



March 16, 2020

RE: Update on COVID-19 and Child Care

Dear CCMS Providers,

As we find ourselves in a unique situation with the spread of COVID-19, please know that we have the utmost concern for your health and safety. At this time, Child Care Licensing and/or our local health authority in Tarrant County have not required closures of licensed child care centers or family homes. We will work to help share this information with you if there is official guidance on closures or additional health or licensing measures you should be aware of. If you make the difficult decision to close or reduce operating hours, you are required to report such closures or modified hours to Child Care Licensing (CCL) immediately. At this time, Child Care Licensing is asking all licensed facilities to respond to a statewide survey:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCLCOVID19

At CCMS, we are open and processing child care payments as normal for child care providers. Currently, we are awaiting guidance from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) on any steps for recording child absences related to COVID-19, extending spring breaks, and policies related to child care services. We expect direction to come forth quickly. COVID-19 related absences will not be counted against the parents maximum allowed absences. Further guidance on recording absences and payments will be shared as soon as it is received.

If open for care, we are asking that you consider assisting with providing emergency care to families who may need care due to school closures. If you are open and have available slots in your program, please contact kimberly.gibson@tarrantcountycms.org with your available slots. Assisting all families in Tarrant County during this time is our top priority and your help is greatly appreciated.

As suggested by Child Care Licensing and Tarrant Public Health, please remember to sanitize your operations with increased frequency including high touch surfaces and doorknobs, washing hands diligently, and having staff members stay home if sick. Also, please work to restrict movements between classrooms (i.e. try to keep the same group of children in one classroom); children may go outside as normal but take precautions to avoid mixing children from different classrooms. Require secure pick up and drop off of children outside the facility (unless you determine that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter an operation). Work to ensure each child is provided individual meals and snacks (versus serving family style meals).

CCL also encouraged providers to contact CCL with any questions you might have or technical assistance you might need. CCL will be issuing Frequently Asked Questions as early as possible next week. In the meantime, you can send any questions you may have to the licensing standards comments mailbox at MSC@hhsc.state.tx.us. CCMS is working to post official guidance and suggestions on best practices on the CCMS website: www.tarrantcountycms.org or call 817-831-0374.

We thank you for your flexibility and understanding and will provide more information as it comes.

Sincerely,

Rita Morris, Director of CCMS