able to attend is there going a relief so our centers don't have to take an unexpected budget cuts? Most centers are highly dependent on this payment to keep our doors open; with some still in operation to support our first responders, medical teams etc. If normal rules still apply for attendance, PT and especially FT, the loss will be so dramatic cut that many will not have the means to keep doors open for these important members.

**Q4:** With state payments being a month behind, if a center closes (by choice, mandated by state or due to financial hardship) how will they be able to reopen or trudge forward with delay of payments or reduced payments due to attendance? It will take up to 40-60 days to receive state payment? Ideas?

**Q5:** Will CCPO allow for CCG to pay according to what our enrollment was as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of March and will it also pay in this manner for the months that follow? These monies were counted on are needed in order for our businesses to keep our employees paid.

**Q6:** Will there be more relaxed requirements for families who apply for assistance?

**Q7:** If a child we deem sick and we request them to stay home till we access how their health is will we get paid those does they are marked absent?

**Q8:** If a parent is laid off how many days will you pay for care while they job search? Will extra time be given to hold their place in facility?

**Q9:** Will reimbursements for February and March still be made? If authorized for March will payments be prorated for the extended Spring Break if a facility extended? What if they stayed closed the remainder of the month?

**Q10:** My questions is if CCPO will be paying the full time amount for March, even if we were closed due to COVID-19?

**Q11:** If a facility modifies their calendar in May from part month to full month will adjustments be able to be processed to accommodate the families receiving part month consideration currently so they are able to be reimbursed at a full month rate?

**Q12:** Can I continue billing the public assistance even though I'm closed?

**Q13:** If I need to be closed for one or two full months, with no student attendance, can I still bill for CCAP and CCG?

**Q14:** Kids are not attending my childcare due to the coronavirus. Is childcare assistance going to pay? Will daycare assistance be paying for max amount of authorizations even if parents are keeping children at home for social distancing and/or caring for someone, or staying home because they feel it's safer?

**Q15:** If we have to close due to staff shortage out of our control, or a closure due to exposure will we still get paid max amount of authorization? Even if the kids are not attending?

**Q16:** What happens when my center closed for the month of April, will I still be qualified to apply for the Child Care Program, because it is based on attendance?

**Q17:** I would like to know if CCPO is still staffed so we can bill for those who attended this month. Also, what happens to the families with re authorizations - or need to get re authorized? Especially if they are laid off?

**Q18:** Will child care assistance and CCG be paid to programs that are closed?

**Q19:** Why would the parents need to call in when you know school is closed for most of March that will be a lot on AKFS and delay billing even further?

**Q20:** All of our school age kids only have a part time authorization for the month of April. Will that be changed to full time?

**Q21:** If you have an authorization for child care for a child whose parent has now pulled them out of daycare for either fear or because the parent is now at home, are we able to bill for the child even though they are not attending anymore?

**A:** Children receiving PASS I, II, or III Child Care Assistance who have been issued a full month authorization are required to be in care at least 6 days during the month for the provider to receive payment at the full month rate. If the child is in care for 5 or fewer days (1 - 5 days), the payment is reduced to the part month rate.

Children with a part month authorization are required to be in care at least 1 day for payment to be made at the part month rate. Child Care Providers participating in the CCAP (and CCG) will need to submit their monthly requests for payments for each month that child care was provided.

Currently, there have been no changes to these rules. The Child Care Program Office is working with our leadership and continue to receive information and updates from the State on a daily basis. We are monitoring the child care situation and the impacts to child care, for both providers and families. As we learn more, or if things change, we will share that information.

\*There will be additional payment information for all licensed child care providers, sent out by way of an email Broadcast.

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Questions regarding families needing an increase in the level of care from a part month to a full month authorization

**Q1:** Will the state pay school aged children with part month authorizations at the full month rate?

**Q2:** Will April contracts be amended to full time for school age children?

**Q3:** Will there be any changes to authorizations due to attendance? Will they be able to be paid at enrollment vs attendance?

**Q4:** Will CCPO authorize full childcare assistance payments for March and the months that follow for families who were forced out of their jobs and if so, how will this communication take place? Will families be contacted so they will know this is available to them or will families need to do this on their own?

**Q5:** Will each facility need to communicate the changes with child care assistance authorizations or will there be a communication sent to all parents?

**A:** If families need an increase to the level of care due to school closures they need to report that change to their local child care assistance office, the sooner the better, so that changes can be made to the authorizations.

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Questions regarding notice to end services, notices days and CCAP Requests for Payment

**Q1:** How is child care assistance covering costs of care, since for many situations there is no notice to give providers on absences/termination, do the same rules apply? (i.e. days the child was supposed to be in care go under notice days on billing form)? Or how do we handle this for people planning to return once given the go ahead?

**Q2:** Will providers be able to bill the state the notices days for those families that have chosen not to attend for the month of April, but may or may not return in May?

**Q3:** Will you be covering the families who gave two weeks but could not attend?

**A:** Whether or not a 10 business day notice was given by families no longer using services, providers may include the notice days on their requests for payment.

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Questions regarding charging/collecting families' co-pays and other monies, and whether or not to hold spots

**Q1:** Can providers choose whether or not to collect copays from families for April forward?

**Q2:** Some of the Parents are gone but a few feel like they don't have to pay for April because they won't be at daycare, how should I address this situation?

**A:** The CCPO cannot advise providers as to whether or not to collect co-pays or other monies from families with authorizations for the month of April and beyond. These are business decisions.

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### Questions regarding family non-payment

**Q1:** Because parents had other school children and children enrolled in home childcare when schools closed they did not pay their copay or return to the facility. What will you guys do to help us recover our money due besides debarment enforcement?

**A:** As of right now, there have been no changes to these rules. The Child Care Program Office is working with our leadership and continue to receive information and updates from the State on a daily basis. We are monitoring the child care situation and the impacts to child care, for both providers and families. As we learn more, or if things change, we will share that information.

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### Questions regarding parent's working from home who need to use child care

**Q1:** If a parent who is authorized in my facility only working from home can I still provide care while they are working and fulfilling their work duties at home if the child is in my care?

**A:** Yes, families can use child care while working from home.

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### Questions regarding timeliness of CCAP payments

**Q1:** Will our state payments for childcare assistance be delayed?

**A:** The CCPO does not anticipate any payment processing delays.

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\*\*Information is subject to change. Be sure to monitor your emails daily and the CCPO website for updates to information.

### Stimulus/Funding Questions

Many questions were received regarding the federal economic stimulus funding. This statement is in response to the majority of the questions following. More specific questions will be answered below.

Congress did pass the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act or CARES. Through the CARES act the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) will be providing States funding to assist child care providers. We don't have the exact amount Alaska will be receiving. We will be implementing a plan in early April to provide funding to all licensed child care providers. Details of this plan will be sent to all licensed child care providers by way of an email Broadcast message soon.

**Q:** The economic stimulus passed by congress this week provides \$3.5 billion in grants to states for immediate assistance to providers to prevent them from going out of business. How much of that is coming to AK and when can providers access it?

**A:** Answered above.

**Q:** The Stimulus packages says there will be funds available immediately will you be sending out information on how to apply to get those funds.

**A:** Answered above

**Q:** The federal government approved 3.5 billion in grants to states through CCDBG Program for immediate assistance to prevent providers from going out of business and support child care. What is the timeline on getting this money out to providers? I know it was just passed last night, but does CCPO have any idea on how they will disperse money or what these funds will be used for?

**A:** Answered above

**Q:** What do you do with the CCDBG when some of the centers closed for COVID-19 when you already have the grant for the next two years? Please clarify or maybe I got this wrong.

**A:** Alaska receives Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funding each year based on an allocation. This money is used to fund, in part, the Child Care Program Office's programs. Alaska utilizes all the CCDF monies received each year. Child care providers closing will not impact Alaska's ability to utilize all the funding allocated.

**Q:** Why can't the department do what CCT&H in Juneau do with their clients (provider & families) on their program, paid the provider at the beginning of the month and the parents paid their co-pay at beginning of the month also?

**A:** Each child care provider decides when the family is to pay their co-pay. Payment for families participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is done after the service month is completed for accountability and accuracy.

**Q:** Would it be possible to be able to use some of our \$ to purchase diapers/wipes/all-purpose cleaner for families?

**A:** Providers determine how money received is to be spent.

**Q:** What options for financial relief are available to providers if they only have cash paying parents enrolled?

**A:** The CARES act provides some information regarding loans to small businesses. The Child Care Program Office's plan mentioned above includes all licensed providers.

**Q:** Are we able to apply for grants for the US COVID-19 Economic stimulus package yet? If so where do we get more information on the process?

**A:** More information can be found on the Governor's [COVID-19 Economic Stabilization webpage](#).

**Q:** During this crisis it is so apparent that childcare is an afterthought at best, even coming in last on the list of essential businesses. Private childcare providers live under a cloud that we are just in it for the money and yet, with payroll being as high as 70% of our total revenue, we operate at a very small margin of profit. A lot of policy and regulations and resources are put into ensuring that childcare programs provide excellent care. Obviously, it is critical, and yet no acknowledgment is given to us who are staying on the frontlines, risking our staff, ourselves and our businesses. What will be done moving forward to express the importance we play, not only in each child's life but in our economy?

**Q:** How is the department going to use the recently allocated CCDBG funds?

**A:** Answered above – CCPO's plan.

**Q:** For those of us closed- if we donate supplies to EMS or a hospital in need, could we be reimbursed?

**A:** Reimbursement for donated items would not come from CCPO.

**Q:** What guidance/support is available for family child care if they have closed due to a hunker down

**A:** Answered above – CCPO’s plan.

**Q:** Will you be sending out a list of funds and instructions on how to apply for them?

**A:** Answered above – CCPO’s plan.

**Q:** OTHER STATES CAN OVERRIDE THIS, WHY CAN'T WE?!?!? Time is not as important as our futures.... we need support from the state level financially as other states have done!!

**A:** Each state is different in how their regulations are implemented. Waivers can be requested from the Office of Child Care to temporarily not enforce or follow specific rules. In Alaska, we also need our State regulations to be suspended. We have identified regulations that if suspended would allow us more flexibility, and our request is working through the process. In the meantime, the CCPO will be implementing a plan, see above, that does not require a regulatory change.

First Five Years Fund has a [summary of what’s included in the federal bill](#) that will help child care programs.

### Unemployment Questions:

**Q:** Will child care providers who own small at home daycares be able to collect unemployment during this time?

**Q:** What guidance/support is available for family child care if they have closed due to a hunker down order? Can they access unemployment benefits?

**Q:** If staff are being encouraged to apply for unemployment due to temporary closure, how do we account for those staff as far as licensing regulations are concerned? Do we retain these employees on our roster, or will we have to separate them and then be required to complete background check procedures when they reactivate employment?

**Q:** Do we need to terminate our employees in order to them to apply for unemployment?

**A:** For information regarding Unemployment Insurance. Please visit the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s [COVID-19 Scenarios page](#).

### COVID-19 Information and Resources

- [State of Alaska Covid-19 Resources](#)
- [Health Mandates](#)
- [How to respond to COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Economic Stabilization Resources](#)
- [Municipality of Anchorage Coronavirus Response](#)
- [COVID-19 Resource Center](#)
- [Newsletter Sign up & Share Your Story](#)
- [Action Alert - Tell Legislators What You Need](#)
- [Child Care Referrals](#)
- [Child Care Aware of America](#)