



Ohio'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 Ohio took to support the child care industry and working parents through 2020.

Ohio received \$117 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act.

The state used these funds to create a Temporary Pandemic Child Care Program, a short-term license for child care providers to stay open for parents working on the frontlines of the crisis. Providers—both centers and homes—that remained open were asked to prioritize care for the children of medical professionals. The state kept a list of approved providers, searchable on the state's Department of Jobs and Family Services website. Child care workers employed in pandemic programs were also considered essential and were eligible to send their children to such temporary programs. Payments were made on a weekly basis and were determined based on the provider's quality rating and the number and ages of enrolled children. Additionally, programs were not permitted to charge families additional copayments or fees.

To help child care providers reopen, in May, the state announced a \$60 million grant program that offered financial assistance in two ways. First, the program offered a monthly payment to licensed child care providers to cover the costs of materials such as thermometers, personal protective equipment, and cleaning supplies that programs needed to purchase to follow enhanced health and safety protocols. Grant amounts ranged from \$500 to \$6,000.

Second, the state offered a Ratio Support Payment intended to support licensed providers open for at least

two weeks as they experienced variable attendance during the reopening stages. The state calculated these grant amounts based on the provider's private and subsidized enrollment, ranging from \$273 to \$22,820 per month. Funds could be used on any operating expenses, cleaning supplies, and payroll costs. Applications were open June 14 through June 21, and payments were processed the week of June 22. The state explained that grant distribution patterns in June were used to inform the funding structure for July. The state has also published guidance indicating that providers may receive subsidy payments based on attendance for school-age care provided during virtual school hours.

Effective August 9, Ohio's child care providers were permitted to return to normal group sizes and staff-child ratios. The state also extended its Ratio Support Grant through September. Providers could receive a monthly grant ranging from \$273 to \$12,503 per month based on the number of children they served during the month and their quality star rating.

During the months of March, April, and May, the state continued to pay subsidies to closed providers based on pre-pandemic enrollment. This practice ended on May 31, and from June through December, open providers were only be able to bill for 20 absent days per child.

During the fall, the state did not offer any further grant assistance for child care or school-age care providers. At the time of publication, the state had yet to announce future plans to support providers into 2021.