

COVID-19 Policy-0920 Implementation of Childcare Services	RE: State policy – WD Letter 09-20, change 1
<i>Date effective: 03/31/2020</i>	<i>Date released: 04/29/2020</i>

COVID-19 WORKFORCE POLICY

Emergency Child Care for COVID-19 Essential Workers and Extension of Child Care Job Search Period During COVID-19 Emergency—Update

Background: To offer guidance and assist individuals affected by COVID-19. On March 31, 2020, TWC issued new childcare policy guidance on COVID-19.

Policy: WFSDallas will follow the Texas Workforce Commission Guidance #09-20, change 1, as amended, and as it applies to the Child Care System serving Dallas County.

Eligibility for TWC COVID-19 Essential Worker Child Care

Effective March 25, 2020, TWC’s definition of “protective services” includes a new category for children of specified COVID-19 frontline essential workers: TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers. The TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers eligibility category includes the following types of essential work. Due to limited funding, Boards must prioritize child care services for TWC COVID-19 essential workers in the order listed:

1. Workers in child care services that support workers in other essential functions
2. Pharmacy and health care workers
3. First responders
4. Critical infrastructure workers in grocery, utilities, and trucking
5. Other identified infrastructure workers, which include:
 - a. critical state and local government staff;
 - b. mail/delivery services;
 - c. nursing homes, home health care, and other direct care providers;
 - d. banks;
 - e. gas stations;
 - f. military; and
 - g. restaurants and other food delivery
6. Other critical occupations identified by the Board.

WFSDallas ensures that TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers meet the Commission’s approved modified state income eligibility threshold—approximately 150 percent of the state’s median income (SMI), either monthly or annually, as follows:

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Family Size	TWC Threshold of Approximately 150% SMI (Monthly)	TWC Threshold of Approximately 150% SMI (Annually)
2	\$6,700	\$80,000
3	\$8,200	\$99,000
4	\$9,800	\$118,000
5	\$11,300	\$136,000
6	\$13,000	\$155,000
7	\$13,200	\$159,000
8	\$13,500	\$162,000
9	\$13,800	\$166,000
10	\$14,100	\$169,000

NOTE: Income thresholds for TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers are based on SMI estimates published by the Administration for Children and Families and are rounded to the nearest hundred or thousand to help parents easily identify where they fall. Parents may use the monthly or annual amount to determine if they are eligible.

In accordance with provisions for children who need protective services, as defined in TWC's Child Care Services rule §809.19(a)(2)(D), TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers are exempt from parent share of cost (PSOC) requirements.

Children requiring protective services must be served regardless of recoupment that a parent may owe. Boards must disregard child care recoupment owed by eligible TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers during the duration of their eligibility period.

WFSDallas will implement an expedited process to determine eligibility and enroll children of TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers, using TWC's COVID-19 Essential Worker Child Care Enrollment Form customized version posted on the Contractor's website.

A child is eligible for TWC COVID-19 Essential Worker child care if the parent is currently employed as an essential worker as defined above and:

- the parent requires child care services in order to work;
- the family income is at or below 150 percent of the SMI; and
- the child:
 - is under age 13 (or under age 21 if disabled);
 - has legal citizenship or immigration status; and
 - resides with a family (including with an individual standing in loco parentis) within the Board's local workforce development area.

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Boards must accept a parent’s self-attestation for all eligibility criteria except for a child’s legal immigration status. TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers are not required to submit documentation to verify any other aspects of eligibility.

An essential worker in a two-parent household in which the other parent is not a frontline essential worker and is capable of caring for the child in the home does not meet the eligibility criteria of needing child care in order to work, and the parent must not be determined eligible for child care services as a TWC COVID-19 Essential Worker.

To reduce social contact and spread of COVID-19, WFSDallas will accept:

- electronic signatures (including forms submitted electronically with a typed name and date in the signature line and digital photographs of enrollment form); and
- electronic documentation of a child’s immigration status if applicable (for example, digital photographs of documents).

Pending approval of a federal waiver, Boards must be aware that TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers are exempt from the 12-month eligibility requirement. Boards must set up care for three months of eligibility. TWC will continue to monitor the emergency and the ongoing need for essential worker care on a monthly basis and will direct Boards on any extensions or changes to this requirement.

WFSDallas is aware that if the federal waiver is not approved, TWC will direct Boards to adjust eligibility periods for TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers to 12 months.

Eligible Low-Income families that are employed in an essential service defined by CISA but are not employed in a TWC COVID-19 Essential Worker occupation (as defined above) may receive child care services through the Board’s funding for At-Risk/Low-Income child care.

Child Care Program Payments

Contractor will reimburse child care programs for TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers child care regardless of whether the program receives reimbursements for children who are temporarily not attending due to COVID-19. As described in WD Letter 07-20, issued on March 26, 2020, and titled “COVID-19 Child Care Services Guidance,” TWC will monitor absences monthly and will issue guidance on when this requirement must end.

TWIST Changes

TWIST will also be updated to include a new Special Projects code value for TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers (9-COVIDTX). WFSDallas will ensure that staff uses the new Special Projects code when setting up child care services for TWC COVID-19 Essential Workers.

A new Funding Contract type (COVIDTX) will be added to TWIST and associated with the new Special Projects code (9-COVIDTX), enabling Boards to track provider payments for TWC COVID-19 Essential

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Workers. BAEL contract management staff will work with Boards to set up the new Funding Contract type in TWIST.

Extension of Job Search Period for All Families

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, TWC approved an extension of the job search period, as described in §809.51, for non-temporary changes in a parent’s ongoing status in work that exceeds three months.

If a parent’s job search period is scheduled to end before June 1, 2020, WFSDallas will extend the job search period and/or activity interruption through August 2020.

TWC will continue to evaluate labor market conditions and the status of the COVID-19 emergency on a monthly basis and will provide further guidance on job search periods as conditions change.

WFSDallas will continue to provide child care services for families experiencing non-temporary changes in a parent’s ongoing status in work that exceeds three months until further guidance is issued by TWC.

Child Care Income Report and UI Early Warning Report

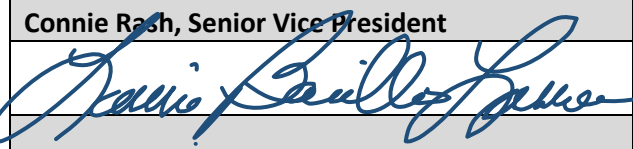
WFDallas will suspend procedures to use the Child Care Income Report and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Early Warning Report to identify eligibility or program violations while the policy to extend job search periods is in effect. TWC will advise Boards of when to resume using these reports.

Contractors may leverage the UI Early Warning Report to help employers that are hiring identify possible workers.

Action: During COVID-19, WFSDallas will implement the WD Letter 09-20, change 1 and as amended. Please see https://www.twc.texas.gov/files/policy_letters/09-20-ch1-twc.pdf

Questions: For any questions, related to this policy, please contact Demetria Robinson, Vice President at 214-290-1013.

Approved for Content:

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	<i>4/30/2020</i>
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