OHIO BENEFITS AND PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE (PFCC) UPDATES

Ohio has successfully integrated PFCC eligibility into the Ohio Benefits system for five pilot counties! As of May 16, 2022, the following five pilot counties are using Ohio Benefits to determine PFCC eligibility for new and ongoing applications: Allen, Athens, Butler, Hamilton, and Medina.

Families that live in one of the five pilot counties may now apply and reapply for ongoing PFCC within Ohio Benefits. Families that have an active Ohio Benefits account for other programs can add PFCC benefits to their existing account. Recertification packets for PFCC benefits will be available to families beginning with July recertifications for the five pilot counties. Families living in one of the five pilot counties may complete their July recertification via their Ohio Benefits account. Additionally, for families that prefer to use the paper recertification application, the Ohio Benefits system will continue to automatically mail the recertification to all families.

Beginning June 13, 2022, all Ohio families wishing to apply for PFCC may complete an initial application using the Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal. The recertification process for the remaining 83 counties will not be added to Ohio Benefits until late summer.

SUMMER LEARNING — TIPS FOR LIVE PERFORMANCES

This summer, get out and enjoy a fun learning opportunity! Live performances are a great introduction into the world of performing arts. Contact your local children’s theatre or performing arts theater for upcoming shows.

Check out these tips to help the children prepare.

Before the visit:

- Call the venue to check if it is age-appropriate and how long the show will last.
- Explain what you will see and hear during the performance.
- Review appropriate audience manners and explain when applause is appropriate.

On the day of the visit:

- Arrive early to explore, use the restroom, and find your seats.
- Recognize that it is ok to leave before the end of the performance. Preschoolers may find even a half-hour event too long.

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 or child care resource and referral agency!
SHARE THE ROOM, NEVER THE BED – THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFE SLEEP

ALONE Babies should always sleep alone and in an empty crib.

BACK Babies should always sleep on their backs.

CRIB An empty crib, with a firm mattress and fitted sheet, is safest.

The goal of safe sleep is to ensure that more babies reach their first birthday. In addition to the ABC’s of Safe Sleep, there are many resources available to help parents and caregivers as they navigate life with a newborn or infant. By following the ABC’s of Safe Sleep parents/caregivers can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). To see what a safe sleep environment looks like, click here. More information is available on the Ohio Department of Health Infant Safe Sleep webpage: Ohio’s Infant Safe Sleep Law.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES YOU SERVE

The Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) offers more programs and services than just those for addiction. Information on topics such as Stress First Aid, Emergency Preparedness, Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health, Transition-aged Youth, and Strong Families Safe Communities, to name a few. Learn more on all topics available at their “Know our Programs and Services” page. Recently Ohio’s Practice and Policy Academy Team made updates to the Healthy Families Handbook to showcase a diverse variety of trainings available to support families impacted by substance use disorder. OhioMHAS encourages professionals that work closely with families to take advantage of these trainings, offered freely through federal, state, and local entities. For more information on this topic and trainings available to you please visit https://mha.ohio.gov/know-our-programs-and-services/healthy-families-handbook.

TEMPORARY WAIVING OF COPAYMENTS FOR PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE (PFCC)

All programs received communication on May 4, 2022, that copayments for families receiving PFCC are temporarily waived as of May 8, 2022. This means providers of publicly funded child care will not be responsible for collecting the assigned copayments from caretakers who are receiving PFCC. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will issue full payments to providers by adding the assigned copayment amount for each family to the final PFCC payment received from ODJFS.

Providers must not require families receiving PFCC to continue to pay the assigned copayments during the waiver period. Providers that continue to collect a copayment may be in direct violation of the signed provider agreement as outlined in the Child Care Manual Procedure Letter No 154. Providers will be notified when the funding for copayment assistance has ended and when they will be responsible for collecting assigned copayments from families receiving PFCC again.

Contact the Child Care Help Desk at 1-877-302-2347, option 4 if you have questions.

Program Text Messages

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services can now send cell phone text messages to early childhood programs with Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQoS) accounts. Text messages may include information about the following:

- Policy changes
- New technical assistance documents
- System desk aids
- Professional development opportunities
- Confirmation of a program’s decision to opt in or cancel text messaging services

You can OPT IN for text messaging through your program’s OCLQoS account. Email will continue to be the primary means of communicating with programs. For guidance on how to use text messaging, visit OCLQoS Licensing Job Aids | Early Learning and Development | Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.
CHILDREN WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Is your program prepared to prevent exposure to known food allergies? Children can be allergic to any food. Certain foods, however, cause 90% of children’s food allergies: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy/soybeans, fish, shellfish, and sesame. Children may be exposed to foods that cause an allergic reaction by tasting, eating, smelling, or touching the food. Most allergic reactions happen when there is an accidental exposure to the allergen. Here are a few tips and resources to help early childhood staff know to safely manage children’s food allergies.

• Know how to identify foods and understand how foods are labeled. For example, milk products may be identified as casein, caseinate, whey, and lactoglobulin. Check out Choosing Safe Foods: How to Read Labels So You Can Avoid Food Allergens.

• Train all staff to identify signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction. An allergic reaction can be mild or severe, and a severe reaction can be life threatening. A child can have a severe reaction to a food even if their previous reactions were mild. Food Allergies: What You Need to Know explains common food allergens and symptoms of a food allergy.

• Communicate with families to create a healthy and safe learning environment for children with food allergies.

CHECK OUT THIS YUMMY SNACK IDEA: CHEESE AND APPLE PIRATE SHIPS

Ingredients
• 1 apple
• 8 to 10 ounces low-fat cheese, such as cheddar, colby-jack, or mozzarella
• 8 to 10 pretzel sticks

Directions
1. Cut apple into 8 to 10 slices.
2. Cut cheese into square or triangle pieces.
3. Put an apple slice on a plate or napkin.
4. Put 1 pretzel stick above the apple slice to make the mast of the ship.
5. Put 1 or 2 cheese slices on top of or next to the pretzel stick to make the sail(s).

Makes 4 to 5 servings

Safety tip: To prevent injuries, an adult should slice the ingredients.

Resources for Providers

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Book Build Connections Toolkit – Early learning resources to help and guide parents and caretakers on the importance of early learning, talking and reading for infants and toddlers.
aap.org/en-us/literacy/Pages/default.aspx

AAP Books Build Connections Toolkit
Day By Day Ohio – Website offers literacy resources daybydayoh.org

Information from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness
PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE (PFCC) COPAYMENTS ARE TEMPORARY WAIVED

Beginning on May 8, 2022, families receiving PFCC with an assigned copayment do not have to pay it. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced that the State of Ohio approved temporary funding to assist families receiving PFCC benefits. ODJFS will pay providers the copayment on behalf of the family. Families and providers will be notified when the funding has ended and when families will be responsible for paying the assigned copayment once again.

OTHER RESOURCES

Food Assistance by County - ohiofoodbanks.org/get-help

Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies - Provides monetary and non-monetary assistance for individuals and families oacaa.org/find-an-agency/

Explore Ohio - Ohio.org

Literacy Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Book Build Connections Toolkit – Early learning resources to help and guide parents and caretakers on the importance of early learning, talking and reading for infants and toddlers.

aap.org/en-us/literacy/Pages/default.aspx

AAP Books Build Connections Toolkit

Day By Day Ohio – Website offers literacy resources daybydayoh.org

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is available to all children in Ohio from birth to age 5.

https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/

See the information letter from First Lady Fran DeWine for more details.

Maternal Mental Health Hotline

This hotline is confidential and toll-free and is designed for expecting and new moms experiencing mental health challenges. Moms can call or text the hotline to connect with a counselor at no charge.