



Updated July 15, 2020

Child Care and COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Businesses

Note: This information will be updated frequently. Please check back regularly for updates.

How do I apply for a certified quality rating in the Child Care Quality System?

As of June 1, 2020, the Office of Child Care is not accepting new applications to participate in the Child Care Quality System (CCQS) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs will be notified when the application is again available.

My program already has a certified quality rating. Do I need to apply for recertification?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all certified quality ratings are being extended until summer 2021. Beginning June 2021, the Office of Child Care will begin accepting recertification applications for all child care programs that received a certified quality rating on or before May 1, 2020. Programs with an existing certified quality rating that fail to submit a recertification application in June 2021 will receive one of the following ratings: (1) Default Foundation of Quality, if the program is eligible to accept child care subsidy payments; or (2) Not Participating, if the program does not accept child care subsidy payments.

When will we receive a new timeline?

Programs applying for recertification during June 2021, will receive a new timeline for the onsite observation, as well as the timeline for submitting required documentation in July 2021. In July 2021, the Office of Child Care will assign a new, randomly selected observation month to all programs that apply for recertification, as well as a new timeline for document submission.

Programs that apply for a new certified quality rating will receive the new timeline when the application is submitted and processed.

In preparing for a new Child Care Quality System rating, our program has made several investments including obtaining TOP Star certification, increasing participation of staff in Career Ladder-approved courses and implementing family engagement practices. Will we get credit for these efforts?

These important investments in your program positively impact children in your care and will benefit your program when you apply for a certified quality rating once the application period re-opens. These investments, and several other investments that your program can make during this time, will contribute to your programs rating. Some investments, such as obtaining the TOP Star certification and accreditations, are valid for multiple years. Child care programs are encouraged to contact these certification agencies to determine when the certifications expire. Additionally, several professional development accomplishments, including Career Ladder levels awarded and college credit hours completed, will count for a future rating.

In addition, the Office of Child Care will be partnering with programs that have made investments in professional development in the past 12 months to share in the costs associated with those investments. Information on this cost-sharing partnership will be released by the Utah Registry for Professional Development in the coming months.

My program was really close to High Quality. Will we be able to get an observation before the recertification period in 2021?

The Environment Rating Scale Institute has stated that the tools “should NOT be used under pandemic conditions to assess the quality of a program in an official assessment in which the average overall quality of the program is determined.” For this reason, the Office of Child Care has paused the Child Care Quality System until June 2021. During this interim period, your program may be able to apply for support and technical assistance offered by the Office of Child Care using the rating scales and virtual coaching.

My program is currently receiving an Enhanced Subsidy Grant. Will my program continue to receive the Enhanced Subsidy Grant with my extended certified quality rating?

Yes. Child care programs that achieved a High Quality or High Quality Plus certified quality rating will continue to receive the Enhanced Subsidy Grant at the originally calculated amount until the new certified quality rating expiration date. These programs must submit a recertification application in June 2021 to receive a new rating. If a program does not apply during the recertification application window, the Enhanced Subsidy Grant will end June 30, 2021.

What is the timeline for Family Child Care programs and CCQS?

The timeline for Family Child Care programs to participate in the Child Care Quality System is being evaluated. Programs will be notified when the pilot and early rating period is being implemented.

Although the timeline has been pushed back, the Office of Child Care is developing plans for support for Family Child Care so programs may have the opportunity to prepare for CCQS during this time.