



Mississippi's Response to COVID-19: Child Care Actions

Fact Sheet | January 2021

On March 27, 2020, the CARES Act was signed into law, including \$3.5 billion in supplemental appropriations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. This funding represents a 60% increase in total discretionary appropriations for fiscal year 2020, which amounts to \$9.326 billion. States were given broad flexibility for how to use this funding and have therefore taken a variety of approaches to help address needs of working families and providers through COVID-19. However, as the funds ran out during the ongoing crisis, many states began pulling from other sources to continue supporting parents and providers alike. This fact sheet explains the actions Mississippi took to support the child care industry and working parents through 2020.

Mississippi received \$47 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act. The state used these funds to cover child care costs for essential workers and to pay subsidies and copayments to providers based on enrollment, rather than attendance, regardless of operating status, through July.

Parents who qualified as “priority population” were eligible to receive an emergency subsidy certificate regardless of family income. These certificates covered the full cost of care as well as parent copays being waived. Parents already receiving child care subsidies who experienced a job loss or could not meet school or work requirements due to COVID-19 were eligible for the subsidy program as well.

Through May, the state subsidized providers based on enrollment, rather than attendance as long as the enrolled child had attended at least one day during the first month of the declared emergency. Additionally, providers received the full subsidy amount.

The state also provided all licensed and registered child care providers with an opportunity to request health and safety supplies at no cost. A webinar was conducted by state officials for child care providers regarding the financial support available to them outside of the state’s subsidy program, including the Paycheck Protection Program and expanded unemployment insurance.

Furthermore, the state created the Childcare Crisis Assistance in Isolation Response, or CCAIR Plan, in the

spring. The plan established CCAIR child care sites, a temporary designation for locations that remained open to provide child care for essential workers. Any existing child care providers could be a CCAIR provider, but to serve children with emergency subsidy certificates, facilities were required to complete CCAIR orientation training that was provided online and free of charge.

On July 1, Mississippi announced that it would pay child care subsidy certificates to all providers at an enhanced rate based on enrollment. On August 1, only providers who were open and serving children received these payments. This policy was extended through December 31. Mississippi also covered all family copayments for providers who were open and serving children through December 31. Providers who were temporarily closed due to COVID-19 conditions were eligible for continuation of payment during the closure.

In August, the state offered one-time payments to providers based on provider type and capacity, available through November.

In September, Mississippi State Department of Health announced that child care workers could receive free COVID-19 testing.

At the time of publication, the state had not announced additional plans to support child care providers, or families with school-aged children struggling with remote learning, into 2021.