

February 25, 2021

Director of the Office of Child Care
330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201
Sent via email: Doris.Halford@acf.hhs.gov

Dear Director of the Office of Child Care,

The Department of Human Services as the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agency in Iowa has prepared this report on our State's planned use of funds in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA).

Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)

Co-pay Reimbursement: Families on the State's Child Care Assistance (CCA) subsidy program will not be required to pay their co-pays from February 2021 through June 2021. The Lead Agency has notified families on the subsidy program of this temporary change in policy. We have also notified all licensed child care providers and all licensed-exempt providers that are CCDF eligible. The lead agency will use required attendance documentation that is sent by child care providers to determine the amount of co-pay that would have been due to the child care providers. The Lead Agency will then send payment for family co-pay amounts owed directly to child care providers.

Unlimited CCA Absences: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency restricted the number of absences that were paid for children on CCA to four per month. Since March of 2020 the lead agency has paid for an unlimited number of absence days for children on CCA. We plan to use CRRSA funds to continue this policy through June of 2021.

Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices

None

Grants or Assistance (Other than Subsidies) to Stabilize Child Care Providers

Monthly Stipends: The lead agency plans to use CRRSA funds to offer monthly stipends to child care programs from March 2021 through June 2021. All licensed and registered child care programs that are open will be eligible. Internal agency records of open programs will be used on a monthly basis to develop a list of eligible programs. The list of eligible programs will be sent the stipend. The intent of these stipends is to support continued operations including increased costs due to virus mitigation practices. Stipend amounts will be based on capacity. Child care providers with higher capacities will receive larger amounts. Amounts can be found in the charts below. The lead agency has partnered with our Child Care Resource and Referral to send out communications to child care programs, including an email address where any questions can be directed. Additionally this information will be added to our lead agency website on a page that is specifically dedicated the child care funding opportunities.

Child Care Centers	
Capacity	Stipend Amount
0-100 children	\$3,000
101-200 children	\$5,000
201-300 children	\$7,000

Child Development Homes	
Capacity	Stipend Amount
0-16 children	\$1,500

Assistance to Providers Not Participating in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic

Monthly stipends described in the above section are available to all licensed and registered child care programs regardless of their participation in the State’s subsidy system.

Other

WAGE\$: The lead agency currently has a contract with the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (Iowa AEYC) for a nationally certified program called Child Care WAGE\$. This program provides education-based salary supplements to early educators to help increase compensation. Low wages in the child care field can create a barrier to child care programs attracting and keeping staff. This is especially difficult for child care programs as they need stable staff to ensure the enhanced cleaning measures and social distancing efforts to safely respond to COVID-19. The WAGE\$ program supports child care providers in reducing staff turnover.

Investing in Iowa’s Child Care (IICC) Grants: The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the availability of child care. The lead agency is starting a grant program to assist with this issue. The program will offer three types of grants, start-up grants, expansion grants and relief grants. The start-up grants will assist programs that recently received permission to be reimbursed for costs related to equipment and materials that were purchased for the child care program. The expansion grant will be available for child care programs that already exist but would like to add additional spots in their program. These programs will be able to request reimbursement for equipment and materials that were purchased to increase capacity of the child care program. The relief grants are for programs that are currently operating but have an expense related to regulatory requirements. The intent for this grant is to support programs that might be in danger of closing because they have a financial barrier to meeting regulatory requirements. For all of three types of grants no funds will be used for purchase or improvement of land or for purchase, construction or permanent improvement of any building or facility.

Sincerely,

/s/

Julie Allison
 Child Care Bureau Chief/CCDF State Administrator
 Division of Adult, Children and Family Services
 Iowa Department of Human Services