



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

COVID-19 Re-opening Plan – Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the questions the Department has received regarding the COVID-19 re-opening plan and answers to those questions. If you have a question that is not on this FAQ, please reach out to the Child Care Licensing Team at DHS.Childcarelicensing@dhs.ri.gov.

UPDATED: 5/10/2020

Q. Do children in care have to wear masks?

A. We are not requiring children to wear masks, but we are asking the staff that care for children to wear masks while they are in the building/home. Since the webinar was created, we also received guidance that children should not wear masks at all, including when they are sick and in isolation. Children wearing a mask may have difficulty breathing, which might worsen for children who are sick.

Q. I do not want to open until September. Will regs be the same?

A. Public health guidance and research on COVID-19 is continually evolving. If you are not planning on opening until September, we recommend you touch base with the Child Care Licensing Team, or your individual licensor, 30 days before open and we can provide you with the latest guidance.

Q. Can I accept children from out-of-state into my center/home?

You can serve out of state children at this time, as long as they are existing, and not new, enrollments. The Governor updated her Executive Order on Friday to state that the out-of-state self-quarantine does not apply to dropping off and/or picking up children from child care.

Q. Given the funding assurances from RI DHS for CCAP, is there some expectation that I reserve a percentage of my enrollments (upon reopening) for CCAP children?

A. Yes, CCAP providers should make every effort to prioritize services to CCAP children upon reopening. CCAP families who are unable to access child care upon reopening will be encouraged to report these challenges to RI Department of Human Services. Decisions regarding continued funding will be made on a case by case basis, depending upon the provider's ability and willingness to secure services for CCAP children.

Q. Will providers receive a new updated license when we reopen under the COVID-19 emergency regulations?

A. DHS will not be providing new licenses during this time with updated capacities. We will expect all providers to post their COVID-19 plan, and their approval letter, with their license to show the reduced capacities. License renewals will be sent as normal with regular license capacities.

Q. Will there be allowance for mixed age groups in child care center or family child care homes?

A. For centers interested in offering a mixed age group classroom, please propose this plan in your COVID-19 plan to be approved by the Department.

Q. If 4-foot walls are used to separate classrooms, is this allowable?



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

COVID-19 Re-opening Plan – Frequently Asked Questions

A. If you currently have a 4-foot wall separating two classrooms in your facility, you can operate stable groups in those classrooms. DHS will not allow providers to build/introduce any new four foot walls/dividers/partitions to separate large rooms in order to increase capacity during this time.

Q. How does shared space such as indoor play areas/libraries work during this time? Can they be used?

A. We are recommending providers discontinue use of any indoor shared spaces at this time. Outdoor shared places, such as playgrounds, can be used with a cleaning and sanitization plan. Please note: regulatory guidelines regarding group size during COVID-19 still apply to outdoor play time.

Q. Will there be a guidance document provided for new/temporary regulations? Will there be training on how to implement them?

A. Prior to submitting your COVID-19 plan you will be required to participate in two webinars which DHS and The Center for Early Learning Professionals have developed. Both webinars will be focused on the new regulations as well as guidance about adhering to these regulations. As always, once you have completed these webinars, you may contact the Child Care Licensing Unit with any questions.

Q. For AM/PM programs, can we have two different groups of children in the same classroom space?

A. If you intend to offer split sessions, these sessions need to be included in your plan. You will also need to provide information on the cleaning protocol you will be following between the two sessions.

Q. When we re-open, how do we choose which children come back?

A. This will be a decision that each program will need to make for itself. It is likely that some families may choose not to return at this time due to being either unemployed or working from home. If you need assistance with how to develop a waiting list system, please contact the Center for technical assistance on this.

Q. What if my center has shared bathrooms for different classrooms. How can I ensure I am being safe?

A. How you address this depends on your facility and classroom locations. If possible, identify two stalls for one group and two for another. If there is no way to establish separate use, ensure frequent cleaning of the entire bathroom through out the day.

Q. If we reopen before the school year ends, can we take school age children full day?

A. Yes, you may accept school age children full day. If you intend to do this, please include those classrooms in your plan.

Q. If you are a center that services school age children, will you be expected to continue their distance learning routine if child care re-opened before the school year ends?

A. To the best of your ability, school aged children should be supported in their distance learning while in care. Each school department has handled distance learning differently. Prior to reenrolling a school aged child, we recommend you having a conversation with the parent to determine what their child's



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

COVID-19 Re-opening Plan – Frequently Asked Questions

distance learning plan is and if it is something you can support during the day. You are not required to support distance learning in order to open or accept a child into your program.

Q. What will happen to our license if we cannot financially reopen right away?

A. Your license will remain opened active until your renewal, but you will be unable to operate. If you choose to reopen during these new regulations, you will need to submit a COVID-19 plan prior to opening.

Q. Will we receive monitoring visits during this time?

A. Yes, monitoring visits will continue to occur. These visits will include a short-flow monitoring form based on the new regulations and other active high-risk regulations. At this time, we will not be counting these monitoring visits as your annual/twice a year monitoring visit.

Q. Will providers receive an extension on any license renewals that occur during this time?

A. Providers who are due for renewal or whose license is scheduled to expire during these regulations are still expected to submit renewal applications in a timely fashion. If you are missing something in your packet due to restrictions in place because of COVID-19, you need to alert your licenser **ASAP** regarding these restrictions. Extensions will be granted on a case by case basis.

CCAP Questions:

Q: Will CCAP Providers be reimbursed for CCAP children after 6/1 if they are closed?

A: No, only CCAP Providers who open will be reimbursed for CCAP children. Providers who reopen (beginning 6/1) will be reimbursed for CCAP children based on enrollment, not attendance; however, providers are expected to update School Age enrollments accordingly for those that are in attendance to ensure proper payment

Q: If my licensed capacity decreases as a result of COVID-19 emergency regulations, will my CCAP payments decrease?

A: Providers will be reimbursed based on CCAP enrollment (pre-COVID) and not attendance. If a provider is unable to serve a CCAP family due to their licensed capacity, the CCAP family has the option of using their subsidy with a different CCAP provider. DHS will reimburse the CCAP provider who is serving the CCAP child. If a child is not attending, but remains enrolled with the original CCAP provider, that provider will continue to receive reimbursement as long as they reopen.

Q: Do CCAP families need to pay copays?

A: Yes, upon reopening, all CCAP families are responsible for paying their copay. However, it is at the discretion of the provider to determine if they will require families who choose to not send their children whether they will require the families to pay the copay in order to maintain their slot.



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

COVID-19 Re-opening Plan – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do CCAP families still need to recertify if their eligibility period is ending?

A: Yes, all CCAP families still need to recertify in order to maintain their benefits. As a reminder, all CCAP families are issued a 12-month certificate. Families can maintain these benefits even if/when they report a non-temporary change in status such as job loss. CCAP families who report job loss during their eligibility period can receive three additional months of CCAP coverage for job search activities.

Q: Are CCAP rates changing on 6/1?

A: Yes, RI is administering temporary rate enhancements for CCAP providers upon reopening. The new rates are available on the [DHS website](#) and will be in effect from 6/1/20-8/29/20.

Q: Will DHS reimburse providers for private-pay families who are not attending and have disenrolled?

A: DHS is only able to reimburse CCAP providers for CCAP subsidies. For information regarding SBA loans and other opportunities for small business owners, please contact the Department of Labor & Training at www.dlt.state.ri.us.