



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

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Clarence H. Carter, Commissioner  
Tennessee Department of Human Services  
James K. Polk Building, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
505 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Commissioner Carter:

The Office of Child Care has completed its review of the proposed amendments to Tennessee's approved Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for 2019-2021, submitted on September 30, 2020 and updated on April 15, 2021.

This letter is to inform you that the following CCDF Plan amendments were approved.

- **Section 5.4.1- In-State Criminal Registry or Repository Checks with Fingerprints Requirements** - Amended to reflect that In-State Criminal Registry or Repository Checks with Fingerprints Requirements for new, prospective, and existing staff, have been put in place. Approval of this amendment indicates that Tennessee's CCDF Plan demonstrates compliance with the Final Rule.
- **Section 5.4.4- National FBI Criminal Fingerprint Search Requirements** - Amended to reflect that National FBI Criminal Fingerprint Search Requirements for new, prospective, and existing staff, have been put in place. Approval of this amendment indicates that Tennessee's CCDF Plan demonstrates compliance with the Final Rule.
- **Section 5.4.6- Interstate Criminal Registry or Repository Check Requirement** - Amended to reflect that Interstate Criminal Registry or Repository Check Requirements for new, prospective, and existing staff, have been put in place. Approval of this amendment indicates that Tennessee's CCDF Plan demonstrates compliance with the Final Rule.
- **Section 5.4.7- Interstate Sex Offender Registry or Repository Check Requirements** - Amended to reflect that Interstate Sex Offender Registry or Repository Check Requirements for new, prospective, and existing staff, have been put in place. Approval of this amendment indicates that Tennessee's CCDF Plan demonstrates compliance with the Final Rule.

The following plan amendments were approved related to COVID-19:

- **Section 1.8.3 - Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan** - Amended to reflect during the state declared emergency for COVID-19 the conditions under which temporary changes to licensing requirements, payment practices, length of eligibility period, and criminal background checks related to the establishment of temporary care were implemented.
- **Section 3.1.2(a) - Eligibility criteria based on reason for care** - Amended to reflect that the requirements for hours worked as a point of eligibility is not enforced for essential workers during the state declared emergency for COVID-19.
- **Section 3.1.2(c) - Eligibility criteria based on reason for care--** Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19 a 90-day job search period is allowed for eligibility at redetermination.
- **Section 3.1.2(d)-- Eligibility criteria based on reason for care** - Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the definition of protective services was expanded to include children of essential workers. Additionally, income limits for essential workers are being disregarded blanketly, not on a case-by-case basis. Approval of this amendment for income limits as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 3.1.3 –Eligibility criteria based on family income** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, income limits for essential workers are being disregarded blanketly, not on a case-by-case basis. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 3.3.1 – 12 Month Eligibility** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19 emergency certificates may be issued for fewer than 12 months for essential employees only and the eligibility period for redeterminations for all other certificates has been extended for six months. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective September 28, 2020.
- **Section 3.3.2 – Option to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period** - Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19 emergency certificates may be issued for fewer than 12 months for essential employees. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective September 28, 2020.
- **Section 3.4.4 – Family Contributions to Payments** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, family co-payments are not required for all families. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 4.3.1- Setting Payment Rates** - Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the payment rate for school-age children is the full-time rate, regardless of the number of hours of attendance.

- **Section 4.3.2 - Setting Payment Rates** - Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the lead agency established differential rates to serve school-age children.
- **Section 4.5.1 – Payment** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the 20-day limit on absences is removed to continue payment to closed providers or when a child is not attending due to COVID-19. Additionally, providers engaged in the Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance Program can be paid for the duration of the program,
- **Section 5.1.2 - Licensing Requirements** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, contracted temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers are exempted from certain licensure requirements and training, including immunizations, safe sleep practices, prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions, prevention of shaken baby syndrome - abusive head trauma, precautions in transporting children, or pediatric first aid and CPR. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.2(a)(1) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers are not required to provide evidence of children’s immunizations. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.2(a)(2) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe sleep practices requirements are waived for school-age temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.2(a)(4) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the standards for food and allergic reactions are waived for temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.2(a)(6) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment requirements are waived for temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.2(a)(9) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, requirements for transporting children are waived for temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.

- **Section 5.2.2(a)(10) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the CPR/First Aid requirements are waived for all child care sites. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.3(a) - Health and safety standards for CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, the pre-service training requirement was waived for temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.2.4 - Ongoing Training Requirements** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, annual training requirements are waived for temporary care sites created to serve children of essential workers. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.3.2(a) - Inspections for licensed CCDF center-based providers.** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, in-person routine inspections are suspended for licensed center-based providers. A combination of in-person and virtual visits resumed July 2020. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.3.2(b) - Inspections for licensed CCDF family child care providers.** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, in-person routine inspections are suspended for licensed family child care providers. A combination of in-person and virtual visits resumed July 2020. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.3.3 - Inspections for license-exempt CCDF providers** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, in-person routine inspections are suspended for license exempt providers. A combination of in-person and virtual visits resumed July 2020. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.4.1(a) – In-State Criminal Registry or Repository Checks with Fingerprints Requirements** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, abbreviated background check processes are utilized for staff at temporary care sites and do not include an In-State Criminal Registry Check with Fingerprints. Additionally, during state-declared emergency periods fingerprint cards may be used when fingerprint scan sites are closed. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.
- **Section 5.4.4(a) – National FBI Criminal Fingerprint Search Requirements** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, abbreviated background check processes are utilized for staff at temporary care sites and do not include a National FBI Fingerprint Check. Additionally, during state-declared emergency

periods fingerprint cards may be used when fingerprint scan sites are closed. Approval of this amendment as per the waiver effective June 8, 2020.

- **Section 7.2.1 - Use of Quality Funds** – Amendment in response to COVID-19 to use quality funds and CARES Act funds for activities or initiatives related to COVID-19 response.
- **Section 7.4.1 - Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)** – Amended to reflect that during the state declared emergency for COVID-19, routine assessments were suspended for the QRIS assessment process.
- **Section 7.11.2 - Early Learning and Development Guidelines and Other Quality Improvement Activities**--Amended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to allow the lead agency to use quality funds and CARES Act funds to support ongoing operational costs for child care providers.

In addition, we acknowledge typographical changes made to 4.1.3b.

The effective dates for these amendments to the Tennessee CCDF Plan are noted on the amendments log within the ACF-118 electronic submission site.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact Eric Blanchette, Child Care Program Manager in our Atlanta Regional Office at [Eric.Blanchette@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Eric.Blanchette@acf.hhs.gov) and/or 404-552-2782.

We appreciate your efforts to meet the childcare needs of eligible families in Tennessee and look forward to our continued partnership in the administration of your Child Care and Development Fund Program.

Sincerely,

Ellen C. Wheatley, Ph.D.  
Deputy Director  
Office of Child Care

cc: Jude White, Assistant Commissioner  
Eric Blanchette, OCC Regional Program Manager, Region IV  
Francesca Longo, Regional Liaison, Office of Child Care