

Pre-K Counts (PKC) and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) COVID-19-related closure and modified program operations FAQs

Will the 180-day requirement waiver given to public schools also apply to Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs? Yes.

Will payments continue to flow for Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs, whether open or closed? Yes. PKC and HSSAP programs are typically paid 1/12 of their annual grant amount each month. In normal circumstances payments can be withheld if spending reports show a slower rate of spending. Should this occur, and if your program requires its full 1/12 payment, please follow the normal process of reaching out to your program specialist to request that your payments be “caught up.” Your program specialist will contact the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to arrange for the monthly payment to be released (or however many months you may be behind).

If my Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program is closed, whether by choice or by mandate, may staff apply for unemployment? Since payments will continue to programs without interruption, the expectation is that program-funded staff will continue to be paid during closures and placed on administrative-type leave (staff should not be expected to use sick time for COVID-19-related closures).

Can Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs continue to operate during the COVID-19 restrictions?

Yes, but only to serve children of employees of [life-sustaining businesses and services identified by the Department of Community and Development \(DCED\)](#).

To continue operating, programs must apply for a waiver using the process outlined here: <https://www.pakeys.org/governor-wolf-orders-statewide-shutdown-of-non-essential-business-2/>. PKC and HSSAP programs may continue to operate while waiver consideration is pending.

Are all Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs able to apply for a waiver? No. While schools remain closed, PKC and HSSAP programs physically located inside school buildings must adhere to school closure requirements and may not re-open until those school buildings re-open. Parents/caregivers who employed by life-sustaining business and need care for their children may contact their local Early Learning Resource center for assistance finding a suitable childcare alternative. Early Learning Resource Center contact information can be found here:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/ELRCs.aspx>.