Program Issue: President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency as of March 1, 2020, and on March 10, 2020 Governor Ned Lamont declared civil preparedness and public health emergencies in Connecticut due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. In response to these declarations and to support the State’s emergency response and the child care field, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) will enact temporary program changes to the state child care subsidy program, Care 4 Kids, for the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergencies in Connecticut.

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting Connecticut families and child care providers. Governor Lamont’s Executive Order No. 7T provides authority to make modifications to the Office of Early Childhood’s statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements. Under that authority, the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies cited below, and any related policies, requirements, and business processes are temporarily modified as outlined below for the duration of the state of emergency in Connecticut, or until otherwise modified sooner.

Directive: The Care 4 Kids program shall make the following program changes effective March 1, 2020, until the end of the civil preparedness and public health emergencies in Connecticut, unless modified sooner. All related Care 4 Kids case notes must indicate the COVID-19 procedure was followed:

A. Redetermination
   a. When redetermination forms are submitted and the family is determined to be eligible, the redetermination will be processed to grant 12 months of eligibility. Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-18 (b).
   b. Redeterminations submitted for eligibility effective March 1, 2020, April 1, 2020, and May 1, 2020, payment certificates will be extended for three months, except for redeterminations that are processed pursuant to subsection (a) above. Regs. Conn. State Agencies §§ 17b-749-09 (g)(4), 17b-749-14 (c)(4)(C), 17b-749-18 (b)(1).
   c. Redeterminations received in April or May that result in a determination of ineligible, will still receive an additional three months of payment eligibility, unless household income exceeds 85% of the SMI level or there is no child in the household. Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-18 (b).

B. Job Loss
   a. If a parent reports losing their job due to COVID-19, they will remain eligible for Care 4 Kids through the end of their eligibility. Regs. Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-04 (e).
b. Family fee will be reduced based on household income and a new certificate will be issued for the remainder of the eligibility period. Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-13 (f).

C. Provider

a. The parent will not be responsible for the first 20 hours of care if they are using a new provider because their previous provider is closed due to COVID-19. Regs. Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-16 (a) (5).
b. Invoices will be processed and paid based on enrollment as submitted by providers and each month a reconciliation activity will be performed by issuing a manual payment to ensure providers are paid no less than the amount paid for March enrollments. Regs. Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-15 (b) (1).
c. Parents that are reporting a new provider, will have their previous certificate cancelled and a new one issued listing the new provider to ensure that no two providers are receiving payment for same child.
d. If children are not in care with their provider, or an alternate temporary provider, and plan to resume care with the provider indicated on the Child Care Certificate, the following shall occur:
   i. The certificate shall remain intact through the end of their eligibility period, or the end of the civil preparedness and public health emergencies in Connecticut, whichever is sooner; and
   ii. Providers shall submit the actual charge (any amount, including $0) for those children on their invoice.
   iii. For redeterminations due in March, April or May, the changes outlined in Section A above shall be followed.
e. There will not be a limit on the number of hours that may be approved for the same provider and/or an alternate temporary provider. Regs. Conn State Agencies § 17b-749-14 (a) (2), 17b-749-16 (a) (1), (2), (3), (5), (6), (8).

D. Home-based (licensed family child care and unlicensed relative) Health and Safety Orientation requirement:

a. The health and safety in-person pre-service Provider Orientation Program (POP), and the completion of First Aid, CPR and Medication Administration certifications for all home-based providers will be waived until the end of declared emergency. C4K-POL-14-06 & C4K-POL-18-01.
b. Home-base providers will be required to complete these orientation and training requirements after the declared state of emergency has ended.

E. Fingerprint-based background checks:

a. Care 4 Kids child care providers who are unable to access fingerprinting services for the purpose of any OEC background check shall not be required to submit fingerprints. Any such background check shall be processed without a fingerprint based criminal history records check. The submission of fingerprints will be required when the civil preparedness and public health emergencies in Connecticut are no longer in effect. Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 17b-749-12 (e).

Questions concerning this transmittal can be referred to Office of Early Childhood at 860-500-4421.

HF:ct