

Fall 2020 Guidance - Priorities for Full-Time In-Person Learning for Family Child Care Networks and Affiliated Providers

- **All Network affiliated providers will be expected to provide services, in some form, to all children and families currently enrolled in their programs this fall.** For the purposes of this document, “enrolled children and families” are those who have accepted an offer with one of your affiliated providers’ programs, either through an initial or waitlist offer or those who are transitioning from an EarlyLearn Network and meet the eligibility requirements of your Network.
- We expect that most affiliated providers will be able to serve all enrolled children through full-time, in-person services (if requested by families). However, if more families have requested full-time, in-person learning than your affiliated providers currently have the capacity to provide, this document provides guidance on how to prioritize families for full-time, in-person services.
 - For families enrolled in Child Care-funded slots who request in-person learning (i.e., all infants, toddlers, and extended-day 3-K slots), please proceed in assigning those families to full-time, in person learning. Once you have reviewed this document and made assignments accordingly, you may notify Child Care families assigned to in-person learning of their assigned learning model as soon as possible.
 - For families in Child Care-funded slots who request fully remote learning, please hold on confirming their assignment, pending further guidance.
 - Additional guidance about sharing this information with families is below.
- **Infants and toddlers:** Due to limited capacity and funding constraints, we are not able to continue services for infants and toddlers enrolled in Child Care services whose families do not wish to return to in-person learning (would opt for full-time remote learning). Families of infants and toddlers should be made aware of this limitation and given the opportunity to revise their preference. In cases where families opt out of care, the Network should seek to fill that vacancy.
- **In order to continue to receive payment from the DOE for contracted services, all affiliated providers must provide some level of in-person learning services in their programs in the fall.** Affiliated providers are able to provide remote learning until 8/31 and still receive payment from the DOE. After that date, affiliated providers must provide some level of in-person learning services in order to continue to receive payment. Any requests for exemptions from this policy must be submitted through [this survey](#).
- **Affiliated providers should provide full-time, in-person services for as many families as possible, prioritizing families using the criteria specified here.** If more families request full-time, in-person care than affiliated providers have space to accommodate, Networks will work to offer the families alternate placement. If the

Network is not able to offer the families alternate placement, the DOE Outreach Team will work to offer the families alternate placement.

- Networks must ensure that payment is made to the affiliated provider serving the children and in no case should Networks pay more than one affiliated provider per child.
- In the event that it is not possible to provide full-time, in-person services to every enrolled family who requests them, **Networks should prioritize in-person services to the following priority groups** using the following criteria to prioritize full-time, in-person care:
 - If there are not enough full-time in-person slots to meet all enrolled families' needs, Networks should prioritize providing full-time slots to infants and toddlers (before 3-year-olds).
 - Children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), programs may prioritize siblings of children with IFSPs/IEPs if it space allows and it aligns to the families' preference
 - Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs) - children whose home language is not English
 - Families in transitional housing, foster care, and/or families experiencing domestic violence, where a family's status is known
- To maximize in-person learning opportunities for currently-enrolled children:
 - Programs that typically provide 10 hours of care per day may request flexibility **in their operating hours for in-person services, including providing 8 hours of service instead of 10**. Affiliated providers must plan to provide at least 8 hours of service per day for in-person services.
 - DOE is not able to allow learning models that include half-days of in-person instruction for early childhood programs that are currently contracted to provide full day services.
- **Families have responded to multiple surveys. Earlier this summer**, we requested that Networks [survey](#) families about their preference for learning models. Networks asked families to indicate a preference for full-time, in-person care. **As we prepare for the fall and families transition to your Networks, we ask that you resurvey all your families to understand their needs and indicate a preference for full-time, in-person care.** Networks should use the results of the survey and ongoing conversations with affiliated providers and families as their primary source of information about family preference.
- In addition to resurveying families, Networks should resurvey their affiliated providers to understand their capacity to offer in-person learning services. Knowing this will allow Networks to determine which families will need alternate placement.
- **Communicate openly and honestly with families about the prioritization process for full-time in-person learning.** Consider incorporating the following in your communications with families:

- Share with families your Network and affiliated providers commitment to ensuring the health and safety of children, families and staff during this time, and to complying with all local, state, and federal guidance.
 - Be transparent about the considerations and expectations you are working under to ensure health and safety, including affiliated providers group size and staffing limitations.
 - Emphasize your commitment to meeting the needs of as many families as possible during this time.
 - Share the priority categories listed above so families understand why some families are prioritized over others. Ensure individual families' and children's privacy is respected.
 - Encourage families to review the guidance listed above regarding flexibilities throughout the year, so they can plan accordingly.
 - Consider how you communicate blended-learning schedules to families, and ensure the information is clear and easy for families to understand so they know when to bring their child to your affiliated providers' programs.
 - Be sure families know that all enrollment is subject to change, based on local and state policy, should the public health indicators in New York change.
- **Support families eligible for child care assistance to find the in-person services they are eligible for and request.** Networks can direct currently-enrolled families to DOE's Outreach team if they are not able to provide as much in-person services as a family requests and is eligible to receive. DOE's Outreach team will work with the family to see if there are any other program options available. Families can contact DOE Outreach by emailing OutreachTeam@schools.nyc.gov.

Eligibility determination for Child Care Assistance

Child Care Assistance

- Until further notice Networks and families should only submit new child care assistance applications and recertifications via email to earlylearn@schools.nyc.gov or mail to:

NYC DOE - Office of Student Enrollment
 PO BOX 377
 Maplewood, NJ 07040

- Networks and families should not submit the same application to both the email inbox and mailing address.
- All DOE Family Welcome Centers are currently closed for in-person services. Networks and families should not plan to visit in person at this time.

- For assistance with child care applications, families and programs can also contact DOE by emailing earlylearn@schools.nyc.gov or calling 718-935-2009. Interpretation services are offered in over 200 languages.
- If due to COVID-19, families cannot obtain the required documentation for either new child care assistance applications or for eligibility redetermination, they can submit an attestation available on the [ACS Division of Child and Family Well-Being \(CFWB\) website](#).
- **Child care eligibility redetermination has been postponed due to COVID-19** for families who were originally due for eligibility redetermination in March, April, May, June and July. These families will need to submit their recertification application for redetermination according to the dates provided in the table below.

Postponed eligibility redetermination date for child care assistance due to COVID-19		
Original date for family eligibility redetermination	Revised date by which family must submit recertification packet	Revised date family will lose child care benefits if not redetermined eligible
3/31/20	7/14/20	7/29/20
4/30/20	7/14/20	7/29/20
5/31/20	8/14/20	8/29/20
6/30/20	9/13/20	9/28/20
7/31/20	10/14/20	10/29/20

- If families do not submit the completed recertification application and required documentation by their designated date, they will stop receiving child care benefits. Families and programs will receive the Notice of Intent to Discontinue Child Care Benefits, which will advise when child care benefits will be discontinued and what rights families have to appeal the action.
- At this time, the original eligibility redetermination dates for all other families remain the same.

**Summer 2020 Enrollment & Eligibility Guidance
for
Family Child Care Networks and Affiliated Providers**
(Released July 21, 2020)
(For Reference Only)

Note: This guidance applies to all Network affiliated family child care providers.

*This guidance is only applicable for **July and August 2020**. The DOE will release new guidance on enrollment and eligibility for September 2020 later this summer.*

- All Network affiliated providers will be expected to provide services, in some form, to **all** eligible children and families **currently enrolled** in their programs. **Networks should not drop any children or families from program rosters at this time.**
- **The needs and preferences of your enrolled families will likely be different, and the services provided by programs will need to reflect these differences.** Some families may not be able or ready to send their child to a program for in-person learning this summer; other families may need full day and full week care; others may be able to accommodate a more flexible schedule that includes a combination of in-person and remote learning.
- Programs may serve currently-enrolled children and families through **three potential learning models**:
 1. Full-time in-person learning;
 2. Full-time remote learning; or
 3. Blended learning (a combination of in-person learning and remote learning).
- In a child's early years, learning is most impactful when it takes place in person. **All affiliated providers should plan to provide some level of in-person learning services this summer.** We anticipate that most affiliated providers will provide a combination of the learning models listed above, depending on families' needs, group size requirements, and staffing limitations.
- If an affiliated provider is not able to re-open, the Network should request an exemption by emailing the DECE at fccsupportteam@schools.nyc.gov. The provider will be able to maintain affiliation with the Network during this time, if the exemption is approved by the DOE.
 - If an affiliated provider is not able to re-open by August 31, they will not be able to continue to receive payment for enrolled children whose families need in-person care. More guidance will follow.

- At this time, Networks in collaboration with affiliated providers must continue to provide remote learning services to all currently-enrolled children until they resume in-person services. Additional guidance may follow.
- To maximize in-person learning opportunities for currently-enrolled children, affiliated providers in consultation with their Networks may:
 - Request flexibility in their operating hours for in-person services, **including providing fewer than the usual 10 hours per day. Note: All affiliated providers must provide at least 7 hours of care per day to receive full payment for the day.** Affiliated providers should discuss their programs' capacity with their Networks who will request approval from their assigned Family Child Care Support Manager. Networks and affiliated providers must clearly communicate operating hours in advance to families.
- Families who opt for full-time remote learning through the end of summer should be able to review this decision at the beginning of September, and may opt back into in-person learning if they would like to do so.
- Networks and affiliated providers are invited to submit any comments on this guidance document through the Network's assigned DECE Family Child Care Support Manager.

Priority for in-person family child care services

- **Networks should offer in-person services at affiliated providers to as many currently-enrolled families as possible**, given family needs, group size requirements, and affiliated providers' capacity.
 - In the event that it is not possible to provide extended day, in-person services to every currently-enrolled family eligible for child care assistance who requests them, Networks should prioritize in-person services to priority groups. The DOE has provided recommended priority group criteria in the table below.

Tier 1 criteria to prioritize currently-enrolled <u>families</u> for in-person summer services	
Priority 1	Protective Cases – Referrals from ACS for protective reasons.
Priority 2	Preventive Cases – Referrals from ACS or Preventive Services Agencies for preventive reasons. Foster Care cases are also included in this category.

Tier 1 criteria to prioritize currently-enrolled <u>families</u> for in-person summer services	
Priority 3	<p>Cash Assistance and Transitional Child Care</p> <p>Employment – Cash Assistance (CA) recipients who are employed in an approved work activity or receiving transitional benefits.</p> <p>Training – Public Assistance (PA) recipients who are in an approved training/education program.</p> <p>Transitional Benefits – A working client whose CA case was closed because of employment.</p>
Priority 4	<p>Domestic Violence – Families receiving services due to domestic violence.</p> <p>Homeless – Families who are homeless. For child care eligibility, the family must also be income eligible.</p>
Priority 5	<p>Employment – Employed parents/guardians who meet the “essential worker” eligibility criteria defined by the DOE Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs).</p>

- If all families in the Tier 1 priority groups who request them are provided in-person services, Networks should prioritize in-person services at affiliated providers for currently-enrolled children as follows.

Tier 2 criteria to prioritize currently-enrolled <u>children</u> for in-person summer services <u>after</u> all interested families meeting Tier 1 criteria are served
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) • Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs) - children whose home language is not English • Infants and toddlers

Tier 2 criteria to prioritize currently-enrolled children for in-person summer services after all interested families meeting Tier 1 criteria are served

Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 2 priority <u>does not</u> include a priority for currently-enrolled siblings, unless they also belong to one of these groups. • IEP or IFSP services will be provided either through remote, teletherapy or in-person services, depending on parents' preference and applicable health and safety considerations. Teletherapy will continue for parents who wish to remain remote, and for families who would like in-person SEIT, services can be provided at childcare locations. We are currently working with our partners in DOHMH to understand how additional in-person services will work for children with IFSPs and IEPs.
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- **After Networks have ensured full-time, in-person services at affiliated providers to currently enrolled families from the above Tier 1 and Tier 2 priority groups, they should then aim to offer in-person services to any other currently-enrolled family who requests them.**
- If an affiliated provider is not able to provide in-person services to all enrolled children whose families have requested in-person services, the Network may offer the family placement with another affiliated provider with the capacity to provide in-person services to additional children.
- Networks must ensure that payment is made to the affiliated provider serving the children and in no case should Networks pay more than one affiliated provider per child.
- If a currently-enrolled family changes their preferences and wants more in-person care, the Network must prioritize the family according to the above guidance and the affiliate provider's capacity, but should not change the services for other currently-enrolled families.
- Families will have the opportunity to change their preferences for in-person and remote learning services again after the summer.
- Networks and affiliated providers should keep detailed records reflecting the days on which enrolled children received in-person services and the duration of those in-person services using existing attendance tools.
- Networks are not allowed to enroll additional new children at this time, unless they are currently under-enrolled and affiliated providers have additional capacity to provide in-person services, beyond what has been requested by their families currently enrolled.
- Any new enrollments this summer would be temporary enrollments, unless the program will have available vacancies starting September 1, 2020.
- Networks may remove children from rosters and update WES if the families have confirmed that they will no longer be needing care (i.e. family is moving).
- Networks may transfer children from one affiliated provider to another for the summer if:

- Affiliated provider has confirmed that they will not be re-opening this summer;
- Affiliated provider is not re-opening for in-person services services by August 31; or
- Affiliated provider is not able to provide in-person services to all children enrolled due to program capacity.
- Networks and affiliated providers can direct currently-enrolled families to DOE's Outreach team if they are not able to provide as much in-person services as the family requests and is eligible to receive. DOE's Outreach team will work with the family to see if there are any other program options available. Families can contact DOE Outreach by emailing OutreachTeam@schools.nyc.gov.

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