



Local Leadership Council August 12, 2020

ELRC Region 17 Office Updates

- Staff are working remotely to every extent possible
- HSC building remains closed to the public
- Information will continue to be released as it becomes available
- View monthly newsletters and the most up-to-date information on our website www.montocpa.org/elrc
- Employee Directory is on our website www.montocpa.org/3171/Employee-Directory
- You can still contact staff by phone; however, it is likely you will have to leave a voicemail due to staff working remotely. Return calls may be placed from a private number.

CARES Funding Update

- OCDEL approved 3 rounds of funding
 - Round 1 released in June
 - Round 2 released in July
 - Round 3 is anticipated to be released in August
- All ECE programs will be required to submit a new attestation form for Round 3
- For Providers that have NOT YET reopened - Temporary Closure Letter must be submitted and must indicate a reopening date. Provider must then be open for at least 60 business days.

Child Care Works & Subsidy Payments

- Announcement ELRC-20 #09 – ELRC will process CCW provider payments based on enrollment (from 3/13/2020) through August 31, 2020.
- Announcement ELRC-10 #11 - CCW payments will be made based off attendance as of September 1, 2020.
- Adverse Actions – ELRC will be generating Adverse Actions that were temporarily on hold due to COVID-19 to families beginning 8/18/2020 through 8/25/2020.
- Announcement ELRC-20 #10 – ELRC will process CCW provider payments based on enrollment if a program needs to close due to a confirmed positive case of COVID19.
- Currently there is a VERY short wait list for CCW funding
- ELRC is still awaiting information from OCDEL regarding concerns for school-aged children needing care while attending virtual learning as parents/caretakers are at work. No final decisions have been made at this time.

Certification Announcements

- REVISED Announcement C-20-06 Interim Guidance for Certified Child Care Facilities operating during the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic
 - This announcement includes information regarding face masks and temperatures.

- Announcement: C-20-08 - Health and safety clarification regarding compliance with certification
 - Providers must create a health and safety plan based on CDC guidelines. The health and safety plan should include the following 5 topics:
 - Screening Policy
 - Drop off/Pick up Policy
 - Mask Policy
 - Sick Policy
 - Sanitation/Disinfection Procedures
 - This announcement also includes information on reporting positive cases of COVID-19 to the Department of Health

Keystone STARS Updates

- Improve readability of STARS quality indicators
- Further clarify intent behind STARS quality indications
- Provide thoughtful questions for discussion between providers and Quality Coach
- Further define PD Registry requirements
- Further clarify role of PD Plans in a program's CQI Plan
- Retracted Appendix A
- Provide PA ECE Career pathway for easy reference
- Internal Assessments – Due to COVID-19, program quality assessments have been changed. For the 2020-20201 FY, providers will be required to complete an internal assessment for the STAR 3 and STAR 4 levels. This includes an internal assessment completed by the program and a consultation with a Program Quality Assessor.

Fiscal Updates

- CARES Act payments are being processed
- New fiscal year started on 7/1/2020
- Continuing to work on CCW subsidy payments as usual
- For September 2020, invoices (due by 10/5/2020):
 - Providers MUST mark absences accurately, including month-long absences for children who have not yet returned to care
 - Marking “No change” for all children may result in the ELRC requesting additional information or verification which may delay provider payment

Resource and Referral Updates

- Help families as they apply for CCW services
- Work with families requesting childcare because that family is working with the County Assistance Office
- Help families locate high quality childcare programs
- Has a library of community resources

Temporary Child Care Assistance (TCCA)

- The ELRC is working to launch a program designed to temporarily assist families experiencing immediate crisis who would not qualify for subsidized childcare services.
- Potential qualifying reasons include:
 - Respite care for older caretakers (over 62 years of age)
 - Single parents who are unable to work due to a temporary disability
 - Parent/caretakers that need care while attending a treatment or therapy program
 - Parent/caretakers who are unable to work due to mental health illness
 - Families who are experiencing homelessness and do not qualify for CCW

- Families experiencing a recent traumatic event
- Families experiencing grief and loss due to a death within their immediate family
- The ELRC continues to work towards launching this new program. The following steps have been identified:
 - The ELRC is working to finalize eligibility criteria
 - The ELRC has finished drafting an application
 - Next step is to develop a network of childcare providers willing to accept the terms of this funding

LLC Subcommittees: Updates

- Current LLC Subcommittees:
 - Knowledge, Networking and Advocating
 - Early Intervention and Behavioral Health
 - Early Learning Partnerships – Includes Infant Toddler Contracted Slots, Early Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and Head Start
 - ECE Quality Staffing – Hoping to still host job fairs; however, looking at unique solutions to do this during COVID-19
 - Alternate Funding Sources & Services – This led to ELRC creating TCCA program
- ELRC is looking at move forward with subcommittees in a virtual format

Open Floor Space: Supporting Programs and Engaging Families during a Pandemic

Feedback and thoughts from Providers on successes, challenges, supports needed, etc.

- Maggie Rivera from Holy Redeemer Child Care Center – Hardest thing has been not being able to communicate with families via face-to-face. Also having a hard time adjusting to a lack of being able to be social in the ways they previously could be before COVID-19
- Rennee Alston from Wee R the World – Struggling with parents not communicating when they themselves or their child has COVID-19 symptoms. What do providers do when families do not effectively communicate? Also dealing with concerns from other parents about allowing tours of the facility from families not enrolled.
 - Have tours at the end of the day, after everyone has left, but before cleaning has been completed. Do Zoom calls with perspective families to meet teachers.
 - Interview with family over the phone first, then do a virtual tour, then do an in-person tour at the end of the day when the center is closed. This helps to weed out parents who may not be interested.
- Kris Bowman from The Amooore Group – Struggling on how to meet the needs of families, children, and ECE programs that require early intervention. Wants to know how they can work with their colleagues to best support ECE programs and children.
 - Sending and reviewing videos of children after hours
- Kelsey Houdeshel from CCIU Early Head Start - Families losing jobs and are anxious about losing CCW funding.
 - Encourage families to contact their caseworker so the ELRC can most effectively work with the family and help find solutions. Communication is key!
- Jacqueline Rogers from Early Head Start Maternity Care Coalition – Has a home-based program to assist families when needed. If there are families that are worried about losing jobs and continue receiving subsidy, the coalition may be able to support them in some way.
- Pamela Bell works for Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol – Providers can reach out to her for resources and information regarding substance use disorder. Email: PBell2@montcopa.org
- Kym Ramsey from The Willow School – Programs are experiencing hardships in staffing their program. Some staff may be hesitant to return to work due to concerns about

COVID19. Staff may be dealing with their own issues surrounding childcare, school schedules, and the health & safety of their own families.

- Denise Ashe from Montgomery County OIC – Programs are also experiencing hardships in staffing because of other COVID19 issues. Employees who work in a child care setting Monday through Friday must be willing to practice social distancing and avoid large crowds during the weekend. If staff members are not willing to take these precautions, there is an increased risk to the program's children and staff.

Additional Questions/Answers

- Providers asked for clarification about how enrollments and payments will be handled as of 9/1/2020:
 - For children who have not yet returned to care during the pandemic, the enrollment will be suspended as of 9/1/2020.
 - The ELRC will attempt to contact families who have not returned to care and will follow our Excessive Absence policies if families do not indicate a future need for care. Following the 9/1/2020 enrollment suspension, the ELRC will call the client on Day 30, send a Missing Information Letter for provider choice on Day 45, and generate an Adverse Action on Day 60.
 - For children who have been attending care sporadically but are in attendance on 9/1/2020, the 5-day consecutive absence policy will be implemented. After 5-days of consecutive absences, CCW payment will be suspended on the 6th day.
 - As of 9/1/2020, absences will be counted and tracked by the ELRC. The policy regarding 40 paid absences per fiscal year per child will be enforced.