

## **WV Quality Tiered Reimbursement System Policy and Procedures**

Updated October 2023

- 1.) To be eligible for tiered reimbursement, child care centers and facilities must have a regular 2-year operating license through the WV Dept. of Health and Human Resources, Division of Early Care and Education and have been in operation for a minimum of one (1) year. Family child care homes must have a regular certificate of registration for at least one (1) year in WV. Programs with an initial or provisional license will not be eligible for tiered reimbursement.
- 2.) Programs applying for Tier II quality status must hold a current provider service agreement (PSA) in good standing with the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency. In the event that a program has a provider service agreement but does not currently have any subsidized children enrolled in care, the program will be eligible to apply for tiered reimbursement.
- 3.) Programs are to contact their local Quality Improvement Specialist prior to applying for Tier II Quality Status for documentation review. Any documentation not reviewed will be returned to the provider.
- 4.) Programs applying for tiered reimbursement must not have been placed on a provisional license or provisional certificate of registration for noncompliance(s) within the past six (6) months.
- 5.) Tier II programs will return to a Tier I status if placed on a provisional license or provisional certificate of registration exceeding 30 days. Tier II programs that have had their status revoked due to a provisional license must wait a minimum of three (3) months before reapplying for a higher tier.
- 6.) If a programs Tier II quality status is revoked due to non-compliances of Tier II standards during a monitoring visit, the program eligibility to reapply for Tier II quality status will be determined by their local Quality Improvement Specialist once all standards have been successfully corrected.
- 7.) Tier III programs that are placed on a provisional license or provisional certificate of registration will return to a Tier I quality status. Tier III programs that have had their tier status revoked may return to a Tier III status once they are placed back on a regular operating license or certificate of registration given that their national accreditation certificate is still valid.
- 8.) Tier II and Tier III programs must notify the Tiered Reimbursement Coordinator within 5 business days of any changes in their operating license.

- 9.) Programs applying for Tier II quality status must submit a tiered reimbursement application and all required documentation to be considered. Programs applying for Tier III are required to submit a tiered reimbursement application form along with a current accreditation certificate from an approved accrediting body. No additional documentation is required for programs applying for Tier III quality status.
- 10.) Tier II documentation material may be submitted in three (3) formats: in a 3-ring binder divided into sections of tiered standards or on a compact disc (CD) or flash drive with an electronic copy of all documentation material saved and labeled according to the tiered standards. No faxed or emailed documentation will be accepted.
- 11.) The Division of Early Care and Education is allowed 60 days from the date of receipt to process an initial tiered reimbursement applications and 60 days from the expiration of current Tier II Quality Status and report approval or denial.
- 12.) Quality supplemental reimbursement rates will take effect on the first day of the month following the month of approval for Tier II or Tier III.
- 13.) A one-time bonus payment will be awarded to programs that advance in quality tier level. Bonus amounts are determined based on available funding. Annual Tier II renewals will not be considered for bonus payments to programs.  
A Tier II or Tier III program that returns to Tier I quality status due to a non-renewal or revoked status is not eligible for a second bonus payment if they are approved for a higher Tier within a 3 year period.
- 14.) For the purpose of Tier II standard requirements, qualified staff refers to staff members who have a high school diploma or GED and meet the requirements for the position of director, assistant director, lead teacher, teacher, assistant teacher or teaching assistant (as defined in Licensing Regulations).
- 15.) Professional development requirements for Tier II must be met with training that is either registered with WV STARS or from an accredited college or university.
- 16.) For Tier II initial applications, all required professional development core knowledge/content areas are to be within the past 3 years prior to application submission.

- 17.) The following regional accrediting associations will be accepted when considering academic courses for completion of Tier II requirements: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- 18.) All qualified staff are required to complete the required training hours as stated in the Tier II application annually regardless of how many hours they are scheduled to work on a weekly basis.
- 19.) Staff members with a teaching certificate who are employed by the Board of Education for WV Pre-k or kindergarten classrooms are not required to complete the 18 hours of professional development annually. However, if staff members with a teaching certificate are employed by the center, then they are required to complete the professional development requirements for Tier II. In the case that the staff member works only during the school year (9 mos.) and is not working during the summer months, professional development requirements can be pro-rated for 9 months of the year (13.5 hours).
- 20.) WV STARS will recognize 'non-registered training' of up to 15 hours of the required 45 to renew a WV STARS Credential. Therefore, tiered reimbursement policy will reflect approval of up to 6 hours of the required 18 professional development hours for Tier II. Only Non-STARS hours reflected on the WV STARS transcript will be accepted. College transcripts may be submitted for verification of approved courses.
- 21.) Professional development for new staff members may be pro-rated according to the date of hire. Pro-rating of new staff is limited to 25% of the total number of staff in a program. For instance, a program with 16 staff members will be allowed to pro-rate professional development for up to 4 staff. The staff members must be newly hired to the program (within 12 months of a Tier II application submission), and the pro-rated amount is determined in 3-month increments. (See Appendix- Provision for new staff members.)
- 22.) In regard to the conference requirement for Tier II: A conference is defined as multiple training sessions with a keynote speaker or an all-day training institute on the same topic with a minimum of 6 documented training hours. However, some trainings that do not qualify as a conference may fit this description. For the purpose of Tier II, a professional development event that may qualify as a conference is subject to approval by the Division of

Early Care and Education. **Super Saturdays do not meet the Tier II requirement of annual attendance at an early childhood conference. See Appendix 1 for a list of Approved Conferences for Tiered Reimbursement.**

23.) Tier II applications that are submitted with minimal missing, inaccurate or incomplete documentation items will result in the applicant being notified of the missing documents and given a deadline date by which to submit them. The application can only remain in a pending status for up to 2 weeks. If the missing documentation is not received by the deadline date, the application will be denied, and the applicant can re-apply in six (6) months.

Tier II applications that are submitted with a substantial amount of missing, inaccurate or incomplete documentation will result in an automatic denial.

Tier II applications that reflect using a non-approved curriculum will result in an automatic denial. **See appendix 2 for approved curriculum list**

24.) Any program that has a Tier II application denied must wait a minimum of six (6) months before reapplying for a higher tier.

25.) Only the Environment Rating Scales written by Harms, Cryer, and Clifford (ITERS-3, ECERS-3, FCCERS-3, SACERS-Updated) will be accepted for the Tier II ERS requirement. The most current edition of each Environment Rating Scale must be used and accurately completed including individual items and subscales. The Rating Scales for each classroom are meant to be self-assessments conducted by program director to develop a plan of action for quality improvement. Scores on the self-assessment are not factored into the approval or denial of an application,

26.) The liability insurance requirement for family child care homes can be met one of two ways: A homeowner's insurance policy that includes the child care business or a separate business liability insurance policy. When the homeowner's insurance policy is used, applicants must submit a letter or other documentation from their insurance company stating that the company is aware of multiple children being cared for in the home and that they are assuming liability for the child care business. Otherwise, a separate business liability policy will be required. (FCC Homes only)

- 27.) Applicants are expected to keep a copy of their application and supporting documentation on site. Material that is submitted to the Division of Early Care and Education will not be retained after review. Any Department employee may come to the approved program to review validation material at any time. Programs will have the option to send return postage to the Division of Early Care and Education so that notebooks may be returned to the program by mail. Any documentation not requested for return will be destroyed 90 days after approval or denial of application.
- 28.) Programs that have been approved for Tier II quality status must renew the status on an annual basis with the Division of Early Care and Education. Each year, new documentation must be submitted with updated and accurate information to maintain the Tier II reimbursement rate. Environment Rating Scales self-assessments for each classroom must be completed on an annual basis. Submission of a Tier II renewal application does not guarantee automatic approval.
- 29.) At the time for a program to renew Tier II quality status, a notification letter will be sent by mail to the program, which includes a deadline date by which to submit validation materials to the Division of Early Care and Education. If the materials are not received at the Division by the deadline date given, the Tier II quality status may lapse until Division staff has had up to 60 days from the application due date to review the documentation materials.
- 30.) Tier III programs that are renewing accreditation must submit all required paperwork and fees to the approved accrediting agency on time in order to prevent a lapse in Tier III reimbursement rates. In the event that a program has submitted all required paperwork and fees and is waiting an excessive amount of time on a validation visit from the accrediting agency, the program may send a copy of the paperwork submitted and proof of fee payment to the Division of Early Care and Education for consideration to remain at a Tier III quality status until a decision has been made on the part of the accrediting agency. **This request will only be considered if the Division of Early Care and Education has been contacted a minimum of 30 days prior to the accreditation expiration date. If the Division is not contacted within the required timeframe, the program will return to Tier I status until approval from the accrediting body has been received by the Division.**
- 31.) Tier II programs that are changing the type of care provided (i.e., center, facility, home) must be in operation for a minimum of one year before applying for a higher Tier.

- 32.) Tier III programs that change provider type may retain their Tier III status if there is no change in their accreditation status.
- 33.) In the event that a Tier II or Tier III program is under investigation by Child Protective Services/IU, the program may retain the quality tier level during the investigation until a claim is substantiated, assuming that all other eligibility criteria are met. Substantiated claims that cause a program to be placed on provisional license will have their Tier status revoked and return to Tier I status.
- 34.) Tiered Reimbursement applicants have the right to request a conference or file a grievance. To do so, applicants must submit in writing a request for a conference or a statement of complaint to the Division of Early Care and Education within 90 days of the date of the action.