



ODJFS Updates Director's Forum February 3, 2022

- **Well Wishes, Appreciation, and Thank You**-We hope all of you, your families, staff, and parents/children you serve are well. Our thoughts and prayers are with all during this VERY challenging time. We sincerely appreciate all the early childhood educators and school age professionals for their passion, dedication, and commitment to helping children learn and develop. EXTRA special thank you for the programs who are caring for children in the midst of the COVID19 challenge. Our families and community would not survive without you and the care you are courageous enough to provide.
- **Update Overview**-We will share a few licensing/SUTQ updates. Typically, time does not allow for us to take questions during the forum however, please forward questions to Alma/Latoria/Angie. We will include answers in our meeting follow up that we share within 7-10 days from the forum meeting date. We will also include links to documents/information we share today in our follow-up.
- **Child Care Stabilization Grants**- As a result of funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has established several child care stabilization sub-grant opportunities. A [manual procedure letter](#) outlining these sub-grant opportunities is available in the [eManual](#). These sub-grants are available for ODJFS regulated child care centers, family child care (FCC) type A and type B homes, in-home aides (IHA), and approved day camps, as well as Ohio Department of Education (ODE) licensed preschool (PS) and school-age (SA) programs that are approved to provide publicly funded child care (PFCC). The three sub-grant opportunities are Operating/New Pandemic Costs, Workforce Recruitment/Retention and Access Development. Each is based on program eligibility. Applications for these opportunities will be accessed in the Ohio Professional Registry beginning December 1, 2021. A copy of the application will soon be available on the [Provider Pandemic webpage](#). Programs can use the paper application prepare information needed for submission of the automated application in the Ohio Professional Registry when the application becomes available. Paper applications will not be accepted. Please contact OCCRRA with questions about these stabilization sub-grants at support@occrra.org or 1-877-547-6978. **Please reference the attached manual procedure letters for more information.**
- **Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services**- The Administration for Children and Families is partnering with CMS to help the early childhood workforce access health coverage during the Open Enrollment period for Marketplace coverage, which started on November 1. Starting on November 14th, the Week of Action will raise awareness among the early childhood workforce about how to access health coverage and connect with navigators and assisters. It is important to ensure that every early childhood educator has access to affordable health care coverage, particularly those who are on the front lines serving children, families, and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we know that the early childhood workforce is two times less likely to have health care coverage or to receive employer-sponsored health care coverage than the general population. Benefits are a critical piece of compensation, and as we continue to work to improve compensation for the workforce, it is essential to include health care coverage. The Early Childhood Educators Fact Sheet in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) are useful tools to inform the workforce about this health coverage. For more information on how to access health coverage and connect with

navigators and assisters visit [Get Healthcare Coverage, Health Insurance Marketplace® | HealthCare.gov](#).

- **Communicable Disease Charts**-The chart has been updated and now available for ordering from forms central. Please note at this is a change from what was shared on the day of the forum meeting.
- **Old World New World**- Both the Family Child Care and Child Care Center chapters were five-year rule revisions and, as a result, included numerous changes. **Please review the attached Technical Assistance document for each chapter outlining some of the changes as well as a list of forms.** The rules should still be reviewed by programs, as the documents do not include all rule changes. The Manual Transmittal Letter for each rule package includes a detailed summary of what changed in each rule as well.
- **Systems Guides**- ODJFS is working on updating all systems guides to reflect the new rules. They should be on the website very soon.
- **Serious Incident Injury Reports**- Communication sent to ensure program report information as required. When entering the serious incident please ensure the following information is included:
 - The number of children who received a positive COVID-19 test and the last day the children were in care. Please do not include any children who had been previously reported or any children who were placed in quarantine.
 - Indicate the ages of the children who tested positive by checking the boxes for either Infant, Toddler, Preschool or School-Age.
 - The number of staff who received a positive COVID-19 test and the last day the staff member was present at the program. Please do not include any staff who had previously been reported or any staff who were placed in quarantine.

A serious incident should not be submitted to report a positive COVID-19 case for the following:

- A child's parent or family member who has tested positive and is not an employee of the program.
- Someone who is not a resident and or employee of the home for type A, type B or In-Home Aide providers.

If you have any questions with regard to entering a serious incident in OCLQS, please contact the Child Care Help Desk at 1-877-302-2347, option 1.

- **Temporary Closure**-Programs are not required to enter a temporary closure in OCLQS if they are closing for a short period of time due to guidance received from the health department, closure for deep cleaning/sanitizing, or due to temporary issues related to child attendance/staff availability. Please contact your assigned specialist to determine if a temporary closure in OCLQS is required based on your circumstances. Temporary closure are typically for programs that will closed of an extended period of time.

- **Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)-** We need your input! The Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness has released draft revised [Early Learning and Development Standards](#). The draft standards represent collaborative efforts of more than 150 early care and education providers, technical assistance providers, content experts, state agency staff and other stakeholders. The standards are open for public comment through **February 18, 2022**. The public comment survey is an opportunity for early childhood professionals, families, community members and other stakeholders to review the drafts and provide feedback. Additional revisions will be made to the standards, if necessary, depending on the feedback we receive. **Please review the attached email received from Ohio Department of Health for more information.**
- **Ohio Department of Health Ohio Approved Trainings-** The Ohio Department of Health, in partnership with many state and local organizations, has created three new Ohio Approved courses. The courses are:
 - Early Childhood Health: Making Referrals in Early Childhood Settings
 - Early Childhood Health: Sickle Cell Disease in the Childcare Setting
 - Early Childhood Health: Tobacco Effects in Early Care Settings

The courses are offered free of charge and can be found by registering through [OhioTRAIN](#). To receive Ohio Approved credit, individuals need to register for the course in the Ohio Professional Registry, (OPR), then register again in [OhioTRAIN](#) to access the online content and complete the course. For a listing of trainings available and for instructions on how to register and obtain Ohio Approved credit, please visit the Ohio Department of Health's [Early Childhood Health and Safety](#) page.

- **Step Up to Quality Program Improvements-**On January 12, 2022, Director Matt Damschroder announced improvements to the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) program. These changes are a result of Governor Mike DeWine vetoing a temporary suspension in Amended Sub. House Bill 169 in December. The goal is to reduce the administrative burden on programs who participate in SUTQ. Please see the attached News Release.

There are three key improvements to SUTQ including:

1. Reducing paperwork for programs without diminishing the integrity of SUTQ
2. Discontinue the rating renewal process and making SUTQ a continuous rating
3. A Pre-Star designation for programs who are provisionally licensed

ODJFS is working with the Ohio Department of Education to implement these changes as quickly as possible. Programs will be notified when these changes have been completed. **Please review the attached news release for more information.**

- **Rating Reduction and Removal Guidelines Updated-** The Moderate and Serious Risk Non-Compliance Reduction and Removal Guidelines for Step Up To Quality for [Family Child Care](#) and [Child Care Centers](#) TA Letters were updated to reflect rule changes effective October 29, 2021. They are available on the [Child Care TA letters webpage](#).

- **COVID Reminders-** The COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for children ages 5-11 years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information available on the [COVID-19 vaccination for children 5 through 11 year old](#). The Ohio Department of Health has created an [FAQ document](#) for parents and guardians of children eligible for the Pfizer pediatric COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 prevention strategies for our children and child care staff members remain critical to protect those who are not fully vaccinated. Programs are encouraged to continue to use a layered COVID-19 prevention strategy that includes wearing a mask, regular cleaning and sanitizing routines, staying home when ill, and physical distancing. For more information on prevention strategies, visit the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Ohio continues to offer COVID-19 vaccinations. The best thing you can do to fight COVID-19 is to protect yourself, your family, & your community! Visit [Ohio Department of Health](#) to book your appointment.
- **Vaccine Reminders-** it is important to ensure everyone's safety against COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine or booster helps to protect your friends and your whole family. It also helps to slow the spread of COVID-19 within your community. According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), getting a vaccine, which is available for those who are 5 years of age and older, can help:
 - Protect family members, including siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and family members who may be at increased risk of getting very sick if they are infected
 - Keep children from getting seriously sick even if they do get COVID-19.

As you are aware, COVID-19 cases are on the rise. You are encouraged to continue to provide vaccine and vaccine booster information to staff and families. Individuals may be vaccinated at their local health department, pediatrician, family physician, community health center, adult and children's hospitals, as well as at pharmacies.

Staff and parents are strongly encouraged to contact their health care provider to learn about vaccination opportunities or they can visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov to find a provider, make an appointment, and for additional resources. For frequently asked questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 – 11 visit [FAQ: COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5-11 | COVID-19 \(ohio.gov\)](#). Additionally, the CDC guidance for [Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs](#) was updated November 10, 2021 and [Omicron Variant information](#) was added on December 19, 2021.

Lastly, the CDC has updated their [COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs \(cdc.gov\)](#). Programs are encouraged to continue to follow COVID-19 guidance from the CDC and the [Ohio Department of Health](#).

- **Quarantine Updates**-The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) issued a News Release informing that ODH has aligned their guidance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for COVID-19 quarantine and isolation for schools. Child care programs are encouraged to follow this same guidance. The JFS 08087 Communicable Disease Chart has been updated and includes information for COVID-19. Please note that the Quarantine section specifically states to quarantine for 14 days **OR** until the local health department says they may return to school. This guidance aligns with the ODH guidance. Additionally, the chart includes COVID-19 reporting requirements to your local health department. Lastly, rules state that when a communicable disease is required to be reported to the local health department, that ODJFS must also be notified by the end of the next business day. Positive COVID-19 cases for a provider, family child care resident, staff and or children should be reported to ODJFS as a serious incident in OCLQS.
- **Updated Guidance Documents, Rules, FAQ's, and Resources**-The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) issued a News Release informing that ODH has aligned their guidance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for COVID-19 quarantine and isolation for schools. Child care programs are encouraged to follow this same guidance. Please review the attached documents for more information.
- Very critical time, be sure to carefully review information, updates, and resources.
- Be healthy, safe, and take care 😊