

Policy Communiqué #16-09: Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

Title: Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

Date: August 31, 2016

Priority: High

Category: Informational

Action Required: Yes. See Discussion and Next Steps.

Response Required: No

Purpose:

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is issuing this communiqué to clarify enrollment and payment rules for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) program. Attached are:

- OCDEL Announcement #15-02 EHS-CCP dated September 21, 2015
- List of participating EHS-CCP providers

Discussion:

In December 2014, the federal government awarded Pennsylvania eight EHS-CCP grants. Please review the attached OCDEL Announcement #15-02 for full details of the grant.

Attached is a list of the grantees and their partners. The grantees are listed in red. Each grantee's participating partners are listed below the grantee's name. OCDEL strongly encourages the Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies to form close partnerships and establish strong communication with the EHS-CCP grantees located in their service areas. The CCIS should check directly with the EHS-CCP grantee if there are questions, or partners missing on the attached list.

The funding for EHS-CCP is different from other early learning programs such as Head Start (HS) or Pre-K Counts (PKC). In HS and PKC, child care funding "wraps around" the hours HS and PKC operate. In EHS-CCP, funding is "layered" with subsidy funds forming the foundation and EHS-CCP funds layered on top. The goal for each EHS-CCP is to enroll a minimum of 25 percent of children who are receiving Child Care Works (CCW).

Enrollment

Eligible children must meet the following qualifications:

- Child must be between the ages of birth and three years
- Family income may not exceed 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG)
 - There are exceptions for foster children or children experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act
 - Up to 10 percent of children may be over 100 percent of FPIG

Enrollment priorities

- Families enrolled in or eligible for CCW
- Child must need care during the hours the provider is offering EHS services

- Child whose parent works evenings is not eligible for the EHS-CCP program unless the provider is giving EHS services during the evening
- Child whose parent works at night and is eligible for daytime sleep hours could be eligible for the program
- Child whose parent works less than five days a week is eligible for five days of care each week
- Child whose family is receiving TANF is eligible for the program

Each CCIS agency must be in communication with its local EHS-CCP grantee and partners. If the EHS-CCP partner has openings and needs help filling them, the CCIS must review the waiting list for eligible children. Each EHS-CCP grantee has a unique approach to operating the program. The possibility exists that the grantee can enroll the children and pay for the full cost of child care temporarily until the child reaches the top of the CCW waiting list and can be enrolled through the subsidy program. It is equally important to advise the grantee when a parent is about to lose eligibility for CCW. Grantees may be able to help the parent resolve the eligibility issue (such as delinquent co-payments) and retain CCW. To better understand each EHS-CCP grantee's enrollment strategy, please reach out to the grantee and discuss your local options.

Scheduling

The CCIS must enroll children and pay for care based on the following schedule:

- Child receives care five days a week, even if the parent does not work five days a week
- Child receives full-time care each day of the week
- Child receives care for the full-year, even if the parent temporarily loses his or her job and does not work the full-year (ex: parent works seasonal employment or is not employed over the summer months)

Payment

Subsidy payments for five full-time days for the full-year create the payment foundation for the EHS-CCP. EHS-CCP grantees may not end a child's enrollment because the family no longer qualifies for CCW. To ensure continuity of care, EHS-CCP grant funds can be used to cover temporary gaps as follows:

- To pay for care while a child is on the waiting list awaiting subsidy funding
- To pay for care when the parent temporarily loses eligibility for child care funding (such as a TANF parent who stops attending an employment and training program)
- To pay for a limited time if a parent loses his or her job for more than 90 days and subsequently loses subsidy

While the grantee is not to end enrollments for children whose parents lose subsidy, the intent is that the EHS-CCP payment of the subsidy portion of child care be temporary. Remembering that each local EHS-CCP grantee will have unique policies around the loss of subsidy for enrolled children, some may not continue to pay for child care indefinitely. The CCIS should advise parents that funding may be for a limited time in the following situations:

- Voluntary withdrawal from the subsidy program with the expectation that EHS-CCP funds will continue to pay the full cost of care for the child
 - Co-payments are assigned to families receiving CCW; some parents may attempt to end subsidy so they do not have to pay a co-payment
- Loss of job beyond 90 days with no attempt to find new employment

Next Steps:

1. Share this information with appropriate staff.
2. Contact your local EHS-CCP grantee to establish lines of communication.
3. Review your waiting list for eligible children. Offer to help parents of eligible children contact the grantee for possible enrollment while the child remains on the waiting list.
4. Direct questions to your subsidy coordinator.