ATTENTION!
CHILD CARE STABILIZATION SUB-GRANT APPLICATION IS OPEN!

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is excited to announce that the Child Care Stabilization Sub-Grant application is OPEN in the Ohio Professional Registry.

As a result of funding received through the federal American Rescue Plan Act, ODJFS has established several Child Care Stabilization Sub-Grant opportunities. A manual procedure letter outlining these opportunities is available on the Provider Pandemic Child Care Information page. These sub-grants are available for ODJFS regulated child care centers, family child care Type A and Type B homes, in-home aides, and approved day camps, as well as preschool and school-age programs licensed by the Ohio Department of Education approved to provide publicly funded child care (PFCC).

A copy of the application is available on the “Provider Pandemic Child Care Information” webpage on the ODJFS website. Programs may use the paper application to prepare information needed for submission of the automated application in the Ohio Professional Registry. Paper applications will not be accepted.

For further guidance, please visit occrra.org, email support@occrra.org, or call 1-877-547-6978.

Policy Updates
The following have been updated:

- Child Care Rules – Visit jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/rules_forms.stm
- Crosswalk between previous and revised child care center and family child care home rules. These documents include a list of all revised forms available in Forms Central.
- The updated JFS 08087, “Communicable Disease Chart,” is now available to order through Forms Central.

As a result of rules changes, several technical assistance documents have been updated. Below are links to the updated Step Up To Quality Reduction and Removal Technical Assistance documents:

- Provider Technical Assistance Letter 11 Step Up To Quality Rating Reduction and Removal Guidelines for Child Care Centers
- Provider Technical Assistance Letter 12 Step Up To Quality Rating Reduction and Removal Guidelines for Family Child Care

BRRRRR…. IT’S GETTING COLD OUTSIDE!
As we transition to colder months and begin heading outside for wintertime fun, let’s make sure the children are dressed right for a change in weather. The American Academy of Pediatrics provides Tips to Keep Kids Warm All Winter, as well as resources for cold weather safety. Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent injury. Children exposed to extreme cold for too long and without warm, dry, breathable clothing can get frostbite or even life-threatening hypothermia.

OHIO EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE – SAVE THE DATE!
The 2022 Early Childhood Conference, sponsored by the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children, will be held virtually this year and is scheduled for April 28-30, 2022. For more information, visit oaeyc.org.
We have exciting news to share about PFCC eligibility. Ohio is one step closer to integrating PFCC eligibility into the Ohio Benefits system, which Ohioans currently use to apply for cash, food, and Medicaid benefits. Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 5101:2-16 is being revised to accommodate this system integration.

Five pilot counties – Allen, Athens, Butler, Hamilton, and Medina – will begin using the Ohio Benefits system for new PFCC applications in late February 2022. This means that any family that resides in one of the pilot counties who is applying for PFCC for the first time will use the Ohio Benefits system to apply. Families that prefer to use a paper application must use the JFS 07200, “Application for Cash, Food, Medical or Child Care Assistance,” paper application.

What does this mean for programs that provide child care services for PFCC and families?

Programs that provide PFCC services should not see a change. Notification of eligibility will remain available to programs in KinderConnect. Eligibility notices for families will have an updated look, but they will contain the same information. If your program helps families apply for PFCC, and the family resides in a pilot county, beginning in February 2022, they will need to apply using Ohio Benefits or the JFS 07200, “Application for Cash, Food, Medical or Child Care Assistance,” paper application.

What does this mean for families seeking PFCC?

Currently, families may complete an online application for PFCC via the self-service portal. Once their county is active in Ohio Benefits, families will have more resources available to them, such as the ability to apply, reapply, and report changes for their PFCC eligibility. Families that already have active accounts in Ohio Benefits for other programs will be able to add PFCC benefits to their existing accounts. This will allow them to access all their benefit information in one location.

FLU SEASON

Seasonal flu cases can be found year-round in the United States, but fall and winter are the most common times for flu viruses. Flu season is different every year, and it is impossible to know when it will start. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu activity tends to increase in October and peak between December and February. Do you have a plan for reducing the spread of illness in your program and for when to exclude ill children or staff from child care? Click here for cold and flu resources for families and providers.

COVID-19

COVID-19 cases are increasing in Ohio. Encourage staff to get vaccinated, or to get their booster. Remind families that the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for children ages 5-11. Visit the Provider Pandemic Child Care Information page for COVID-19 resources. Staff can contact their health care provider to learn about vaccination opportunities or they can visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov/ to find a provider or make an appointment.

### Brain Building for Child Care Programs

Babies are born ready to learn. The links below can help families and caregivers provide developmentally appropriate brain builders by turning everyday moments into teachable moments. They can empower parents and caregivers to play a proactive role in their children’s early brain development.

- Family Engagement
- Early Childhood Classrooms
- Professional Development

### OHIO BENEFITS AND PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE (PFCC) NEWS

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Families that have already been determined eligible for PFCC and that have active PFCC cases will be added to the new system in two phases. Those in the pilot counties will be added to Ohio Benefits in April 2022. Those in the remaining 83 counties will be added to Ohio Benefits in June 2022.
CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

Lead is a metal that occurs naturally in the environment. Although lead can be found in small amounts in the earth’s crust, most of it comes from human activities such as manufacturing and mining. Children can be exposed to lead in many ways, but most exposure happens when children put things into their mouths while playing. Even small amounts of lead can cause learning and behavior problems in children. There are several resources for programs and families on the ODJFS Child Care website, including:

- **Parent Resources** (under “Basic Needs and Medical Resources” on the “Families” page)
- **National Center for Healthy Housing Lead-Safety Toolkit for Home-Based Child Care** (under “Health and Safety” on the “Programs” page)
- **Children’s Environmental Health Network Lead-Safe Toolkit for Child Care** (under “Health and Safety” on the “Programs” page)
- **Lead Hazards in Substitute Care Settings** (under “Health and Safety” on the “Programs” page)
- **Ohio Choose Safe Places** (under “Health and Safety” on the “Programs” page)

Lead exposure can also occur through aging lead pipes. Ohio is working with child care programs to ensure clean, safe drinking water.

On June 28, 2021, Governor Mike DeWine announced a [new H2Ohio project](#) targeting the removal and replacement of aging lead pipes in Cleveland. This project is in addition to a similar project offered by Greater Cincinnati Water Works. If contacted about these initiatives, programs are encouraged to participate.

INTERESTING FUN FACTS

**January is International Creativity Month.**

Child care providers can support and encourage children’s creativity by giving them plenty of time, materials, and space for play. Be certain you are allowing them to lead the activity and use descriptive praise to boost their confidence. Look around your program, gather household items, recycled objects, and natural materials to get the creative juices flowing!

**February is Black History Month.**

Children of all ages notice physical differences like skin color. Children are never too young to learn about the beauty of human differences. For infants and toddlers, this can mean offering board books that include diverse characters, or representing diversity through dolls, toys, and music from a wide variety of musicians. For more ideas, explore the [National Museum of African American History’s Early Childhood Education](#) page.

**March is the first month of spring!**

Embrace the new season by incorporating more outdoor activities. The best learning is spontaneous learning. The next time you look out the window or take a walk, try identifying signs of spring together, focusing on the colors, sounds, smells, and sights all around. With infants and toddlers, let them take charge. Allow them to explore their surroundings freely and safely. Rain puddles, snow melting, flowers blooming, and birds nesting all make great things to explore. Have fun!
CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS:
DID YOU KNOW?
More and more children ages 5-11 are getting the COVID-19 vaccine since the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration gave final authorization of the pediatric dose. The CDC has issued guidance about COVID-19 vaccination for children 5-11 years of age.

Children may be vaccinated at many types of locations, including local health departments, pediatricians, family physicians, community health centers, adult and children’s hospitals, and pharmacies. Parents should contact their medical provider to learn about vaccination opportunities or visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov to find a location or make an appointment.

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- Parent Resources:
  odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/childhood-lead-poisoning/for-parents/

- Childhood Lead Poisoning:
  odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/childhood-lead-poisoning

For more information, call 1-877-LEADSAFE (532-3723) or email lead@odh.ohio.gov

Ready to start the process to become rated?
Visit boldbeginning.ohio.gov for Step Up To Quality resources or contact your child care licensing specialist today!