



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

To: DDS Providers

From: Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner

Cc: Peter Mason, Deputy Commissioner; Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff; David David, Director of Service Development and Support; Ken Cabral, Director of Family Services Strategy; Amber Burke, Director of Employment and Day Services

Date: September 15, 2020

RE: Employment and Day Reopening Phases- UPDATE

After reviewing the most recent data, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has determined that we *will be moving to phase 2 of the reopening of Employment and Day Services effective October 1, 2020*. Your thoughtful efforts to limit any potential spread of COVID - 19 and to reduce the risk of exposure have proven to be successful with in our community. We will continue to remain vigilant regarding the health and safety of the people we support and monitor the impact of reopening employment and day services.

In phase 2, DDS set the capacity benchmark for people returning at 75%. DDS understands that several providers found meeting the benchmarks for phase 1 difficult. The department is committed to continually working with providers on these benchmarks and we ask that teams continue to facilitate conversations with residential providers and families toward evaluating a safe return, as well as considering all alternatives to scheduling when making these difficult decisions.

DDS recognizes that some providers may not have the physical space to accommodate 6 feet of social distancing for each person they support, however we have determined that in the best interest of maintaining the health and safety of everyone we support, DDS will continue with the requirement of maintain 6 feet of social distancing.

We ask providers to implement the Reopening Plan submitted and reviewed by the regions and continue to consider alternative spaces to accommodate this requirement. Several providers have converted office areas and break rooms into additional space for group day services that can accommodate the social distancing requirement. DDS encourages providers to think creatively about options for additional space. Working with local partners, reviewing available municipal or community spaces, even exploring modular additions are all options that can help expand physical space and increase capacity while maintaining social distancing requirements.

Service Delivery Provided in Groups

DDS is requiring that individuals assigned to a group remain consistent throughout the day and throughout phase 2. We are strongly encouraging staffing assigned to a group also remain consistent throughout the day and for the duration of Phase 2. A group size is limited by the waiver service type definition and ratio required.

This is important to limit the number of people who have the potential of exposure to COVID-19 if there is community transmission at a day site. Maintaining stable groups helps to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Please continue to reinforce your system for logging for the purposes of contact tracing. If necessary, particularly note if there are interactions between different groups.

As the State and National landscape changes, the department may need to make changes to the requirements we set forth in our memos regarding the proactive measure we are taking as a community to mitigate the risks or exposure to COVID-19.

All other requirements regarding to PPE, face masks, cleaning and sanitizing approved in your original reopening plan remain intact.

For new people entering your services (grads, age outs), please follow the protocols developed as part of your reopening plan regarding screening.

Day Funding for Individuals

The funding memo "Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 Coronavirus Funding dated August 5, 2020 stated:

"Please note, funding for individuals that choose not to use day supports may be recycled after three months."

This 3-month period begins on October 1, 2020 for those individuals who are not accessing their employment and day funding allocation. It is our hope that individuals will meet with their teams and plan out the best and most effective way to return to their employment and day service. If the allocated funds have not been accessed by January 1, 2021 the regions will be reviewing those individual situations to determine next steps.

The department appreciates the ongoing efforts by all our qualified providers during this extraordinarily challenging time. DDS continues to analyze COVID-19 related data across the agency, the state and across the country to influence our decision-making processes as we move forward.

Thank you.