

EES Policy No. 20-03-02	<b>RE: Emergency Child Care Provisions for COVID-19 Pandemic Related Needs</b>
<b>Policy Memo</b>	<b>Contact Persons: Sally Hargis</b>
<b>From:</b> Sandra Kimmons	<b>KEESM Reference:</b> 7600, 10200, 10260
<b>Date:</b> March 24, 2020	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Primary DCF Areas Affected:</b> EES	<b>Where Posted on Web:</b> <a href="http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Policy_Memo/policy_memo_list.htm">http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Policy_Memo/policy_memo_list.htm</a>

Due to the recent declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools are temporarily closing effective immediately, some with no date yet planned to reopen. A number of child care centers and home providers are also closing temporarily due to this declaration. With the parent(s) of many of these children still needing to work, and some being required to work additional hours, this leaves many families in a crisis situation regarding child care. To help alleviate this problem, the child care assistance program is temporarily authorizing the following changes to the child care program:

1. **Additional benefits.** Upon request, families with current child care plans will have all child care plans for their children reevaluated to provide child care assistance for additional hours needed while those parents are working. The same considerations of parent schedules that would normally be used are to be used when determining the need for additional benefits. Additional hours/benefits shall not be authorized to duplicate benefits for any hours that have already been issued. Plans written with the original provider must be ended and new plans written with the new provider. Keep in mind that many parents who must work during this time will need extra hours above and beyond their normal working hours. Staff will use the best available information/prudent person to verify the need for these changes and will not require families to provide additional verifications. At this time, these additional benefits will be provided for the identified cases through the month of July 2020. Additional benefits for this period may be authorized back to the date the child's regular provider closed temporarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided that the family makes the request for additional benefits by the end of the second month following the month their provider temporarily closed for this reason. For example, if their regular provider closed temporarily on March 13<sup>th</sup>, the family would need to make the request for additional benefits by May 31<sup>st</sup>. If the family requests additional benefits for March, only those hours for which benefits have not already been authorized may be considered. Instructions for the process of making these additional payments will be sent separately.
2. **Child Care Reviews.** Child care cases with reviews due to be completed in March, April, May and June of 2020 will be approved at the current level for an additional 12-month eligibility period

regardless of whether or not the family has submitted a review application or completed the review process. If the family reports a need for additional hours or an income decrease that would decrease the family share deduction, those changes will still be acted on. March and April reviews have already been sent out in KEES, but an attempt will be made to continue April benefits for all cases with a review due and suppress the review mailing for May and June reviews, and to automate the authorization of a new 12-month eligibility period. For March reviews, staff will process any review received, authorizing a new 12-month eligibility period at the previous level. Working from the report of reviews due, for those cases in which a review application is not received, staff will need to register a “fake” review and clearly document the reason for doing this. They will then authorize a new 12-month eligibility period for the family based on the eligibility period that is ending. If the family has provided information that would increase their hours of care or decrease their family share deduction, that new information would be used. Staff will use prudent person to verify this information. Otherwise, the information from the existing 12-month eligibility period will be used. When information is available about how April, May and June reviews will be processed, notification will be sent to the regions.

3. **Child Care Closures.** Effective immediately, child care cases are not to be closed or plans ended for any reason other than the client’s request, if the household’s regular income goes over 85% of SMI or if it is known to the agency that the child is no longer in the home. This will continue through the month of June 2020 and includes postponing the closure of cases for non-cooperation penalties with Child Support Services, out of state usage, parents temporarily not using care due to pandemic concerns while the provider remains open and failure to provide requested information/verification. This will also include situations in which any current recipient family’s income goes over 85% of SMI due to working overtime or extended hours to address work/staffing issues due to the COVID-19 Pandemic disaster. This additional income is not countable, as it is not expected to continue and does not reflect their normal earnings. Therefore, that income is not representative. See KEESM 7110 for prospective budgeting.

**Note:** Just a reminder - parents who have been temporarily laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are expected to return to their same job are considered to be experiencing a temporary change that does not affect eligibility for child care. See KEESM 7640, item #1.

This memo replaces policy memo 20-03-02 that was issued on March 16, 2020 and was revised due to guidance received from the Office of Child Care regarding duplication of benefits.