

EES Policy No. 20-08-08	RE: September 2020 CC for School Age Children and Hero Relief Program Phase II: Child Care for Parents Performing Essential Functions for COVID-19
Policy Memo	Contact Persons: Sally Hargis
From: Sandra Kimmons	KEESM Reference: 2835 & 2831
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September 2020 Child Care for School Age Children

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most Kansas schools are not starting their new school year as early as they usually do. For many working parents, this is creating an increase in their child care expenses for August and possibly September. To assist with that increased expense, DCF is issuing an extra child care benefit to families with school age children for the month of September. The extra September child care benefit for each family with school age children will be the difference between the usual September benefit and the August (summer month) benefit and is intended to assist families with the additional child care costs created by the delay in school start dates for this school year. The extra benefit will be automated in KEES for existing child care plans, and a notice will be sent to families when the extra September benefit is issued. That benefit should be in their EBT card account by the time they receive the notice. A journal entry will be made in KEES to document the extra September benefit for each case that receives it. The extra benefit will be visible to EES staff in the issuance history.

When approving new applications received during September, the extra benefit will need to be calculated manually and prorated. Since no August benefit was received, the extra benefit will be calculated using the hours determined in the 12-month plan for August of 2021. A worksheet has been developed to assist with the calculation of the prorated September hours for these applications. For applications being approved for the Hero Relief program, EES workers will need to first look at the August 2021 hours calculated in KEES in the 12-month plan for use with this worksheet BEFORE shortening the eligibility period to six months as required for the program. For example, a family with a school age child applies on September 15, 2020. They are approved for child care and September is calculated based on the child's regular school schedule, which results in a September benefit that is approved for 45 hours for the month. KEES calculates a need for 215 hours for the month of August 2021. Using the worksheet, the worker will enter the August 2021 hours of 215 and the application date of 9/15/20, returning 115 hours as the prorated amount. The worker will then override the

September hours on the Child Care Plan (not the Family Plan) using 115 to authorize the benefit for the family.

For applications that were received in August but not processed prior to the extra benefit being issued in KEES, the extra benefit will not be automatically issued by the system. When approving these applications, EES staff will need to set up the 12-month eligibility period and override the September 2020 hours using the hours that KEES has calculated for July 2021.

Because KEES is using the August 2020 benefit issued to calculate the extra September benefit, families with school age children who applied and were approved for a pro-rated benefit in August 2020 will need to have their cases reviewed to determine an additional benefit amount to be issued to bring the total September benefit amount for each school age child up to the amount that would have been received in August if the benefit had not been prorated. A cleanup report will be generated for this purpose and worked by the Foster Care Child Care unit.

Child Care Assistance for School Age Children during Virtual Learning Times

Families receiving Child Care Assistance will already receive additional benefits in September, as described above. For months after September, families may receive additional hours, if needed, to cover the time that the child is doing virtual learning with an instructor who is not the child care provider. Some children may be attending the child care provider full time and others may be on a hybrid schedule and only be with the child care provider some days during the week. Child Care Assistance is not provided for the hours of regular school operation for children who are home schooled. A form has been developed to assist families in reporting extra hours of child care needed and will be made available through many child care providers as well as the Kansas Quality Network website. That form may be found at the following link:

http://www.dcf.ks.gov/COVID19/Documents/Child_2020_School_Schedule_Form.pdf

Families may also report extra hours needed through the SSP or other normal reporting options. EES will use the client's statement related to their child's school schedule and will only verify it if questionable. If a family reports a need for increased hours of care for a school age child that is related to COVID-19 pandemic school schedule changes, the change will be made effective with the month it is reported and must be logged as a COVID-19 related change.

Hero Relief Program Phase II

Effective September 1, 2020, the Hero Relief Program outlined in Policy Memo No. 20-03-04 is being expanded to include another group of essential workers who may be eligible for child care assistance if they meet the other program eligibility criteria. The new group includes educators and other essential school workers as described below.

This change is being made to assist with the child care expenses of eligible essential school workers who are employed by public or private schools who must now return to work in/for Kansas schools during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. As with the workers originally listed in EES Policy Memo No. 20-03-04, eligibility for these workers will be determined using the following guidelines:

1. **Eligible Essential Staff.** Due to limited funds, the decision has been made to restrict eligibility to medical professionals, healthcare workers and other essential medical staff in various settings including

hospitals, outpatient services, nursing and other care facilities, first responders, food and agriculture workers, judicial branch (essential services), National Guard, frontline child and adult protection specialists, child care providers caring for children of eligible workers listed, and school workers as described below. Reasonable verification of the parent's employment in one of these settings is required. Minimum work requirements are applicable to this program. See flag instructions below if an application must be denied for failure to meet the minimum work requirements. In a two-adult household, only one must qualify as an essential worker as defined below for the household to qualify for child care through the Hero Relief Program. Normal child care scheduling rules for these households will apply when determining hours of care needed.

2. **Income Limit.** Due to limited funds, the decision has been made to restrict eligibility to families who have countable income of 250% FPL or less. **This income determination will need to be made off the system using Appendix worksheet W-14.** It is not necessary to enter income in the system.
3. **Eligibility Period.** These plans will remain open and eligible for 6 months. The review will need shortened to 6 months. If a family who is currently eligible for child care and meets the definition of eligible essential staff contacts the agency and provides verification of their status, their current child care plan will be ended with the current month, and a new Hero Relief Program plan for child care written for 6 months with a social service need reason. The review due month in KEES will need to be changed to match the end of the 6-month period.

All families applying for the Hero Relief Program will use the regular application form ES-3100. There is no place on the application for them to indicate that they are applying for this specific type of child care. EES staff will need to screen each application for child care that they are working on. Based on the place of employment listed and/or employment verifications provided, the prudent person concept will need to be used to make this determination. It may be necessary to contact applicants if EES staff have questions about this. If there are questions, decisions regarding whether or not someone qualifies as an essential worker will be made by the region's EES PA or APA. **Note that the adults in families applying for this assistance must be working.** However, if they should temporarily stop working after approval, eligibility will continue through the 6-month eligibility period.

As with other child care cases with a social service need, no family share deduction is assigned to these families.

Families who qualify for the Hero Relief Program will not be required to cooperate with Child Support Services. In KEES, EES staff will add the following note to the referral: "CC-COVID" to indicate that the referral should not be processed. In addition, the non-custodial parent must be listed as unknown. If qualified, EES staff will approve the application even if there is an existing non-cooperation penalty that has not been resolved.

If a family who qualifies for the Hero Relief Program is using a provider who is not currently enrolled with DCF and they want to become enrolled, EES staff must note on the referral to provider enrollment that this provider will provide care for a family who qualifies for the Hero Relief Program.

All cases receiving child care through the Hero Relief Program must be flagged in KEES using the "Child Care-COVID-19" flag. The processing date will be the begin date and the end of the 6-month plan will be the end

date for the flag. This flag must also be used for any case that is denied due to not meeting the 20 hour per week work requirement. The negative action reason “Failed 28 Hr Work Req” will be used to deny the application. The worker will need to append the NOA using the Standard Copy and paste from the KEES user manual at this link: [CC Denial/Discontinuance for Failure to Meet Work Hour Requirements](#).

The addition of essential school workers to the Hero Relief Program is effective September 1, 2020, and will remain in place until the Kansas COVID-19 Emergency Declaration incident period is end dated and the program ends. DCF staff will be notified when it is end dated. Any open cases receiving assistance through the Hero Relief Program at that time will continue and be reviewed at the end of their 6 month eligibility period to determine whether or not they qualify for regular child care benefits.

For applications from school workers received prior to September 1, 2020 but not yet processed, if the family’s countable income is over 185% of FPL but under is less than or equal to 250% of FPL, the application will be approved with a plan start date of September 1, 2020. It will be necessary to append the approval notice in KEES and use the comment section to advise the family that they were not eligible prior to September 1, 2020 because their income exceeded allowable limits for child care that was available at that time. The Hero Relief Program for essential workers begins on September 1, 2020. For the same situation, if the family’s countable income is under 185% of FPL but the application has not yet been processed, the application will be approved back to the date of application using the guidelines for the Hero Relief Program with no family share deduction assigned.

Examples:

1. A family applied for child care on August 27th, and the eligibility worker is processing the application on September 3rd. The family’s countable income is 200% of the FPL for their household size, and the parent meets the definition of an essential worker. Since the household did not qualify for regular child care due to excess income, but would qualify for the Hero Relief Program, the application will be approved with a child care plan starting on September 1st, the first day of the new program. The approval notice is appended and a note is added to the comment section to explain the September 1st start date of the child care plan.
2. Same scenario as example #1, except that the family’s countable income is 150% of the FPL. In this case, the application will be approved with a start date of August 27th.

It is not intended for EES staff to find and rework applications that have already been correctly processed. However, if staff are contacted by a family that applied within 30 days and was correctly denied for excess income at the time of processing, but would qualify for child care through the Hero Relief Program, the family will not be required to reapply. Child care for school workers will be approved beginning with the date of the contact, but no sooner than September 1, 2020. For example, a client applied on August 17th, and on August 20th was correctly denied due to countable income that was 200% of the FPL. On September 10th the client hears about school workers possibly qualifying for the Hero Relief Program and contacts the agency to ask about child care. If qualified, the original application may be used and the application approved effective September 1st. Child care plans will not start before September 1st.

Effective September 1, 2020 essential workers are being defined as follows:

Healthcare workers:

- Workers who perform critical clinical research, development, and testing needed for COVID-19 response.
- Healthcare providers and Caregivers including physicians, dentists, psychologists, mid-level practitioners, nurses and assistants, infection control and quality assurance personnel, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists and assistants, social workers, optometrists, speech pathologists, chiropractors, and diagnostic and therapeutic technicians and technologists.
- Hospital and laboratory personnel (including accounting, administrative, admitting and discharge, engineering, epidemiological, source plasma and blood donation, food service, housekeeping, medical records, information technology and operational technology, nutritionists, sanitarians, respiratory therapists, etc.).
- Workers in other medical and biomedical facilities (including Ambulatory Health and Surgical, Blood Banks, Clinics, Community Mental Health, Comprehensive Outpatient rehabilitation, End Stage Renal Disease, Health Departments, Home Health care, Hospices, Hospitals, Long Term Care, Nursing Care Facilities, Organ Pharmacies, Procurement Organizations, Psychiatric Residential, Rural Health Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers, and retail facilities specializing in medical good and supplies).
- Public health / community health workers, including those who compile, model, analyze and communicate public health information.
- Blood and plasma donors and the employees of the organizations that operate and manage related activities.
- Workers who manage health plans, billing, and health information, who cannot practically work remotely.
- Workers who conduct community-based public health functions, conducting epidemiologic surveillance, compiling, analyzing and communicating public health information, who cannot practically work remotely.
- Workers performing information technology and cybersecurity functions at healthcare and public health facilities, who cannot practically work remotely.
- Workers performing security, incident management, and emergency operations functions at or on behalf of healthcare entities including healthcare coalitions, who cannot practically work remotely.
- Pharmacy employees necessary to maintain uninterrupted prescription filling.

First responders:

- Public and private personnel (front line and management) in emergency management, law enforcement, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, and private security, to include public and private hazardous material responders, air medical service providers (pilots and supporting technicians), corrections, and search and rescue personnel.

Food and agriculture workers:

- Workers supporting groceries, pharmacies, convenience stores, and other retail (including unattended and vending) that sells human food, animal/pet food and pet supply, and beverage products, including retail customer support service and information technology support staff necessary for online orders, pickup and delivery.
- Restaurant carry-out and quick serve food operations, including dark kitchen and food prep centers, and carry-out and delivery food employees.
- Food manufacturer employees and their supplier employees—to include those employed in food ingredient production and processing facilities; livestock, poultry, seafood slaughter facilities; pet and animal feed processing facilities; human food facilities producing by-products for animal food; beverage

production facilities; and the production of food packaging.

- Farmers, farm workers, and agribusiness support services to include those employed in auction and sales: grain and oilseed handling, processing and distribution; animal food, feed, and ingredient production, packaging, and distribution; manufacturing, packaging, and distribution of veterinary drugs; truck delivery and transport; farm and fishery labor needed to produce our food supply domestically and for export.
- Farmers, farm workers, support service workers, and their supplier employees to include those engaged in producing and harvesting field crops; commodity inspection; fuel ethanol facilities; biodiesel and renewable diesel facilities; storage facilities; and other agricultural inputs.
- Employees and firms supporting the distribution of food, feed, and beverage and ingredients used in these products, including warehouse workers, vendor- managed inventory controllers and blockchain managers.
- Workers supporting the sanitation and pest control of all food manufacturing processes and operations from wholesale to retail.
- Employees in cafeterias used to feed employees, particularly employee populations sheltered against COVID-19.
- Workers in animal diagnostic and food testing laboratories in private industries and in institutions of higher education.
- Government, private, and non-governmental organizations' workers essential for food assistance programs (including school lunch programs) and government payments.
- Employees of companies engaged in the production, storage, transport, and distribution of chemicals, medicines, vaccines, and other substances used by the food and agriculture industry, including seeds, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, minerals, enrichments, and other agricultural production aids.
- Animal agriculture workers to include those employed in veterinary health (including those involved in supporting emergency veterinary or livestock services); raising of animals for food; animal production operations; livestock markets; slaughter and packing plants, manufacturers, renderers, and associated regulatory and government workforce.
- Transportation supporting animal agricultural industries, including movement of animal medical and reproductive supplies and materials, animal vaccines, animal drugs, feed ingredients, feed, and bedding, live animals, animal by-products, and deceased animals for disposal.
- Workers who support sawmills and the manufacture and distribution of fiber and forest products, including, but not limited to timber, paper, and other wood and fiber products.
- Employees engaged in the manufacture and maintenance of equipment and other infrastructure necessary for agricultural production and distribution.

Judicial branch (essential services):

- Judicial officers and personnel deemed essential by The Office of Judicial Administration to ensure the continued operations of the Kansas court system

National Guard:

- National Guard members that are on orders, to include state active duty, Title 32, or Title 10 orders and members in an Inactive Duty for Training status.
- At the discretion of the Adjutant General, this category also includes full-time staff of the Kansas National Guard or Department of Military Affairs that are necessary for the execution of the National Guard's mission.

Frontline child and adult protection specialists

- Social workers and human services or social services staff employed by the Kansas Department for Children and Families (or one of its protection and prevention services case management grantees) whose jobs require in-home and other face-to-face interactions with members of the public

Child care providers:

- Educators and other workers in these childcare centers, family childcare, schools, and other facilities who are caring for children of eligible workers listed above. Client statement will be used as verification.

Educators and other school (both public and private) workers:

- Educators and select other school personnel including teachers, para-professionals and their substitutes
- Workers providing bus or other transportation services, food services, and custodial services for public and private schools, including those employed by contractors
- Workers providing other essential services within public and private schools may be determined eligible with the approval of regional EES or Employment Service PA's and APA's

[FAQ's for COVID-19 Child Care Assistance for Families](#)