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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

COVID-19 ADVISORY

March 20, 2020 | RE: CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Health & Human Services Commission

HHSC has confirmed the governor's executive order does not apply to child care operations, and they are advising these entities to follow the guidance they've already issued, in addition to the CDC's recommendations. HHSC is advising operations to work with local health authorities to determine whether or not to close if they feel there is a particular risk.

As part of Governor Abbott's disaster declaration for all counties in the state, HHSC's Child Care Licensing Department - Regulatory Services Division is implementing their emergency management response plan. As part of their efforts, they have asked childcare providers to complete the following survey to provide information on day care providers' operation status and condition.

The survey for day care providers is here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCLCOVID19>

The survey for 24-hour residential providers is here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RCCLCOVID19>

HHSC issued guidance to child care providers on March 15th, stating new requirements to restrict entry into day care facilities unless an individual qualifies as the following: operations staff, persons with legal authority to enter, law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, Department of Family and Protective Services staff, professionals providing services to children, children enrolled at the operation, or a parent with a child enrolled and present at the operation. Further, prior to allowing entry into a facility, providers must screen for symptoms and take the temperatures of all individuals and deny entry to anyone who meets specified criteria. Providers are required to conduct pick up and drop off of children outside their facilities and serve meals to children individually, rather than family style.

HHSC Child Care Licensing is also planning to distribute a list of frequently asked questions and answers for providers in the coming days.

The guidance letter posted on March 16th by HHSC for providers can be found here:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/news/2020/03/covid-19-guidance-child-care-providers>

HHSC has set up a website that includes their guidance to all providers related to COVID-19 here: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-provider-information>

Providers and interested parties can sign up for child care and all other provider updates using this link: <https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXHHSC/subscriber/new>

For questions, the agency suggests contacting your local child care licensing offices. Their contact information can be found here: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care/contact-child-care-licensing>

Texas Workforce Commission

TWC runs the subsidized child care program for families that cannot afford child care on their own.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the commission took two major actions to support the program. For providers, they are temporarily suspending the attendance requirement that is normally used to determine the provider's payment. Providers will get paid whether or not the child attends or the daycare has to shut down.

For parents, TWC has authorized local workforce boards to use their funds to pay parents' copays. Parents normally pay copays, but if the local workforce board chooses to use their childcare funds to pay the parent's copay, they now have the ability to do so.