

COVID-19 Child Care Assistance for Essential Workers
Questions and Answers
April 20, 2020

1. How do I get help with child care?

In order to qualify, you must be currently working at an essential business or government agency, you must need child care so you may continue to work, and you must complete a child care application. You do not have to meet any income guidelines for this time-limited program. A list of essential staff/qualifying occupations is attached.

To apply, please complete the attached application and email it to christi.jeffcoat@dss.sc.gov. In the email, please include your first and last name, the best phone number to reach you, and the occupation/business where you work.

2. How does this program work?

If a parent qualifies, vouchers will be paid directly to the child care providers. The SC Voucher system has a maximum weekly provider rate that can be paid. Providers that are in the ABC Quality program already have an established weekly rate based on their quality level. DSS will not charge a weekly co-pay per child, however parents may be asked to pay for the difference between what the child care provider charges and the voucher rate.

3. Does the child care provider have to be licensed for the parents to receive the vouchers?

All license-exempt child care programs operating during this time of COVID-19 Emergency and serving children all day, must have an emergency temporary license to operate. Please contact Child Care Licensing at (803) 898-9020 or email Cynthia Lara at cynthia.lara@dss.sc.gov to start this process. License-exempt providers that have received a temporary license to operate during this time of emergency are able to receive vouchers for eligible children.

4. Where can I find a list of essential employees that would be covered by this?

Please see the attached list of essential staff by occupation.

5. Will this cover payments for child care when the facility is closed but parents are essential and still have to work?

The purpose of this program is to provide child care assistance to essential workers so that they are able to place their kids in child care while they report to work during the COVID-19 emergency. If a parent's child care provider is closed and they need to choose another provider so they can continue to report to work, they can apply for this category of child care.

6. How long will the voucher cover?

This category of child care is being provided from the point of approval through August 30, 2020.

7. How will parents be compensated if they have already paid for child care directly to the provider?

This category of child care is not retroactive. It will pay from the point of approval through August 30, 2020.