

Wake County Quality Supplement 2018-19 Program Overview

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OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Wake County Quality Supplement program provides payments to support quality in facilities that serve preschool children ages 3-5 on subsidy.

The purpose of the Quality Supplement program is to:

1. Support the existing program quality of child care facilities serving children on subsidy;
2. Incentivize improvement in program quality by child care facilities serving children on subsidy; and
3. Increase the number of facilities at the highest levels of quality that serve children on subsidy.

Quality supplements are awarded as a flat monthly rate based on the level of program quality achieved by child care providers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to qualify for a monthly Wake County Quality Supplement, child care facilities must meet the following *eligibility criteria*, which are reviewed monthly:

- Operate within Wake County
- Be licensed by the state of North Carolina's Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)
- Have and maintain a 4- or 5-star rated license
- Have and maintain at least 6 Program Standard points on their license
- Serve at least 2 **preschool age children** (or 1 preschool age child for Family Child Care Homes) **3-5 years old** (not Kindergarten eligible) receiving a WCHS Child Care Subsidy voucher (***Please note this is a change from prior years. Due to the subsidy reimbursement rate increase in October 2017 for children 0-2 years old, only children ages 3-5 years old will be counted when determining your Quality Supplement Rate.***)
- Have no open Administrative Actions against the current license, excluding those related to licensing fees. Further details can be found in the compliance section below.
- Submit documentation that subsidy-related parent co-payments/fees are being collected on an ongoing basis.
- New facilities applying for the 2018-2019 program year must also submit a comprehensive annual operating budget.

COMPLIANCE

- If an Administrative Action, excluding those related to licensing fees, is issued by DCDEE, Quality Supplement payments will be suspended, for a minimum of one month (based on eligibility determination and payment cycle), beginning from the date of DCDEE notification. Quality Supplement payments will be reinstated once the Administrative Action has been closed and all other eligibility requirements are met.
- If there has been at least one additional Administrative Action related to Safety, Substantiated Child Maltreatment or Supervision in the prior two years, **Quality Supplement payments will be suspended for a minimum of 12 months**. WCSS reserves the right to extend the suspension, depending on the severity of DCDEE findings. Quality Supplement payments will only be reinstated after a minimum of 12 months if all other eligibility requirements are met.

The above policy is in addition to all current eligibility requirements, including that there be no open Admin Action, excluding those related to licensing fees. The Wake County Quality Supplement Program reserves the right to extend payment suspension or terminate contract based on severity of the Administrative Action.

PAYMENT OF SUPPLEMENTS

Due to anticipated subsidy rate increases for preschoolers, the Quality Supplement program as it is currently designed will operate through December. Please budget for only six months of payments. Further information will be provided this fall.

Supplement payment rates will be tiered, with payment amounts dependent on:

- the facility's level of quality (as determined by star-rating, Program Standard points, NAEYC/NAFCC Accreditation, and achievement of 7 Education Points)
- number of enrolled **children ages 3-5 (not kindergarten eligible)** on WCHS subsidy

Supplement payments will be paid by Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) via direct deposit. Supplement payments will be distributed by the last business day of the month and will typically be available by the 2nd business day of the following month. The supplement rates will be based on regular assessment of facility eligibility conducted by Child Care Services Association (CCSA).

Once a child care facility has enrolled in the Wake County Quality Supplement program, a supplement rate will be assigned. This rate will remain the same for a full quarter (three months) unless the facility drops below the minimum four-star rating, has an open Administrative Action excluding those related to license fees, or drops below the minimum number of 3-5 year old WCHS subsidy children being served (1 for Family Child Care Homes, 2 for Centers). Additionally, payments will be withheld for any child care facility on the NC Suspension of Funding List (SOFL). CCSA will monitor these criteria on a *monthly basis*. If any of the above conditions occurs, supplement payments will be suspended until eligibility criteria are met.

On a *quarterly basis*, CCSA will do a comprehensive review of each child care facility's supplement rate and re-set rates, as funding is available. This quarterly review will consist of verification of each facility's star-rating, Program Standard points, Teacher Education points, NAEYC/NAFCC accreditation, and number of 3-5 year old WCHS subsidy children being served. The number of subsidy children being served will be established using an average number of preschool-aged children served in the previous three months based on data received through NC FAST. Children not reported on NC FAST attendance by NC FAST deadlines will not be included in determining the average number of pre-school-aged children served. Increases or decreases to a facility's supplement rate will be implemented in the *subsequent quarter*.

For a chart of current supplement rates, please visit the Quality Supplement webpage at www.childcareservices.org (see *Early Educators* menu).

APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE

To apply for the Wake County Quality Supplement program, facilities must submit application materials, which can be found online on the Quality Supplement webpage at www.childcareservices.org. Once a completed application is received and approved, you will receive a grant agreement from Wake County Smart Start. This grant agreement must be completed and returned before payments can begin.

Please note that new applications may be accepted *only as funding permits*. In the event that the number of participants meets or exceeds the program budget, a waitlist will be maintained for new applicants. Completed applications must be received by the 3rd working day of the month for consideration for that month's supplement payments.