



Child Care News

Volume 17 | March 2023



HERO PAY PHASE 2

Phase 2 Hero Pay payments to eligible child care professionals working in ODJFS licensed child care centers, type A homes, and type B homes will begin April 2023.

Reminders:

- **March 31, 2023: Last day to complete payment portal**- payment portal information must be submitted by 11:59PM on March 31st, 2023.
- **April 2023: Payments** for eligible individuals will begin.
- You do **NOT** need to apply; however, an action does need taken. You must complete your payment portal to receive payment.
- You must meet the requirements outlined in **Child Care Manual Procedure Letter 40** to be eligible to receive these dollars.

See Child Care Manual Procedure Letter 40 for information regarding eligible roles, dates of employment required for eligibility, and payment amounts.

Hero Pay guidance and frequently asked questions can be found on the **OCCRRRA** website.

READ IT AGAIN!

All licensed child care centers and licensed family child care providers in Ohio received the Read It Again! supplemental curriculum and 15 storybooks in February 2023. Read It Again! is a free curriculum supplement to develop and strengthen children's early language and literacy foundations. The storybooks you received align with the age of the children enrolled in your program. Hopefully you also attended one of the 2-hour online trainings. If not, you can

still take the self-paced, online Ohio Approved training.

For questions or to register for the self-paced training, please visit: <https://readitagain.osu.edu>.

IMAGINATION LIBRARY: BOOKS FOR PROGRAMS PROVIDING PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE

Ohio's Imagination Library launched a statewide literacy outreach campaign in December. The Imagination Library mailed resources to all child care programs serving families receiving publicly funded child care (PFCC). Programs also received a letter from the director of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Ohio with details. Please reach out to them at jointhecause@ohgil.org if you have any questions.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Ohio wants to mail free books to all Ohio children under five. Books are mailed monthly. Encourage your families to enroll at: <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/enroll>

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) partnered with Ohio's Imagination Library. Together they launched the Storybook Trails program. This program promotes literacy, healthy lifestyles, and connecting with nature. There are 18 Storybook Trails located in Ohio state parks. The trails have panels with a page of a children's book. There is also an activity that goes with the page. Some trails feature a book from the Imagination Library. Check for trails at: <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/initiatives>.

Program Text Messages

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services can now send cell phone text messages to early childhood programs with Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS) accounts. Text messages may include information about the following:

- Policy changes
- New technical assistance documents
- System desk aids
- Professional development opportunities
- Confirmation of a program's decision to opt in or cancel text messaging services

You can OPT IN for text messaging through your program's OCLQS account. Email will continue to be the primary means of communicating with programs. For guidance on how to use text messaging, visit **[OCLQS Licensing Job Aids | Early Learning and Development | Ohio Department of Job and Family Services](#)**.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE GUIDE FOR LICENSED PROGRAMS

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) revised the Child Care Resource Guide. The guide directs programs to the correct phone numbers, emails, and websites for child care licensing, systems, rules, forms, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ), and additional resources: **<https://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/contact.stm>**.

COPAYMENT WAIVERS ENDING FOR PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE (PFCC)

The temporary copayment waiver support for families receiving PFCC will end July 1, 2023. Programs that provide PFCC services are encouraged to start working with the families that have an assigned copayment to establish a copayment agreement. Assigned copayments can be viewed in **KinderConnect** for each child with an authorization to your program.

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM OUR PARTNERS: MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Caring for young children is a challenging and rewarding career, but it can also be stressful. The US Department of Health & Human Services Child Care Technical Assistance Network has online resources to help child care providers:

- Recognize and reduce stress
- Avoid burnout
- Care for themselves

It also includes links to recorded relaxation exercises in English and Spanish:

<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/infant-toddler-resource-guide/self-care-and-professionalism>.

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

April 23rd to 29th is National Library Week: Check to see if your local library has any special events and share the information with your families.

Ways to celebrate with your children

- Teach your children about the different types of books you can check out at your library. Explore and create lesson plans based on different types of books during the week. For example, read a non-fiction book about forest animals. Then make a chart with the children that lists the physical characteristics of the animal, their habitat, and what they like to eat. Check out a cookbook with simple snack recipes and ask the kids to vote on one to create in your program.
- Take a field trip to your local library. Your library may be willing to host a special story time activity for your group.
- Have the children write a note or draw a picture to thank a librarian.
- Read books about libraries and librarians. Some examples are:
 - *Lola at the Library* by Anna McQuinn
 - *Library Lion* by Michelle Knudsen
 - *A Library* by Nikki Giovanni
 - *Library Mouse* by Daniel Kirk
 - *Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré* by Anika Aldamuy Denise

RAINY-DAY IDEAS AND BOOKS

Spring in Ohio brings warmer days, but many of those days will be rainy! Some rainy-day books and activity ideas are:

- *Read The Rainstick: A Fable* by Sandra Chisholm Robinson and Peter Grosshauser, then have the children make their own rainstick out of a cardboard paper towel or wrapping paper tube.
 - Cut some small slits at different places on the tube.
 - Have the children push metal paper fasteners into the center of the tube through the slits.
 - Cover one end of the tube with duct tape.
 - Let the children place one or two handfuls of dried beans* into the tube.
 - Cover the other end of the tube with duct tape and let the children explore the sounds made when they tilt their rainstick.
*Remember to monitor children when they add the beans and use the rainstick as dried beans can be choking hazards and should never be eaten.
- Teach the children about the water cycle
 - WKBN, Youngstown, created a segment for children called, "Weather for Kids," which teaches children about weather concepts. Check out their site for a simple evaporation, condensation, and precipitation project to do with your children: <https://www.wkbn.com/weather/evaporation-condensation-and-precipitation-project/>
- Other rainy-day books:
 - *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema.
 - *Water Changes* by Bobbie Kalman.
 - *The Little Raindrop* by Joanna Gray.

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Create a poetry lesson plan and celebrate with a poetry café

- Help each child write a short poem they can memorize and "read" to the class. Younger children can draw a picture about a poem you shared with them and share the picture with the class. Remember simple nursery rhymes are also poems.

- Scholastic offers some tips on "How to Write Poetry with Preschoolers" at: <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/raise-a-reader-blog/how-to-write-poetry-preschoolers.html>

Some ideas for creating your poetry café:

- Use empty oatmeal cartons or coffee cans with lids for homemade bongos. Tape or glue paper around the bongos and allow the children to decorate them. Let the children decide if they want to use their bongo when they recite their poetry.
- Have the children make and wear no-sew felt berets.
- Create a space where each child can stand to recite their poem. Shine a flashlight in that direction as a spotlight.
- Create an audience space by placing small tables with chairs, carpet squares, or pillows for the children to sit on. Put some mason jars with flameless tealights on the tables or around the seating area. If it is safe to do so, turn down some of the lights.
- Have children color a sheet of paper to look like a red and white checked placemat.
- Put on an apron and serve the children snacks, or let the children take turns being the server.
- Teach the children to snap instead of applauding after a poem is read. (Learning to snap their fingers helps children develop their pincer grasp.)
- Consider inviting one or two guests to come and recite or read their favorite poem.

Resources for Providers

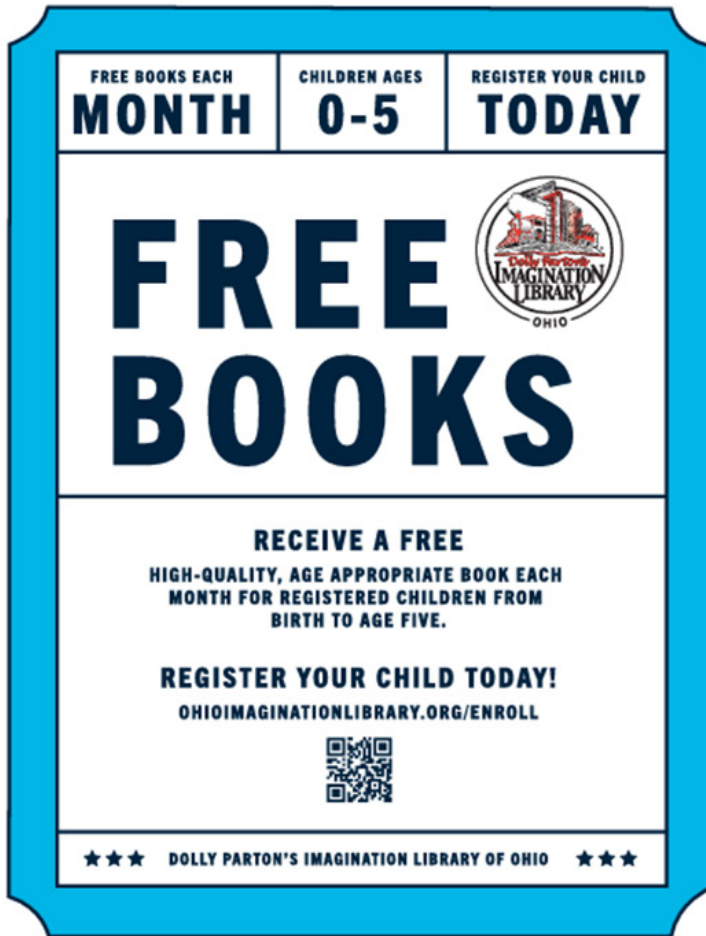
Receive free guidance to help prevent non-compliances before they happen!

Visit the **ODJFS Programs** webpage and **BOLDBeginning!** website to obtain your free resources NOW!

Resources for Families

Please share this page with families enrolled in your program.

IMAGINATION LIBRARY: FREE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVECO-



PAYMENT WAIVER SUPPORT ENDING FOR PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE

On July 1, 2023, the publicly funded child care (PFCC) co-payment waiver assistance will end. All families receiving PFCC are required to begin paying their assigned co-payment to their authorized provider beginning the service week of July 2, 2023. Families and providers will need to review their co-payment agreement to determine if a new agreement is needed. Co-payments will continue to be waived until July 1, 2023. Currently assigned weekly co-payment amounts are accessible to you through KinderSign and the OBSSP.

APRIL 23RD TO 29TH IS NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

The theme for this year's National Library Week is, "There's More to the Story." Ohio libraries have always provided an amazing selection of books and research information for Ohio families. Today's libraries continue to offer great and exciting book collections that help children improve their cognition and language skills, spark their creativity, and learn about their world.

In addition to the wonderful books available, Ohio libraries offer many other useful and exciting services! What is available varies by library, but some of the additional items and services available could include:

- Musical instruments
- Games and puzzles
- Reading programs and prizes for children and adults
- Passes to local museums and cultural organizations
- Book clubs for children and adults
- Storytimes
- Crafting classes
- Maker spaces with tools and machines like 3-D printers and cutting machines
- Movie nights
- Internet and technology access
- Literacy skills
- Science kits
- Seed sharing

National library week is a great time for your family to visit your local library to check out some books and to learn all the ways your library serves your community

Resources for Families

Please share this page with families enrolled in your program.

PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE AND OHIO BENEFITS

Ohio families who meet income and other requirements may be able to receive child care payment assistance. This is called publicly funded child care (PFCC). The Ohio Benefits (OB) Self-Service Portal (SSP) is an online site you can use to apply for and view your cash, food, medical assistance, and/or PFCC benefits. You can also manage and update your PFCC benefit information in the OB SSP.

The OB SSP is mobile friendly and is located at: ssp.benefits.ohio.gov.

The following videos will help you with the OB SSP:

- [How to Create an Account](#)
- [How to Reset Password](#)
- [How to Upload Docs](#)
- [How to Apply](#)
- [How to Report Changes](#)
- [Eligibility Self-Assessment](#)
- [SSP Updates Overview](#)
- [Request a Change in Child Care Provider](#)

For additional information on who can get child care assistance, please see: <https://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS01309/pdf/>

CHILDREN'S MEDICATION SHORTAGES

Many families have been struggling to obtain children's pain and fever relief medications due to shortages. A recent article titled, "Children's Tylenol is getting harder to find. Here's what to do," in the Washington Post provided some information from physicians for parents who are struggling to find pain and fever relief medication for their children:

- Do not use a multi-symptom cold or flu medication in place of acetaminophen or ibuprofen. They may contain extra ingredients that lead to severe side effects in some children.
- Never give children aspirin.
- Do not give children adult medication without consulting a doctor.

- Do not give your child expired medication, even if you feel it is an emergency.
- Call the pharmacy or check their website before you go to see what is in stock. If you are having trouble finding a medication, reach out to family and friends and ask them to check the pharmacies near them.
- Ask the pharmacist if there is a generic version available.
- For children aged 2 and older, try substituting chewable medication for liquid versions.
- Check with your pediatrician to see if you can switch to a different pain reliever or fever reducer.
- Reach out to your pediatrician with any questions.

An article on the Akron Children's Hospital website offers some additional suggestions at: <https://www.akronchildrens.org/inside/2022/12/20/childrens-pain-reliever-shortage/>

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services offers a "Grow Power Toolkit" for Ohio families with young children. This tool kit offers strategies to help families navigate parenting young children. It provides information about the developmental needs of children birth to age 8. The toolkit gives families resources they will need for children's emotional, social, physical, and brain development. It also includes information about early intervention services.

Find additional information, including how you can order the "Grow Power Toolkit" at: <https://boldbeginning.ohio.gov/families/families-lp/grow-power>

Resources for Families

Please share this page with families enrolled in your program.

WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN?

Executive function skills help us “plan, organize, focus attention, remember instructions, and get things done.” It is important for families to help children build these skills at home. Parents can help build these skills during play time by asking their child what the child is doing, why they are doing it, and what they will do next.

One activity you can do with your child(ren) this spring to help them build their executive function skills is to plan and plant a windowsill or outdoor garden.

- Start by reading books about growing plants. Google growing times and conditions. Then let your child choose what type of garden they would like to grow. For example, they may want to grow an herb garden, flower garden, or salad garden. Some gardens will work better outdoors than indoors. Talk with your child about any limitations if you are growing indoors.
- Create a calendar or schedule with your child that lists the dates when you are going to get the seeds, plant the seeds, transplant the seeds. You can also add days when your child should check to see if the plants need watering. Include a day of the week when your child will use a ruler to measure the plant and make other observations about it.
- Take your child with you to find the seeds and dirt. You can save seeds from things your child eats, such as orange seeds, avocado pits, or tomato seeds. Check the internet for how to prepare the seeds for planting. Some libraries, such as the Akron-Summit County Public Library, provide seeds to children and gardeners.

- The children can start by planting the seeds in a cardboard egg carton, and later switch them to pots or plant them outside. If you move them outside, help your child plan a good location based on whether the plant needs sun or shade. Will the plant need protection from animals?
- If you grew something to eat, let your child plan how to use it in a future cooking project. If your plants do not grow, or do not produce a flower or vegetable, ask the children for ideas why. Let them know that failing and then re-planning and trying something different is part of learning.

Check out some of the following books from your library to get you started:

- *Linnea's Windowsill Garden* by Christina Bjork and Lena Anderson
- *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons
- *Planting Seeds* by Kathryn Clay
- *Gardening* by Stephanie Turnbull