

Dear Quality First Scholarships Participant:

As you are aware, Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW) administers the Quality First Scholarships program funded by First Things First (FTF). As a public agency and a nonprofit committed to the healthy development of young children, FTF and VSUW understand the crucial role child care and preschool providers play in educating young children and in supporting working families.

The COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic has raised a variety of challenges for child care and preschool providers, and many are temporarily closing their doors due to decreased enrollment, staffing shortages and/or the inability to access supplies to maintain basic health and safety standards. One important element to continuing to serve children is having the resources to do so.

Earlier last month, we confirmed that FTF would continue paying for QF scholarships for children who were absent, including those who were absent either due to actual illness or because their parents did not feel comfortable taking them to a child care setting during the health crisis (see March 13, 2020 email).

We have received additional guidance from FTF and would like to inform you that, for the foreseeable future and until further notice, FTF and VSUW will pay for all QF scholarships whether the QF scholarship participant was open or not **based on scholarship reimbursements for February 2020**. Please continue to report attendance and usage data for QF scholarship students on a monthly basis as you have always done in the Quality First Scholarships Reporting Portal. Reporting is particularly important because if your current or future QF scholarship service levels exceed the February 2020 reimbursement level (based on, for example, filling vacant QF scholarship slots), you will be paid at the higher level.

The reporting portal will be open from Wednesday, April 1st at 12:00am through Tuesday, April 7th at 11:59pm for you to submit your March 2020 report. VSUW is available Monday through Friday from 8:00am – 5:00pm for any customer service questions or technical support.

The current situation in the child care system has also raised questions about system capacity and how to best support QF scholarship families whose providers have temporarily closed. In order to help FTF and VSUW make decisions in that regard, please fill out this [short survey](#) by **April 6, 2020**.

On behalf of FTF and VSUW, we look forward to continue working with you to ensure children have access to quality early learning during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

VSUW QF Scholarships Team

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