

The Department for Children and Families is committed to promoting the short- and long-term needs of child care providers and the families who depend on their critically essential services. With Kansas’s share of the additional Child Care and Development Block Grant funding Congress authorized in the third federal stimulus bill, the CARES Act, DCF plans to immediately roll out the “Hero Relief Program” to promote the continued availability of safe, high-quality child care options for families during the COVID-19 crisis and afterward. This initiative will expand DCF’s child care assistance subsidies for families and will provide financial support directly to providers.

The expansion of DCF’s child care assistance program will allow families of eligible essential workers to qualify for benefits if their household income is at or below 250% of the federal poverty level.

The financial support for providers includes funding streams that will allow them to continue to remain in business, and to help mitigate some financial losses that are may occur because of decreased enrollment/attendance or temporary closures of facilities for health concerns or other reasons.

As used in this document, “Family Child Care” includes Family and Group Day Care facilities, “Small Child Care Centers” include all centers with 100 or fewer children enrolled, and “Large Child Care Centers” include all centers with 101 or more children enrolled.

**Phase I: April 20, 2020**

**1. Child Care Subsidy Expansion for families of health care workers and first responders**

**Eligible workers:**

- Health care workers (including RNs, other medical professionals and health care support workers, hospital and laboratory staff)
- First responders (including law enforcement, fire and rescue, and other public safety workers)
- Food and agriculture workers
- Judicial branch (essential services)
- National Guard
- Child and adult protective services specialists
- Child care providers caring for children of eligible workers listed above
- **Income limit:** Eligibility will be limited to families who have countable income at or below 250% of federal poverty guidelines, or a monthly income of up to \$5,458 for a family of four. See table below for income for other household sizes.

Household Size	250% FPL
2	\$3,593
3	\$4,525
4	\$5,458
5	\$6,392
6	\$7,325

- **How to Apply:** Families can apply online at **KSHeroRelief.com** or can pick up a paper application in the box in front of their local DCF service center.

- **Eligibility period:** Each family’s plan will remain open 6 months following eligibility (and may continue if the need persists). New enrollment of eligible workers will remain in place until the date that the Kansas COVID-19 Emergency Declaration incident period ends.
- Additional notes:
  - a. Families will receive the full DCF subsidy amount based on their family size, with no family share deduction.
  - b. DCF has requested a waiver from the federal Office of Child Care to allow these cases to remain open for six months (rather than the 12 months required for the standard child care assistance program).

## 2. Sustainability stipends for all KDHE-Licensed Child Care Providers and relative providers

- **Eligible providers:** All KDHE-licensed providers and relative providers
- **Frequency and duration of stipends:** Monthly. DCF anticipates the first stipends will be issued in April 2020.
- **How to apply:** contact Child Care Aware of Kansas at [www.ks.childcareaware.org](http://www.ks.childcareaware.org) or 785-823-3343.
  - a. Note: DCF intends to contract with Child Care Aware for services related to this proposal but has not formalized an agreement at this time.
- Talking points:
  - a. Under normal conditions, child care centers operate on a very thin margin. With many providers seeing decreased enrollment due to pandemic-related unemployment of parents, and others having to close their facilities, there is a significant risk that the child care industry in Kansas could collapse without financial support from other sources.
  - b. Stipends will help providers pay ongoing expenses like food, supplies, labor, benefits, rent/mortgage, maintenance, equipment, utilities, licensing fees, professional development, phone/internet, classroom supplies, liability/accident insurance, and software. These expenses are essential to maintaining the basic quality level of care for Kansas children.
  - c. The disruption of normal operations will vary from provider to provider.

## 3. Revenue replacement supplements for DCF providers

- **Eligible providers:** Open providers who are enrolled to accept DCF subsidies (both KDHE-licensed providers and relative providers), and KDHE-licensed DCF providers who have closed temporarily due to COVID-19
- **Frequency of supplements:** Monthly. DCF expects to issue the first round of payments in May (to replace revenue lost in March and April); subsequent payments will be made in the first month following the lost revenue.
- Talking points:
  - a. Many child care centers continue to bill all parents to hold their child’s spot in their child care business during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether the center is open or closed. Parents who qualify for a child care subsidy have lower incomes and are not likely to have additional funds to pay out-of-pocket for child care when their child is not attending

because the center is closed or because the parent has lost their job.

- b. Each month's supplemental payment will be calculated based on the difference between the average EBT benefits paid by parents to the provider during the six-month period spanning Sept. 2019 through February 2020, and the actual payment received during each month of the pandemic emergency, beginning in March 2020.

#### 4. Supply Grants

- **Eligible providers:** Open KDHE-licensed child care facilities and relative providers
- **Frequency and duration of stipends:** One-time payment covering the months of March, April and May 2020
- **How to apply:** Contact Child Care Aware of Kansas at [www.ks.childcareaware.org](http://www.ks.childcareaware.org) or 785-823-3343.
- Talking points:
  - a. Grants will allow child care providers who remain open for business to maintain a healthy environment.
  - b. The Centers for Disease Control and local health departments are continuously updating recommendations for more rigorous cleaning regimens and daily wellness assessments, leading to an increased need for supplies in child care settings. These supplies may include thermometers, gloves, soap, disinfectants, cleaning wipes, paper towels, toilet paper, trash bags, paperware, disposable table covering, cleaning tools (buckets, bins, rags, mops).
  - c. The better equipped our child care providers are to meet these increased standards, the more likely they are to stay open to provide care for essential workers.

#### 5. Emergency Worker Support Bonuses

- **Eligible providers:** Open KDHE-licensed providers and relative providers who provide care for children of health care workers and first responders
- **Frequency of bonus:** One-time bonus for each slot filled by the child of a qualifying worker, beginning in April 2020.
- **How to apply:** contact Child Care Aware of Kansas at [www.ks.childcareaware.org](http://www.ks.childcareaware.org) or 785-823-3343.
- Talking points:
  - a. In order to perform their essential duties, health care workers and first responders must have safe and reliable care for their children while they work.
  - b. As providers commit to caring for children of front-line workers, they may be increasing their risk of exposure to COVID-19. This bonus will allow additional protective measures to be put in place to ensure providers can provide a healthy and safe environment for all children in their care.

## **Phase II: May/June 2020**

We anticipate additional initiatives as federal and state-level funding is appropriated. Subsequent initiatives will likely include start-up grants for new providers and re-opening grants for providers who have maintained their child care licenses but needed to close temporarily during the pandemic.