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Revised 09/01/18
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION TO CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the Family Support Unit is to assist families striving towards self-sufficiency by:

- Providing quality early childhood education in a timely and courteous manner
- Assisting families through case management services and community outreach
- Encouraging family engagement
- Maintaining parental choice
- Promoting continuity of care
- Being good stewards of the public trust

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY SUPPORT UNIT (FSU)
The purpose of the Family Support Unit (FSU) is to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care for families in the State of Arkansas. The primary funding source for the Family Support Unit comes from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The Child Care and Development Fund is under the administration of the U.S. Department of Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The FSU purpose is achieved in the following ways:

- Assisting families in achieving and maintaining economic self-support and self-sufficiency through case management
- Reinforcing the idea that the strength of the family is important to the state’s and the nation’s economy
- Assisting in the prevention of neglect, abuse, and exploitation of children through child care case management
- Promoting social and emotional development of children in early education settings to reduce and prevent the unnecessary or inappropriate suspension or expulsion of children
- Participating in family engagement and community outreach
- Developing child care procedures that best suit the needs of the children and the parents within the state
- Promoting parental choice to empower parents to make their own decisions regarding child care
- Providing consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care
- Encouraging parental and family involvement in the development of their children

1.3 FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1.3.1 DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
Act 1132 of 1997 established the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) within the Arkansas Department of Human Services. The purpose of DCCECE is to enhance coordination of child care and early childhood education programs within the state. This coordination ensures a seamless delivery of service to low-income families and those who are moving from welfare to work.

DCCECE must ensure:

- Promotion of family engagement through outreach, case management and consumer education
- Stable child care assistance for families
- Equal access to high quality child care for low-income families
- The health and safety of child care settings through standards and monitoring processes
- The recruitment and retention of a qualified and effective child care workforce
- Continuous quality improvement

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education shall strive to improve the overall quality of child care services and programs by implementing the health, safety, licensing, training, and oversight standards
established in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) of 2014. 1 If eligibility requirements are met, child care assistance shall be provided (pending the availability of funds).
As the lead agency, the Arkansas Department of Human Service (DHS) is responsible for implementing a program that complies with federal regulations associated with CCDF. Under the regulations, DHS must ensure that:

- The program is made accessible to all eligible parents (as funding allows)
- Parents/custodians are given a choice of eligible CCDF Program Participant (provider) and that the requirements of this program shall not significantly restrict parental choice of the types of CCDF Program Participants
- Parent/custodians shall have unlimited access to their children and to the CCDF Program Participants that are caring for their children during normal hours of operation
- A record of parental complaints is maintained and made available to the public on request
- Consumer education information is made available to the public concerning licensing and regulatory requirements, complaint procedures, health and safety information and policies relative to child care services

1.3.2 PARENTAL CHOICE

The casehead shall select the CCDF Program Participant for the child, except in Protective Services and/or Foster Care cases. In Protective Services and/or Foster Care cases, the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) shall make the final decision concerning the CCDF Program Participant based on the child’s needs and the case plan. CCDF Program Participants meeting state Quality Approval Accreditation shall be given priority consideration in this selection.

The term casehead refers to the person applying for child care assistance on behalf of a child. A casehead must be at least 18 years of age (except in the case of an emancipated minor) and must have physical custody of the child. Teen parents twenty (20) years or younger and completing their GED or high school diploma shall be listed in KidCare as the casehead. For future reference in policy, casehead shall be synonymous with parent, custodian, guardian, client, applicant or recipient.

The casehead must select a CCDF Program Participant that:

- Is licensed or registered by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
- Meets the requirements of the State of Arkansas
- Has completed the required Participant training and has submitted a signed copy of the CCDF Participant Agreement

If a CCDF Program Participant that meets these requirements cannot be located, the casehead may request assistance from the Family Support Specialist in locating a facility.

1.3.3 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Federal and state laws, as well as DHS policy restrict the use or disclosure of information concerning applications or recipients of child care services to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. The casehead, upon signing the application for Child Care Assistance gives consent for the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) to secure information related to the applicant’s eligibility from collateral sources. DHS shall cross-reference information provided to other governmental programs.
1.3.4 PROHIBITED DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES
The Department of Human Services is in compliance with Title VI \(^2\) and VII \(^3\) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sections 503 \(^4\) and 504 \(^5\) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. \(^6\)

1.3.5 USE OF PROCEDURE MANUAL
The Family Support Specialist, as well as other Family Support Unit employees, shall utilize this procedure manual, to determine assistance eligibility for all applicants in a fair, consistent and timely manner. The Family Support Specialist is responsible for exercising prudent and reasonable judgment when applying procedure(s).

1.4 OVERVIEW OF CASEHEAD RESPONSIBILITIES
The casehead has the responsibility to provide complete and accurate information and documentation regarding the casehead’s situation any time it is requested by a DCCECE employee.

The casehead also has the responsibility to report to the Family Support Specialist any required changes that affects eligibility or fee assessment within ten (10) calendar days of the date the change occurs. Any cessation of employment and/or attendance at an educational or job skills training program is required to be reported within ninety (90) calendar days. The casehead must give a minimum of a ten (10) calendar day notice to the Family Support Specialist and the current CCDF Program Participant when changing providers. Failure to abide by this provision shall result in the casehead being responsible for child care payment at the new facility until the new authorization is written.

1.5 APPEALS AND HEARINGS

1.5.1 RIGHT TO CASE REVIEW
Whenever an application is denied, or adverse action is taken, the casehead must be informed in writing of the decision and of the right for a review of that decision. The notice must state that the casehead has ten (10) calendar days from the date on the Notice of Action in which to submit a request for an Internal Review of the decision.

The casehead or an authorized representative acting on behalf of the casehead may request an Internal Review of the following actions:

- Termination of child care services
- Application, redetermination or changes not processed according to procedure
- Fee assessment

The casehead or an authorized representative acting on behalf of the casehead may NOT request an Internal Review of the following actions:

- Action taken by the DCCECE as a result of the unavailability of funds
- Reaching the lifetime limit of sixty (60) months
- Any request for an Internal Review not received within the time frame outlined in this procedure

An authorized representative must be acting at the written request of the casehead, and must be acting strictly in the interest of the casehead. A CCDF Program Participant cannot act on behalf of the casehead during an Internal Review or Appeal Process.

1.5.2 INTERNAL REVIEW
The following process shall be followed for all Internal Review requests:

\(^2\) Title VI Overview  
\(^3\) Title VII Overview  
\(^4\) Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 503 Overview  
\(^5\) Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 Overview  
\(^6\) American’s with Disabilities Act of 1990 Overview
1. Casehead must request an Internal Review in writing within ten (10) calendar days of adverse action to the Program Coordinator. Casehead shall be notified of the decision within ten (10) business days.

2. If the casehead is dissatisfied with this review, casehead must request an Internal Review from the Unit Administrator within ten (10) calendar days of the Program Coordinator’s written decision. Casehead shall be notified of the decision within ten (10) business days.

3. If the casehead is dissatisfied with this review, casehead may request an Internal Review from the DCCECE Division Director within thirty (30) calendar days of the Unit Administrator’s decision. Casehead shall be notified of the decision within ten (10) business days.

4. If the casehead is dissatisfied with this review, casehead may request an Administrative Hearing within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the adverse action decision by the DCCECE Division Director. Casehead shall request a review by providing a written notice through the Division website form, submitting a request to any local DHS office or to either of the following Central office locations:

    Department of Human Services
    DCCECE
    P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-140
    Little Rock, AR 72203-1737

    Family Support Unit
    P.O. Box 1437 Slot S-145
    Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

1.5.3 ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING

Only a casehead has the right to an administrative hearing within thirty (30) calendar days following an adverse action after an internal review, alleged overpayment, fraud, and/or IPV. The request shall be made in writing to:

    Office of Appeals and Hearings
    P.O. Box 1437, Slot N-401
    Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

DCCECE shall utilize the DHS Office of Finance and Administration (OFA) Accounts Receivable to recoup any monies that have been determined to be owed by a casehead or CCDF Program Participant. The DHS OFA Accounts Receivable shall establish a payment schedule for the casehead or CCDF Program Participant to repay any amount owed.

- The casehead or CCDF Program Participant may contact the DHS OFA Accounts Receivable directly at 501-320-6536 or 1-800-282-7505.
- Casehead must document that the payment is for a child care overpayment. The following information must be listed on payment:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone Number
  - Social Security Number

- CCDF Program Participant must document that the payment is for a child care overpayment. The following information must be listed on payment:
  - Facility Name and Facility Number
  - Address

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CCDF State Plan 8.1.6, p. 179-181
Revised 09/01/18
**1.6 CASEHEAD RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Child Care Assistance is pending the availability of funds and eligibility.

2. Child care assistance cannot be denied on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, or political belief.

3. All adults in the Eligibility Unit must:
   - Work thirty (30) or more hours per week or,
   - Attend school full time or job skills training program equal to thirty (30) hours per week or,
   - Combine work and school/job skills training equal to thirty (30) or more hours per week

4. Lifetime limit of child care assistance is sixty (60) months per parent/custodian unless otherwise exempted.
   - Any month in which five (5) days are billed by the CCDF Program Participant (child care provider) is considered a month of child care assistance and countable towards the sixty (60) month lifetime limit.

5. Withholding information or providing false information may result in the denial or termination of child care assistance. You agree to cooperate in any DHS inquiry concerning your child care assistance. Failure to cooperate shall result in the termination of child care services.

6. Information provided shall not be released without your written consent, except to parties allowed by law. Your name and Social Security Number may be provided to employers, governmental agencies, educational institutions, or any other party deemed necessary by DHS to determine your eligibility. DHS shall cross-reference information provided to other governmental programs.

7. DHS shall not retroactively pay or reimburse child care expenses prior to approval.

8. CCDF Program Participant (child care provider) may be selected according to parental choice. CCDF Program Participant information may be found on our website: [http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/default.aspx](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/default.aspx)
   - Website information includes:
     - Child care search tool
     - Better Beginnings Rating
     - Facility complaints
     - Facility visits

9. No child, receiving subsidy funding, shall be suspended or expelled from the facility without approval from DCCECE.

10. Upon approval, parent(s) or custodian(s) must attend an initial interview with a Family Support Specialist (FSS). Each year either a redetermination interview or a reconnect session shall be scheduled depending on the Better Beginnings Level.

11. The CCDF Program Participant (child care provider) may charge the following fees:
   - Co-pay based on Better Beginnings Rating
   - Registration, late pickup, late payment, insurance, materials or reasonable fees
Additional charges may apply if child care provider is a Better Beginnings Level two (2) or higher
Fees for exceeded absentee days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trimester</th>
<th>Days Allowed</th>
<th>Not to Exceed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July – October</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6 in a given month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November – February</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8 in a given month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March – June</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6 in a given month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. All notices shall be sent electronically via email. An accurate and valid email address must be on file. Email should be checked regularly to ensure all notices are received. DHS is not responsible for any lapse of communication for failure to report an email change to your Family Support Specialist within ten (10) calendar days of the change.

13. The following changes must be reported to your Family Support Specialist (FSS) within ten (10) calendar days of the change: Address, email, phone number, change of CCDF Program Participant, income over eighty-five (85%) SMI, household composition that increases household income over eighty-five (85%) SMI. Any cessation of employment, and/or attendance at an education or job skills training program must be reported within ninety (90) calendar days.

14. A change of CCDF Program Participant (child care provider) may require a redetermination of eligibility. Payments to the new CCDF Program Participant (child care provider) are your responsibility until the change is processed. The following information is required ten (10) calendar days prior to the date of change:
   - DCC-552 Child Care Arrangement Form and DCC-553 Change Form

15. If any adverse action is taken on your application or child care case, excluding overpayment or fraud, you have the right to an Internal Review. If an overpayment, fraud, and/or Intentional Program Violation is alleged, you have the right to an Administrative Hearing.

SECTION 2 - CCDF PROGRAM PARTICIPANT (CHILD CARE PROVIDER)

2.1 PARTICIPATION

To participate in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program, a CCDF Program Participant (child care provider) must meet all of the following conditions:

- Are licensed or registered by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
- Are certified in Better Beginnings
- Agree to comply with the regulations set out in the CCDF Program Participant Agreement
- Complete the online CCDF Program Participant Agreement Training
  - For additional information, the CCDF Program Participant may access the CCDF Agreement trainings and documents online at:
  - http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/ChildCareAssistance.aspx

2.2 PREVENTION OF SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

The beginning years of any child’s life are critical for building the early foundation of learning, health and wellness needed for success in school and later in life. During these years, children’s brains are developing rapidly, influenced by the experiences, both positive and negative, that they share with their families, caregivers,
teachers, peers, and in their communities. A child’s early years set the trajectory for the relationships and successes they will experience for the rest of their lives, making it crucial that children’s earliest experiences truly foster – and never harm – their development. As such, expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings, two stressful and negative experiences young children and their families may encounter in early childhood programs, should be prevented, severely limited, and eventually eliminated. High-quality early childhood programs provide the positive experiences that nurture positive learning and development.8

In response to federal guidelines, DCCECE implemented a policy regarding suspension and/or expulsion of children receiving subsidy funds.

- No child, receiving subsidy funding, shall be suspended or expelled from the facility without approval from DCCECE.
- Discipline shall reflect positive guidance, be consistent and individualized for each child. Such discipline shall be appropriate to the child’s level of understanding. Corporal punishment is an unacceptable method of discipline and shall not be used.

For assistance with preventing suspension and/or expulsion, the CCDF Program Participant, or any family, may contact the Behavior Help team at behaviorhelp@dhs.arkansas.gov and/or complete a form by visiting https://behaviorhelponline.org/. Please complete one request per child.

For more information on the federal guidelines related to suspension and/or expulsion, please visit https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf.

SECTION 3 - CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

3.1 ELIGIBILITY FACTORS

Child Care Assistance shall be provided to families who meet the following guidelines and eligibility requirements. All services are pending the availability of funds.

A family’s eligibility unit is made up of one (1) or more adults and children related by blood or law, and residing in the same house when at least one of the adults has physical custody of the child(ren) for whom application is made. In households where adults other than spouses or parents of the child reside together, each may be considered a separate eligibility unit.

- In a two parent or custodian household, both parents or custodians must meet the work/school eligibility requirements; And all data shall be collected on both parents or custodians in the household in determining eligibility.
- All adults in the Eligibility Unit must:9
  - Work thirty (30) or more hours per week or,
  - Attend school full time or job skills training program equal to thirty (30) hours per week or,
  - Combine work and school/job skills training program equal to thirty (30) or more hours per week

- Casehead must not exceed sixty (60) month lifetime limit (See Lifetime Limit Exemption 4.2.2)
- Email Address (must be valid and current)
- State issued photo ID, military ID, or passport for applicant and authorized representative(s) if applicable

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9 CCDF State Plan 3.1.3, p. 52
3.1.1 CITIZENSHIP

Parents/custodians are not required to be US Citizens.

- Child(ren) in need of child care assistance must be a U.S. Citizen, qualified alien, or refugee
  - Qualified alien is defined as:
    - An alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act
    - An alien who is granted asylum under section 208 of such Act
    - A refugee who is admitted to the United States under section 207 of such Act
    - An alien who is paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of such Act for a period of at least one (1) year
    - An alien who deportation is being withheld under section 243 (h) of such Act
    - An alien who is granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of such Act as in effect prior to April 1, 1980
  - A refugee is defined by United States law as:
    - Is located outside of the United States
    - Is of special humanitarian concern
    - Demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group
    - Is not firmly resettled in another country
    - Is admissible to the United States
    - A refugee does not include anyone who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

3.1.2 EMANCIPATED MINOR

An emancipated minor is defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years who meets one of the following criteria:

- Currently or previously legally married or,
- Legally emancipated by a court order or,
- Living outside the home of a custodial adult with no indication that his/her parent or custodians regard themselves as being responsible for his/her care or control.

- Individual must declare that he/she has no intention of returning to the home of the parent or custodian

Emancipated minors are allowed to sign the Child Care Assistance Application.

3.1.3 RESIDENCE

An applicant applying for child care assistance must presently reside and continue to reside in the State of Arkansas. No specific duration of residence is required prior to application. Residency is not affected by a temporary absence not to exceed thirty (30) days from the state.

All families must be able to provide the Family Support Specialist with a mailing address where all correspondence can be received.
Residency documentation shall include the physical address and must be from the current/previous month.

- Any of the following shall be considered acceptable documentation:
  - Apartment Lease Contract
  - Rent receipt
  - Mortgage Contract
  - Bills
  - Mail
  - State or Federally issued ID
  - Check stubs
  - Notarized Statement

### 3.1.4 WELL-CHILD SCREENING (EPSDT)

Documentation for this requirement shall be acceptable if current within the last twelve (12) months or follows the Medicaid/AR Kids schedule for well-child visits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>EPSDT (Well Child Screening)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 months – 6 years</td>
<td>Current Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Prior Year Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Current Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Prior Year Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 18 years</td>
<td>Current Screening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Completed health screening documentation or
- A physician appointment card (if applicable)
- Document health screening date or appointment date in the EPSDT field and narration should state if screening has been completed or is scheduled (if applicable)
- EPSDT documentation shall be requested based on the Level of Quality Care
  - Level three (3) shall be requested at 2-year redetermination
  - Level two (2) and Level one (1) shall be requested at 1-year redetermination
- Prior approval by the Program Coordinator is required for all cases where documentation is unavailable

### 3.1.5 SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

While not required for eligibility, DCCECE shall attempt to verify a valid Social Security Number (SSN) for every household member for identification purposes.

### 3.1.6 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

#### 3.1.6.1 EMPLOYMENT

All adults in the Eligibility Unit must be employed an average of thirty (30) hours per week or may combine employment, education or job skills training equal to thirty (30) hours per week.

#### 3.1.6.2 EDUCATION
All adults in the Eligibility Unit must be enrolled and attending an educational institute full-time or may combine employment, education or job skills training equal to thirty (30) hours per week.

- Students enrolled in institutions of higher learning (post-secondary education) must be considered a full-time student with a minimum of twelve (12) semester hours or nine (9) quarter hours to receive assistance.
  - Students must provide a class schedule or a copy of their transcript.
  - Family Support Specialist shall collect proof of enrollment in high school, GED, or higher education for each new period (quarter, semester, term, etc.) and the most current grade report.

- Students enrolled in graduate school must be enrolled in at least six (6) semester hours per term.
- Students pursuing a degree that requires clinical, practicum or an internship may provide supporting documentation in the form of a written statement from advisor or institution.
  - Only applies to classes that have long hours or rotating shifts that would hinder the student from obtaining employment or taking other classes

- Students enrolled in GED classes must show the following documents of proof including but not limited to:
  - Verification of full-time enrollment or,
  - Written statement from advisor or institution on official letterhead

- For the summer break, students have the following options based on summer plans:
  - Eligible Activity
  - Job Search
  - Inactive Status
  - Administrative Approval

- During the Christmas holiday break, authorizations shall be keyed to reflect the current scheduled period plus all days for the Christmas holiday break. The authorization shall end on the last day of this break.
- For all other holidays and breaks, the authorizations shall be keyed to reflect the current scheduled period plus any school-approved holidays or breaks. There shall be no disruptions in the authorization.

Note: Family Support Specialist shall provide case management to any students who may be failing or have GPA lower than a 2.0. However, the child care assistance shall not be disrupted.

### 3.1.6.3 JOB SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

All adults in the Eligibility Unit must be enrolled and attending full-time (as defined by the training institution) or may combine employment, education or job skills training equal to thirty (30) hours per week. Trainees must show the following documents of proof and may include but not limited to:

- Verification of full-time enrollment or
- Written statement from advisor or institution on official letterhead
- Family Support Specialist shall collect proof of enrollment in job skills training program for each new period (quarter, semester, term, etc.) and the most current progress report.
- For the summer break, students have the following options based on summer plans:
  - Eligible Activity
During the Christmas holiday break, authorizations shall be keyed to reflect the current scheduled period plus all days for the Christmas holiday break. The authorization shall end on the last day of this break. For all other holidays and breaks, the authorizations shall be keyed to reflect the current scheduled period plus any school-approved holidays or breaks. There shall be no disruptions in the authorization.

3.1.6.4 COMBINED EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, OR JOB SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

A student/trainee who is not enrolled full-time may qualify for assistance by working in addition to attending an educational program or job skills training program. To determine the number of hours a part-time student must work use the following formula:

Multiply enrollment hours by two (2), then subtract this number from thirty (30). This shall show the number of hours the part-time student must work in order to qualify for assistance.

- Example: The student is taking nine (9) hours. \(9 \times 2 = 18, 30 - 18 = 12\). The part-time student must be working twelve (12) hours to qualify for assistance.
- Example: The trainee is taking twenty (20) hours. \(30 - 20 = 10\). The trainee must be working ten (10) hours to qualify for assistance.

Family Support Specialist shall collect proof of enrollment in high school, GED, or higher education for each new period (quarter, semester, term, etc.) and the most current grade report OR most current progress report [if job skills training program] AND acceptable verifications of employment.

3.1.7 JOB SEARCH

Child care assistance may be provided for up to three (3) months to allow the casehead or eligible household member to actively seek employment following a cessation of employment, education, or job skills training program. Job searches shall not be consecutive. Three (3) months of child care assistance may only be authorized if the case has not exceeded the sixty (60) month lifetime limit. Casehead or eligible household member may receive job search following each cessation of employment, education, or job skills training program. A ten (10) calendar day notice of action shall be sent prior to the end of the three (3) month period requesting proof of employment, education, or job skills training program.

If, by the end of the three (3) month period, the casehead or eligible household member is again engaged in an eligible employment, education, or job skills training program, assistance cannot be terminated. Eligibility shall continue until the next redetermination period or next cessation of employment, education, or job skills training program.

3.2 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

3.2.1 ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY

If a child is in the full-time physical custody of someone other than the parent or custodian due to the parent or custodian being activated for military duty, the adult with power of attorney over the child shall serve as an Authorized Representative for the household. (The parent/custodian shall still serve as the casehead.) A copy of a Power of Attorney signed by the parent/custodian for the child must be a part of the case record. All income of the child’s caretaker shall be disregarded.
3.2.2 MEDICAL ABSENCE OR INCAPACITY

Families shall remain eligible for child care assistance when a parent or custodian who normally meets school/work requirements is unable to do so because the parent is:

- Hospitalized or,
- Being treated for a physical or mental illness as an outpatient

If a parent or custodian is temporarily incapacitated, that parent is expected to return to employment, education or job skills training program, or to resume caring for their child once the medical issue is resolved.

To approve care during this time, the FSS shall obtain documentation from the parent’s or custodian’s medical provider and place it in the case record. Care during this time shall be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) days, unless the physician indicates a specific period of time that child care shall be needed. After the authorized period of care expires, additional child care may be approved if the family provides new documentation from their physician to verify continued need.

Parents or custodians requiring child care during maternity leave shall be eligible for up to six (6) weeks of benefits during that time. The FSS shall place documentation of maternity leave in the case record.

3.2.3 JOINT CUSTODY

When parents or custodians have separate households, but share custody of the child(ren), either voluntarily or through a court order, the FSS shall consider each parent’s eligibility separately, as well as his or her income. If both parents qualify for benefits, each parent shall be authorized at the level of care needed when that parent has physical custody.

3.3 INCOME

Income shall be classified as earned or unearned. The family is required to report all income at the time of application, including any income that is anticipated to be received regularly, periodically or at irregular intervals during the authorization period. All earned and unearned income of each household member is included in the eligibility unit count unless specifically excluded.

- Countable income from all household parents or custodians age eighteen (18) years and over, or less than eighteen (18) years, and legally emancipated must be considered in the budget.
- Countable income – only income currently available on a regular basis shall be considered. Unpredictable income of indeterminate amounts may be considered in the budget. For example: bonuses, temporary overtime, or temporary reduction/increase in work hours

Families must report all income at redetermination; however, household income must not exceed eighty-five (85%) of the State Median Income.

3.3.1 COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME

All earned income is counted in the budget unless specifically excluded. The following types of income shall be included but not limited to:

- Gross wages, salaries and tips
- Paid Time Off
- Stipends (VISTA, Delta Service Corps, AmeriCorps, Job Corps, OJT, etc.)
- Commissions and regular bonuses
- Armed Forces pay
- Self-employment income
- Piece rate wages
- In-Kind
- Contractual Income
3.3.2 COUNTABLE UNEARNED INCOME

All unearned income is counted in the budget unless specifically excluded. The following types of unearned income shall be included but not limited to:

- SSI for the casehead, not for the child(ren)
- Social Security payments for the casehead, not for the child(ren)
- Unemployment
- Workers Compensation
- Alimony received for last three (3) months
- Pensions, interest and annuities
- Contributions

3.3.3 EXCLUDED INCOME

The following income is excluded from being counted in the budget may include but is not limited to:

- Transitional Employment Assistance
- Work Pays
- Child Support
- Tax refunds, this includes earned income credits
- Irregular non-recurring lump-sum payments (i.e. Christmas Bonuses, insurance settlements, or capital gains)
- Earnings of a child under eighteen (18) years of age unless an emancipated minor
- Loans, grants, scholarships, and work study earnings
- Earnings for graduate or doctoral educational programs regardless of the source
- Income received for educational purposes from the Montgomery GI bill or the Veterans Educational Assistance Program
- Reimbursement for work-related expenses
- Social Security benefits received by child(ren)
- SSI payments received by child(ren)
- Foster Care board payment
- Adoption subsidy payment
- The value of HUD rental assistance
- The value of Utility Assistance
- Disaster Assistance
- Tribal Income

3.3.4 PROOF OF EARNED INCOME DOCUMENTS

The following documents of proof may be submitted to verify earned income may include but not limited to:

- Copies of consecutive check stubs received in the last thirty (30) days unless it is not representative of regular pay. If income fluctuates see section 3.3.8:
  - If paid weekly – four (4) are required
  - If paid bi-weekly (every two (2) weeks) – last two (2) are required
  - If paid semi-monthly (twice per month) – last two (2) are required
  - If paid monthly – one (1) for last month is required
- DCC Verification of Employment (VOE) form – must be completed by employer
- DCO-97 Verification of Earnings form – must be completed by employer
- Contract Agreement – A copy of the current contract between employee and employer
- Verified letter from employer. Letter must include the following:
• Start date
• Rate of pay
• Pay frequency
• Average hours per week
• Work schedule
• Employer name
• Employer telephone number
• Employer address
• Employer signature

Documents to verify self-employment earned income may include but not limited to:
- Last year’s 1040 Income Tax Return with applicable Schedule form (profits or loss from business)
- DCC-575 Self-Employment Declaration form (can only be used if self-employed for less than 1 year)

### 3.3.5 PROOF OF UNEARNED INCOME DOCUMENTS

Documents to verify unearned income may include but not limited to:
- Written statement
- Award letter
- Court order

### 3.3.6 SELF EMPLOYMENT

Child Care Assistance may be approved for adult household members who are self-employed if the following conditions are met:
- Work thirty (30) hours per week at federal minimum wage or higher.

The Family Support Specialist shall use the following formulas to calculate self-employed monthly income and hours worked:
- Yearly income / (divided by) 12 = monthly income
- Yearly income / (divided by) federal minimum wage / (divided by) 52 = weekly work hours
- To calculate monthly work hours, the weekly average shall be multiplied by 4.334
- Income reported for less than a tax year shall be calculated into monthly income

Documents to verify self-employment earned income may include but not limited to:
- Last year’s 1040 Income Tax Return with applicable Schedule form (profits or loss from business)
- DCC-575 Self-Employment Declaration form (can only be used if self-employed for less than one (1) year)

Types of self-employment and required documentation:
- Self-employed applicant must provide a complete copy of their current tax return, including the 1040 form, 1040 Schedule C (Profit or Loss from Business), 1040 Schedule SE (Self Employment tax,) and any other tax forms as required per type of self-employment, or DCC-575 (if self-employed less than one (1) year). (Refer to the chart, below):
| Sole Proprietorship | Individual owns and operates trade or business alone. All profit and loss belong to the individual. | Form 1040 Schedule C, Schedule SE | • Gross Income  
• Cost of doing business (including depreciation)  
• Depreciation added back in |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Farming             | The activity or business of growing crops and raising livestock. | Form 1040 Schedule F            | • Gross Income  
• Cost of doing business (including depreciation)  
• Depreciation added back in |
| Partnership         | Two or more individuals agree to contribute money and skill/labor to share profits and losses as well as management. | Form 1040 Schedule K-1, Verification of Wages | • Gross Income  
• Cost of doing business (including depreciation)  
• Depreciation added back in  
*Partners may own different percentages of the business. |
| Corporation         | Distinct legal entity formed by individuals but having separate legal status from the individuals. Corporations must file Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State. | Form 1040 Schedule K-1, Verification of Wages | • Gross Income  
• Cost of doing business (including depreciation)  
• Depreciation added back in  
• Compensation of officers and wages earned from the corporation are treated as earnings for the applicant. |
| Rental Income       | The business of money from a tenant or group of tenants in exchange. | Form 1040 Schedule E             | • Total Rental Income  
• Depreciation added back in |
| Less than one (1) year of self-employment | | DCC-575                         | • Gross Income  
• Cost of doing business |

### 3.3.7 COUNTABLE OVERTIME

Any overtime that appears on half or more of the check stubs provided must be counted. Any overtime that appears on less than half of the check stubs must not be counted.

- If casehead, eligible household member, or applicant is paid monthly and has overtime on the check stub submitted the previous month’s check stub shall be requested. If the previous month’s check stub shows overtime, it must be counted in the budget.
- If overtime income determines a casehead, or applicant ineligible check stubs may be averaged for the previous forty-five (45) days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Frequency</th>
<th>Check stubs needed</th>
<th>Overtime present to be counted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### 3.3.8 FLUCTUATION OF INCOME

Fluctuating income is defined as income that varies from week to week. Some caseheads, eligible household members, or applicants may have irregular earnings over the course of a year, including earnings that temporarily exceed eighty-five percent (85%) of the State Median Income. In order to calculate fluctuating income, verification of income shall reflect up to forty-five (45) days.

**Accepted Documents of Proof:**
- Copies of consecutive check stubs received in the past forty-five (45) days
- Contract Agreement – A copy of the current contract between employee and employer
- Payroll statement
- DCC Verification of Employment (VOE) form – must be completed by employer and information must reflect a minimum of thirty (30) days and maximum of forty-five (45) days.
- DCO-97 Verifications of Earnings form – must be completed by employer and information must reflect a minimum of thirty (30) days and maximum of forty-five (45) days.

**Requirements:**
- Only applies to continuous employment with current employer(s)
- If multiple employers, each place of employment shall be calculated separately
  - Example: Parent/Custodian/ Eligible Household member works with two different employers. Each employer must submit separate documents of proof. Income shall be calculated separately for each employer and totals shall be combined.
- Regardless of the number of employers, all income shall be averaged together.
- Does not apply to a non-temporary raise in hourly pay or salary with current employer
- Does not apply to self-employment

### SECTION 4 - APPLICATION PROCESS

#### 4.1 INITIAL APPLICATION

Families may obtain an application in the following ways:
- From the Family Support Unit’s Family Support Specialist
- Family Support Unit website [http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/default.aspx](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/default.aspx)
- Access Arkansas [https://access.arkansas.gov/](https://access.arkansas.gov/)
- Local DHS County Offices

Families may submit application by mail, fax, email, online, or directly to a local DHS Office. For purposes of consideration, the date of application shall be the date an application is received in the DHS County Office or the Family Support Unit at Central Office. If the individual applying for child care is under the age of eighteen (18)

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10 CCDF State Plan 3.1.6, p. 56

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years of age, the application must be completed and signed by the parent, guardian or custodian of the individual, unless the individual is considered an emancipated minor.

4.1.1 COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKET

A completed application packet must have the following:

- Applicant’s signature
- Date
- Photo ID- driver’s license, state issued ID, or passport for each adult in the household
- Birth certificate for each child in the household in which care is requested
- Social Security cards for all household members (optional)
- Email Address (must be valid and current)
- Proof of residence
- Verification of earned and unearned income
- If a student, verification of enrollment in educational institution or job skills training program

4.1.2 APPLICATION PROCESSING

- Approved (pending the availability of funds)
- Denied
- Pended
- Waitlisted

Family Support Specialist may utilize previously submitted documentation if applicant has applied within the past forty-five (45) calendar days. Applications shall be processed or pended for documents within ten (10) business days of receipt.

4.1.3 APPROVAL PROCESS

An approved application must have the following:

- Completed application
- All documents of proof used to determine eligibility
- System screen has shown the applicant as eligible
  - Sixty (60) month lifetime limit has not been exceeded
- Completed face-to-face interview prior to authorization of services pending the availability of funds

Authorizations are keyed and an automated email containing the Authorization Worksheet shall be sent to the applicants notifying them of the case approval.
An Approval Notice shall be sent by the Family Support Specialist.

4.1.4 DENIED APPLICATION

A denied application does not meet eligibility requirements and may include but not limited to the following:

- Incomplete application
  - Missing signature, emails, or other necessary data
  - Required documents of proof were not provided
  - Applicant did not respond to the Notice of Action in a timely manner
- Withdrawn application
  - An application may be withdrawn either by written request or verbally.
• If a request is made in writing, the Family Support Specialist shall deny the application and record any pertinent information in the Notes section of KidCare.
• If the request is made verbally, the FSS shall send a NOA-Pending Closure Notice.

Application status verified in the system as Denied for one of the following reasons:

- Failed to attend appointment (narrate date of appointment & date of denial)
- Failed to provide information (narrate specific requested information that was not received)
- Working less than required hours (narrate verified number of hours working)
- Failed to meet school requirements (narrate requirements not met)
- Failed to meet work or school requirements (narrate requirements not met)
- Over income (narrate income calculation used to reach determination)
- TEA or ESS eligible (narrate referral to TEA or ESS child care services)
- Disqualification (narrate dates of disqualification)
- Application expired (narrate date of expiration)
- Non-resident (narrate residence and supporting documentation)
- Reached lifetime limit (narrate date lifetime limit reached)
- No eligible child(ren) in household (narrate reason)
- Mail returned/unable to locate (narrate date mail returned & inquiries to determine address as unknown)
- Other (narrate reason & circumstances of denial)

Note: All narrations must be documented in the Notes tab in KidCare.

An automated email notice shall be sent to the applicants notifying them of the case denial. Denied applications shall be kept for sixty (60) days and then shredded.

4.1.5 PENDED APPLICATION

An application shall be pended for the following:

- Application without all required documents, or
- Incomplete application

A Notice of Action shall be sent via automated email to the applicant giving them ten (10) calendar days to provide the requested information to complete the application.

Application status verified in the system as Pending.

4.1.6 WAITLISTED APPLICATION

A waitlisted application must have the following:

- Completed application
- All documents of proof used to determine eligibility
- System notice showing casehead has been determined eligible
  - An automated email notice shall be sent to caseheads notifying them of waitlisted status

Application status verified in the system as waitlisted

Family Support Specialist shall provide a list of referrals and resources to the casehead as needed.

Note: If eligible, applications are waitlisted pending the availability of funds.
4.2 TIME FRAMES

4.2.1 LIFETIME LIMITS

In July 2008, Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education implemented a lifetime limit of five (5) years per casehead for child care assistance services. DHS calculates the total months of combined services of TEA (Transitional Employment for Assistance), ESS (Extended Support Services), and Low-Income Child Care. If a casehead has reached a combined total of sixty (60) months, they shall no longer be eligible for low income child care assistance. The sixty (60) months include months of services used and not calendar months. Any month in which the CCDF Program Participant has billed for five (5) or more days shall be considered a month of service. If eligible, a casehead can use up to twenty-four (24) months of TEA childcare assistance and twenty-four (24) months of ESS assistance. Once they have completed forty-eight (48) months of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) assistance they can use the remaining twelve (12) months of assistance for Low Income. If a family is not eligible for either TEA or ESS services, they may apply for Low Income child care and use a total of sixty (60) months of assistance.

4.2.2 SIXTY (60) MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT EXEMPTION

Low Income child care assistance emphasizes participation in work and/or school activities. Low Income families that are currently authorized for child care and who have exceeded their sixty (60) month lifetime limit may continue to receive assistance pending the availability of funds if they are:

- Actively pursuing a two-year, four-year, or higher education degree
- Actively participating in vocational training, OR
- Actively pursuing a high school diploma or GED

Proper supportive documentation shall be provided to determine eligibility such as:

- Verification of enrollment
- Class schedule
- Written statement from advisor or institution
- Copy of transcript

4.2.3 PROCESSING TIME FRAMES

Submitted applications must be processed within ten (10) business days from the date of receipt and:

- Approved (pending the availability of funds)
- Denied
- Pended
- Waitlisted

Family Support Specialist can utilize previously submitted documentation if applicant has applied within the past forty-five (45) calendar days.

4.2.4 REOPENING DENIED APPLICATIONS

If after the application has been denied, the requested documentation is received and postmarked by the due date, the Family Support Specialist shall:

- Review the information for completeness.
If the documentation is complete, the Family Support Specialist shall:

- Refer the case to the Program Coordinator to reopen the closed application.
- The Program Coordinator shall re-open the application with the initial application date.

4.2.5 APPROVAL

The date that all eligibility requirements have been established shall be the effective date of service. DHS shall not retroactively pay or reimburse child care expenses prior to approval, unless a casehead has been improperly deprived of services. The Program Coordinator must approve such services.

4.2.6 CERTIFICATION TIME FRAMES

Certification of Child Care Assistance shall be authorized according to the CCDF Program Participant’s Better Beginnings rating:

- Better Beginnings Level one (1) and Level two (2) – child care services shall be authorized for twelve (12) months
- Better Beginnings Level three (3) – child care services shall be authorized for twenty-four (24) months

Families that have children at multiple facilities at different Better Beginnings levels shall have all authorizations completed and applied at the lowest Better Beginnings level.

4.2.7 LEVEL OF CARE AUTHORIZED

Care types may be authorized for the following:

- Casehead shall have the option of choosing care Monday through Friday or care based on their actual work/education schedule.
- Casehead must provide documentation if child care services are needed for more than fifty (50) hours per week.
- School aged child(ren) may be authorized for child care services only when school is NOT in session.
- Caseheads who work third shift shall have the option of choosing care during the day for sleep time or during the time they are at work. The request for sleep time shall be authorized according to the work schedule.
- Caseheads who share custody of their child(ren) may have care authorized only for the days they have physical custody.

Authorization Care Types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>Beginning with five (5) hours and up to ten (10) hours of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-Time</td>
<td>Between three (3) and five (5) hours of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>Less than three (3) hours of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Care</td>
<td>Care provided Monday-Friday where over half of the total hours of care are past 6:00p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>Care provided between 6:00a.m. Saturday through 11:59p.m. Sunday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.8 PRIVATE KINDERGARTEN/DELAYED START IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In keeping with parental choice, a parent may choose to hold their child back from public school one year. However, when school is in session, full day child care shall NOT be paid for a child who is eligible to attend public school but held back because of parental choice alone. This policy applies when the child is too sick to attend school or has been suspended or expelled. If a child is held out of kindergarten due to a developmental delay or serious medical issue documented by a licensed psychologist, physician or therapist, full-day child care may
be paid for that child, subject to the approval of the Unit Administrator. DCCECE shall follow the policy set by the Arkansas Department of Education for determining cutoff birth dates for children entering kindergarten.

Private kindergarten shall not be paid with CCDF funds when a child is of the age to attend public kindergarten. If before and after school care is needed for a child who is in a private school, and it is verified in writing by the director that the cost of this care is NOT included in the tuition of the school, the before and after school care can be paid with CCDF funds.

4.3 REMOVAL FROM THE WAITLIST

When removing an application from the waitlist:

- All applications shall be removed from the waitlist pending eligibility and approval of funds available.
- Additional updated documentation is not required if approval is within forty-five (45) days of the application date.
- All applicants shall be required to have a face-to-face interview prior to removal from the waitlist and approval for assistance.
- Family Support Specialist shall send the applicant an Appointment Notice within ten (10) business days.
- The Family Support Specialist shall verify that eligibility criteria are accurate and update any fields as necessary based on current documentation.
- The effective date of service shall be the date that the Family Support Specialist completes the face-to-face interview and KidCare has determined eligibility.

4.4 APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING

When scheduling initial or redetermination appointments:

- Family Support Specialist shall be responsible for maintaining the appointment schedule using Microsoft Outlook.
- The following is required in the Appointment Details and KidCare case notes:
  - Subject: Interview
  - Case Number (if applicable):
  - Applicant/Casehead Name:
  - Authorized Representative (if applicable):
  - Contact Phone Number:
  - Date of Appointment:
  - Time of Appointment:
  - Location (county and physical location):

4.4.1 INITIAL/REDETERMINATION APPOINTMENT

In order for the interview process to be less disruptive for families, and increase accessibility for eligibility determinations, appointments can be offered during nonstandard business hours: Monday – Thursday, 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. If appointments are scheduled during nonstandard business hours, prior approval shall be required.

- The FSS shall have the following options for scheduling appointments:
  - Contact applicant by phone or email. If unable to reach applicant by phone or email after multiple attempts, an appointment notice should be mailed the following business day.
    - For Redetermination, send out the Redetermination Packet on the 25th of the previous month prior to the end of the current authorization with a predetermined date and time for the interview.
• Follow up with applicant/casehead to confirm receipt of Appointment Notice/Redetermination Packet. A copy of the Appointment Notice shall be added to case record and document in the case notes.

❖ Appointments shall be scheduled in an area that can provide protection of the Applicant’s personal information.
❖ The FSS shall have full discretion to provide alternative meeting locations that protect the Applicant/Casehead’s right to privacy and the FSS’ safety. Supervisor approval required.
❖ Open areas may be used if there is adequate space to avoid being overheard. Potential meeting areas may include, but are not limited to:
  • County offices
  • Resource and Referral Agencies
  • DWS offices
  • Public library
  • Public park
  • Private meeting areas
  • Child Care Facility

❖ For any appointments scheduled away from the DHS county office, the FSS shall be responsible for securing a meeting location in advance.

4.5 PRIORITY
Priority is defined as the process of exempting an applicant from meeting specific eligibility requirements and removes the applicant from the waitlist. (pending the availability of funds)

❖ Applications shall be approved for one (1) calendar year pending the availability of funds.
❖ Eligibility must be re-determined once every twelve (12) months.
❖ Child Care Assistance must not exceed the sixty (60) month lifetime limit unless lifetime limit exemption requirements are met.

4.5.1 PRIORITY TYPES
The following applicants shall receive priority services pending the availability of funds:

❖ Children in, or transitioning out of foster care and children with an open DCFS protective services case:
  • The applicant must provide a letter from the DCFS case worker or a court order

❖ Children with Special Needs:
  • Special needs are defined as a child whose physical condition has lasted or is expected to last at least two (2) years as diagnosed by a licensed medical or psychological practitioner and/or a child determined eligible for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for whom a current IFSP or IEP exists.
  • Casehead must have physical custody of a child under the age of nineteen (19) who is physically or mentally unable to care for himself.
  • Applicant must provide medical documentation indicating the special needs level of care required.
  • Applicant may receive child care services for all children in the household.(pending the availability of funds)
  • An Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be submitted.
  • Resource referrals shall be made to all special needs applicants.
• Applicants shall be directed to the DCCECE website for CCDF Program Participant options.

Special Needs Care Types and Rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Needs Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>CCDF Program Participant Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level One (1)</td>
<td>No additional staff is needed</td>
<td>Shall not be paid a higher rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Two (2)</td>
<td>Additional staff is needed temporarily</td>
<td>1 ½ × the rate for ALL Better Beginnings Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Three (3)</td>
<td>Full-time 1:1 additional staff is needed</td>
<td>1 ½ × the rate for Better Beginnings Level one (1) or two (2) × the rate for Better Beginnings Level three (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Homeless Families:** (as defined by McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 2001)\(^{11}\)
  - Homeless families do not have to meet the same income and work eligibility requirements as other families.
  - Child(ren) must meet one of the following requirements for living arrangements:
    - Lacks a regular, fixed, or adequate night time residence (sub-standard housing)
    - Shares housing due to economic struggles (double-up)
    - Lives in a shelter, hotel, or motel
    - Lives in a public place not designed for sleeping (cars, parks)
  - If child is school-age eligible, casehead must provide a written statement or verification from school district.

- **Teen Parent Education:**
  - For children whose parents are twenty (20) years or younger and completing their GED or high school diploma.
  - Applicant must provide enrollment form from school or GED program, class schedule, transcript, or letter from advisor/counselor.
  - Applicant must provide most current grades or progress report.
  - All Teen Parent cases must be entered into KidCare as the casehead.
  - Teens under age eighteen (18) shall not be interviewed without the parent/custodian present or a signed consent from the parent or caretaker.

### 4.5.2 PRIORITY REQUEST PROCESS

1. Administration approves case by case
2. Send Priority Request form with supporting documentation to Program Coordinator.
3. Family Support Specialist shall be notified of the approval/denial
4. Authorization shall be keyed if approved
5. Add approval email to case record
6. Document all information into case notes

\(^{11}\) 45 CFR 98.51, McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 2001 Overview
SECTION 5 - REDETERMINATION/ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

5.1 REDETERMINATION PROCESS

Redetermination of eligibility must be completed prior to the end of the current authorization. A minimum of twelve (12) months of care shall be authorized once the casehead has been deemed eligible unless specific changes occur.

- Forty-five (45) calendars days prior to the end of the current authorization Family Support Specialist shall make contact to schedule initial interview and send out Redetermination Packet. Family Support Specialist shall follow-up to confirm receipt of Redetermination Packet by phone or email and document in case notes.
  - If unable to reach after multiple attempts, FSS shall send out Redetermination packet with predetermined day/time for interview.

A complete redetermination packet should consist of the following information:

- Completed application
- Income verification
- Employment, education or job skills training program hours
- Any other required paperwork to determine eligibility

Family Support Specialist shall conduct a face-to-face interview and collect all necessary paperwork for KidCare to determine eligibility.

If the casehead is a no-show to the interview, FSS shall send a NOA-Pending Closure Notice stating child care shall end on the last day of the authorization and follow-up either by phone or email and document in case notes. Contact the CCDF Program Participant to inform them of the authorization potentially ending. Document all communication in the case notes.

- If all information is not submitted at the interview, FSS shall give the casehead a Notice of Action-Request for Information (NOA-RFI) with a deadline of the last business day of the month.
  - Family Support Specialist shall complete two (2) copies of the NOA-RFI notice. One copy must be signed by the casehead to keep on file and one copy for the casehead.

- If all requested information to determine eligibility is submitted prior to the last day of the month, a new authorization shall be keyed to begin on the first day of the new authorization period providing the casehead is eligible.
  - Family Support Specialists have ten (10) business days to process paperwork; therefore, child care may not be keyed by the first of the next month. This may result in the casehead being responsible for payment or child(ren) not being able to attend until the authorization is keyed.
  - Any paperwork received after the last day of the authorization will not be processed.

- The case shall close on the last day of the authorization if all requested paperwork is not submitted by the deadline.

Note: Families are not entitled to uninterrupted services if all requested information is not received timely.

5.1.1 REDETERMINATION TIME FRAMES

Redetermination interviews must be completed with each casehead based upon the Better Beginnings Level.

- Better Beginning Level one (1) and two (2) are once a year.
- Better Beginning Level three (3) are once every two years.
5.1.2 RESCHEDULED INTERVIEWS
If a re-scheduled interview is requested by the casehead, FSS shall send a new Appointment Notice/Checklist. Family Support Specialist shall follow-up to confirm receipt of Appointment Notice/Checklist by phone or email and document in the case notes.

- Re-scheduled interviews should be on or before the twentieth (20th) but must be on or before the last day of the authorization period.
- During re-scheduled interviews, if all information is not submitted, FSS shall give the casehead a Notice of Action-Request for Information (NOA-RFI) with a deadline of the last business day of the month.
  - Family Support Specialist shall provide two (2) copies of the NOA-RFI notice. One copy must be signed by the casehead to keep on file and one copy for the casehead.
- The case shall close on the last day of the authorization if all requested paperwork is not submitted by the deadline.

If a re-scheduled interview is requested a second time, consult with the Program Coordinator before scheduling the interview.

5.1.3 REDETERMINATION/ EXAMPLES

5.1.3.1 REDUCTION
If a family is found ineligible due to a reduction in employment, education, or job skills training program during redetermination, the redetermination of eligibility shall be extended.

- Child care assistance shall be provided for an additional three (3) months for an Extended Authorization Period to allow the casehead to actively seek employment, education, or job skills training program.
- Family Support Specialist shall send a Redetermination Packet on the first (1st) day of the last month of the Extended Authorization Period. All remaining paperwork to determine eligibility is due by the last day of the Extended Authorization Period.
  - Family Support Specialist shall follow-up to confirm receipt of Redetermination Packet by phone or email and document in case notes.
- The case shall close on the last day of the authorization if all requested paperwork is not submitted by the deadline.

5.1.3.2 CESSATION
If a family is found ineligible due to a cessation during redetermination that occurred within the last three (3) months, the family shall be given a Pending Closure Notice that assistance shall be discontinued at the end of the authorization.

If a family is found ineligible due to a cessation during redetermination that occurred greater than three (3) months, the family shall be given a Pending Closure Notice that assistance shall be discontinued at the end of ten (10) days or the authorization period, whichever comes first.

- An overpayment shall be assessed for all days greater than three (3) months from the date of cessation.

5.1.3.3 OVER INCOME
If a family is found ineligible due to household income exceeding eighty-five percent (85%) State Median Income limit during redetermination, the family shall be given a Pending Closure Notice that assistance shall be discontinued at the end of ten (10) calendar days or the authorization period, whichever comes first.

- An overpayment shall be assessed for all days greater than ten (10) calendar days from the date their income exceeded eighty-five percent (85%) State Median Income.
5.1.3.4 INELIGIBLE

On the first day following the end of the authorization, Family Support Specialist shall close the case in KidCare and document in case notes.

- The casehead shall receive a system-generated Closure Notice.
- CCDF Program Participants are notified electronically via the portal any time a closure notice is sent. The Family Support Specialist shall send a follow-up email notifying the CCDF Program Participant of the closure notice.

Any paperwork received after the last day of the authorization shall not be processed, and casehead shall have to reapply.

SECTION 6 - CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management is defined as a collaborative, goal-oriented process of assessment, data entry, planning, facilitation, case coordination, evaluation, monitoring and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual’s and family’s comprehensive needs to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.

Engaging families is the foundation of case management. It is founded on the principle of communicating openly and honestly with families in a way that supports disclosure of culture, family dynamics, and personal experiences to meet the individual needs of every family and child. In order to promote family engagement, the Family Support Specialist shall reconnect with each family they serve every six (6) months regardless of authorization period time frame. The purpose of this communication is to ensure each family is being provided with the resources and referrals needed to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. This may be by phone, email, or face-to-face, whichever is most beneficial for the family.

- Reconnects for Better Beginnings level one (1) or two (2) shall be completed at six (6) months.
- Reconnects for Better Beginnings level three (3) shall be completed at six (6), twelve (12) and eighteen (18) months.

6.1 CASE RECORD ORDER

The Family Support Specialist shall maintain an accurate and current individual case record for each family determined eligible. The case folder should be labeled with the name of the casehead and the KidCare assigned case number. Documentation must be filed in the following Case Record Order:

- Left Side of Case Record: Section 1 (from top to bottom)
1. Records documenting EPSDT - most current on top
2. Records documenting Custody
3. Records documenting Child(ren) Dates of Birth
4. Records documenting Child(ren) Citizenship
5. Copies of Social Security Cards (if applicable)
6. Records documenting Residency - most current on top
7. Records documenting Casehead Identity - ID, driver’s license, passport, authorized representative

- **Right Side of Case Record: Section 2 - current interview process (from top to bottom)**
  (current information/documentation always placed top)
  
  1. Approval Notice
  2. Child Care Application
  3. Earned Income Verification- copies of check stubs, verification of Earnings form, DCO-97, letter from the employer, or an income tax return.
  4. Verification of Unearned Income- examples include SSA benefits, SSI, VA, UI benefits
  5. Copy of Student Schedule or Student Verification
  6. Child care arrangement Verification Form DCC-552
  7. Notices of Actions request in order as sent out
  8. Change Report Form DCC-553
  9. Any additional correspondence or documents

- **Left Side of Case Record: Section 3**
  Improper payments/Fraud (most current on top)

- **Right Side of Case Record: Section 4**
  Previous applications and correspondence (most current on top)

### 6.2 CASE NARRATION

On all cases, narrative entries shall be made at every contact with family or action taken. Narratives should be written in enough detail to allow any reviewer, such as a supervisor, auditor or investigator, to determine what action occurred.

- Documentation must be completed in real time.
- Types of documentation include the following but are not limited to:
  - All case contact, whether by phone, mail, email, or in person shall be entered into case notes. Family Support Specialist shall return phone calls within twenty-four (24) hours of contact. Exceptions to this rule only apply for approved leave or approved absence.
  - Document case approval and family updates
  - Rescheduled appointments
  - Job search start and end dates
  - List of any changes made to the application
  - Casehead compliance referrals (Overpayments/Fraud)
  - Claims
  - Case record transfer
  - Notice of Actions

#### 6.2.1 SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS NARRATIVE

Subject: Interview
Case Number (if applicable):
Applicant/Casehead Name:

Revised 09/01/18
Authorized Representative (if applicable):
Contact Phone Number:
Date of Appointment:
Time of Appointment:
Location (county and physical location):

6.2.2 INITIAL/REDETERMINATION NARRATIVE

Eligibility Unit Size:
Documentation of Citizenship of Child(ren):
Employed:
School:
Monthly Total Income:
Check Stubs/VOE:
Self-employed (if applicable):
Parent Fee:
CCDF Program Participant:
Better Beginnings Level:
Lifetime Limit Months Used:
Wellness:
Interview Date:
Next Redetermination Due:
Resource(s) Given:
Referral(s) Made:
Comments:

6.3 NOTICES

6.3.1 NOTICE OF ACTION

A Notice of Action informs the applicant or casehead before a pending action occurs. Some notices may be less than or greater than ten (10) calendar days. Notices must be sent for the following reasons but not limited to:

- Request for information (RFI)
- Pending denial
- Pending case closure
  - In the event of an overpayment, caseheads have the option of choosing ten (10) days of child care to assist in transitioning; however, the number of days used shall be calculated into the overpayment. (See Section 7.2 Overpayment Definition)
- Withdrawn application
  - If a request for a withdrawal is not received in writing, the Family Support Specialist shall send a ten (10) calendar day Pending Closure Notice.
- Inactive status
- Decrease of co-pay
- Redetermination of eligibility
- Appointment notice
- Reduction of certification period
- Facility change
- Transfer of case record
All notices of action shall be sent electronically via email. Family Support Specialist, if necessary, may contact the CCDF Program Participant regarding any requests for information or other types of notices.

6.3.2 ADEQUATE NOTICE

An adequate notice informing the applicant or casehead of the date action was taken shall be sent for the following reasons via system-generated email:

- Case closure
  - CCDF Program Participants are notified electronically via the portal any time a closure notice is sent. The Family Support Specialist shall send a follow-up email notifying the CCDF Program Participant of the closure notice.
- Application denied
- Application withdrawn
- Application waitlisted
- Authorization Worksheet (Approval of services)
- Written request for case closure
- Change occurred

6.4 PROCESSING CHANGES

Families must be allowed to report changes at any time and Family Support Specialist must act on information that is beneficial to the family, amount of child care assistance, or co-payment level. All required changes must be reported within ten (10) calendar days.

6.4.1 REQUIRED CHANGES

The following changes shall not affect the amount of child care assistance or co-payment:

- Address (within state)
- Email
- Phone Number

6.4.1.1 REQUIRED CHANGES (CONTINUED)

The following changes may affect the amount of child care assistance or co-payment:

- Income over eighty-five (85%) SMI
- Household composition that increases household income over eighty-five (85%) SMI
- Any cessation of work and/or attendance at an educational or job skills training program
  - Casehead is required to report within ninety (90) calendar days
- Change of CCDF Program Participant
  - If CCDF Program Participant change occurs, casehead must provide the following prior to the change taking effect:
    - DCC-552 Child Care Arrangement Form and,
    - DCC-553 Change Form or written request

The following process shall be used for CCDF Program Participant changes:

- If the casehead requests to switch from a Better Beginnings Level one (1) or Level two (2) CCDF Program Participant to a Better Beginnings Level three (3) CCDF Program Participant, the authorization shall end

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12 CCDF Final Rule: 45 CFR 98.21(e)  
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at the original one (1) year time frame and the case shall then be processed based on the Redetermination of Eligibility procedure.

- If the casehead requests to switch from a Better Beginnings Level three (3) CCDF Program Participant to a Better Beginnings Level one (1) or Level two (2) CCDF Program Participant, the authorization shall end at the one (1) year time frame. If casehead requests to switch during their second (2nd) authorization year, the case shall then be processed immediately.

6.4.2 NON-REQUIRED CHANGES

The following changes may be reported and processed if beneficial to the family:

- Reduction in work/education/job skills training program hours
  - Example: Casehead was initially eligible for work/school combination. If the casehead dropped one of the activities but was still active in another, this is considered a reduction.
    - This is regardless of whether or not the eligibility unit consists of one (1) or two (2) parents/custodians.
- Income that does not exceed eighty-five (85%) SMI
- New household member added to eligibility unit
  - A new application and all supporting documentation for a new household member shall be required for KidCare to determine eligibility.
  - Any newly eligible children added to a currently authorized household shall be immediately eligible for assistance upon receipt of needed documentation (pending the availability of funds). If funding is not available, Family Support Specialist shall add child(ren) in the Open Case Waitlist in DHS Share.

If supporting documentation is not provided, the Family Support Specialist shall send a ten (10) calendar day Notice of Action-Request for Information requesting supporting documentation. Changes shall not be processed until all supporting documentation is received.

The Family Support Specialist shall process the changes within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the change. The change is effective the day the Family Support Specialist processes the change.

- For adverse action the change shall be effective following the ten (10) calendar day notice of action. If required documentation is not received the case shall be closed.

Applicant or casehead may report changes by providing a DCC-553 Child Care Change Form or by the following methods:

- Email
- Mail
- Phone
- Fax
- Visit with Family Support Specialist

An office visit is not required in order to submit changes.13

6.5 TRANSFER OF CASE RECORD

When a casehead notifies the FSS that he/she is moving to another county during the authorization and would like to continue child care services the, FSS shall:

1. Notify the current child care facility of the last day for services.

13 CCDF Final Rule: 45 CFR 98.21(e)
2. Enter new address in KidCare and assign case to FSS. The FSS in the original county must contact the FSS in the new county by email to advise of transfer. Document in case notes.

3. The case record shall be sent to the new FSS and a notation made in the case notes of when and where the case was transferred.

4. New Family Support Specialist shall send a ten (10) calendar day Notice of Action with a request for a DCC-552 Child Care Arrangement Verification form and DCC-553 Change Form to be completed and submitted to the new FSS.

5. If any other information is reported, a ten (10) calendar day Notice of Action-Request for Information shall be sent.

If the casehead fails to provide the Family Support Specialist in the new county with a completed DCC-552 Child Care Arrangement Verification form and all other requested information within ten (10) calendar days, the family shall not be entitled to uninterrupted benefits and the case shall be closed. If the family reapplies, the application shall be treated as an initial application.

6.6 INACTIVE STATUS

Casehead shall have the option to place their case in inactive status for up to ninety (90) calendar days.

- A request must be made in writing or by email and filed in the case record.
- During the ninety (90) day inactive status child(ren) do not receive child care assistance.
- Inactive status can only be used one (1) time per twelve (12) month period.

Once a request has been made, FSS shall send a Notice of Action-Inactive Status Notice including start and end dates.

- A ten (10) calendar day notice of action shall be sent prior to the end of the inactive status requesting proof of employment, education, or job skills training program.
  - If casehead provides documentation of an eligible activity prior to the end of the ninety (90) day time frame, authorization shall be keyed for the remainder of the current authorization period.
    - If the case is in reduction, FSS shall email Program Coordinator with request to be forwarded to Program Manager.
  - If casehead does not provide verification of an eligible activity, FSS shall close the child care case on the last day of the inactive status time frame.

Note: If inactive status falls within a Redetermination period, a Redetermination shall be completed at the end of the inactive status time frame.

6.7 CASE CLOSURE

DCCECE may discontinue assistance prior to the end of the authorization period only in the following limited circumstances: 14

- Excessive unexplained absences (after attempts to contact family)
  - DHS recognizes that a casehead's child may be temporarily absent from the facility because of illness or some reason connected with the plan of service. The intent of the absentee billing policy is to avoid penalizing either the casehead or the Participant by not allowing reimbursement for the child's temporary absence. The facility must be open and the billed services available before billing for a temporarily absent child is allowable.
  - The maximum billable absentee days per trimester are as follows:

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14 CCDF Final Rule: 45 CFR 98.21(a)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trimester</th>
<th>Days Allowed</th>
<th>Not to Exceed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July – October</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>6 in a given month**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November – February</td>
<td>16*</td>
<td>8 in a given month**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March – June</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>6 in a given month**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Days shall be pro-rated based on the start date of the authorization.

**The Participant reserves the right to charge the casehead for absentee days that exceed the above limits.

- Any unexplained absentee days over the limits described above may be considered excessive.
  - A change in residency outside of the state
  - Substantiated fraud or an Intentional Program Violation
  - Failure to report a cessation in employment, education, or job skills training program within ninety (90) calendar days
  - Household income exceeds eighty-five percent (85%) State Median Income Limit
  - Household composition that increases household income over eighty-five (85%) SMI
  - Family chooses to end services
  - Family has reached their sixty (60) month lifetime limit (see Lifetime Limit Exemption 7.2)
  - Upon a casehead’s failure to complete the redetermination process, provide requested information, or comply with procedures necessary to establish their continued eligibility
  - Upon a casehead’s failure to meet any eligibility requirements

When a Child Care Assistance case is closed the FSS shall:

1. Send a ten (10) day advance notice of closure to the casehead via Notice of Action with a copy to the CCDF Program Participant
2. Narrate date and reason for closure in case notes
3. Close the case in KidCare
   - The casehead shall receive a system-generated Closure Notice.
   - CCDF Program Participants are notifiedelectronically via their portal anytime a closure notice is sent. The Family Support Specialist shall send a follow-up email notifying the CCDF Program Participant of the closure notice.

**6.7.1 KIDCARE CLOSURE REASONS**

- Failed to attend appointment (narrate date of appointment & date of closure)
- Failed to provide information (narrate specific requested information that was not received.)
- Working less than required hours (narrate verified number of hours working)
- Failed to meet school requirements (narrate requirements not met)
- Failed to meet work or school requirements (narrate requirements not met)
- Non-working or student adult in home (narrate household member & requirement not met)
- Over income (narrate income calculation used to reach determination)
- Tea or ESS eligible (narrate referral to Tea or ESS child care services)
- Disqualification (narrate reason such as Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and dates of disqualification)
- Non-resident (narrate residence)
- Reached lifetime limit (narrate date lifetime limit reached)
- No eligible child(ren) in household (narrate reason)
- No longer using child care services (narrate last date of service & how verified)
- Mail returned/unable to locate (narrate date mail returned & inquiries to determine address as unknown)
- Fraud (narrate substantiated fraudulent activity)
6.8 ACCESS TO CASE RECORDS
Upon written request the casehead may have access to records in which he/she is a participant.

- The record shall be made available for inspection during normal business hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 p.m.
- The Family Support Specialist or authorized DHS employee must be present during the inspection.
- Files and materials contained in the case record shall not be removed.
- Family Support Specialists have ten (10) business days to process all requests for copies of case records.
  - Copies may only be provided to the applicant, casehead or authorized representative
  - An authorized representative may not have access to the case record without a notarized statement signed by the casehead.

- Information about the status of pending investigations or criminal prosecutions shall be withheld.
- The FSS shall withhold confidential information such as names of individuals who have disclosed information about the household without the knowledge of the casehead.

6.9 CASE RECORD STORAGE
With the exception of cases with administrative hearings, all fraud/overpayment and closed cases shall be kept for sixty (60) days and scanned to eDoctus. Denied applications shall be kept for sixty (60) days and then shredded.

SECTION 7 - INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

7.1 OVERVIEW
The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) has the responsibility to assure proper administration of the federal and state funds used to provide child care services. The Office of Payment Integrity and Audit within the Department of Human Services (DHS) conducts reviews on providers that have a CCDF Program Participant Agreement by reviewing billing records and attendance records for that facility.

- Once the reviews are completed, the information is sent to DCCECE to process the overpayment, if applicable.
- Compliance referrals may also be reported by the Family Support Specialists.

7.2 OVERPAYMENT DEFINITION
An overpayment is defined as a payment made in excess of the eligible amount made to the casehead or the CCDF Program Participant.

- All improper payments shall be referred to as an overpayment.
- Casehead Overpayment: An overpayment shall exist for each day after the ten (10) day reporting time frame has passed that the casehead received child care assistance while ineligible. Caseheads have the option of using up to ten (10) days of child care assistance to assist in transition. If the casehead chose to receive services during a transition time, the number of days used shall be calculated into the overpayment.
  - Example: At redetermination, casehead reports an increase in income that exceeds eighty-five (85%) SMI that occurred fifty-seven (57) days ago.
  - Step #1: 57 days – 10 days = 47 days
Step #2: 47 days + (# of days used during Pending Closure Notice) = total days of overpayment

- CCDF Program Participant Overpayment: An overpayment shall exist for each day the CCDF Program Participant received payments from the date ineligibility was determined.
- Overpayments must be reported within three (3) years from the date of discovery.

7.2.1 OVERPAYMENT EXAMPLES

Overpayments may result from the following situations, but not limited to:

- Giving false information
- Withholding information
- Billing for unauthorized days
- Administrative error

7.3 UNDERPAYMENT DEFINITION

An underpayment is defined as a payment error made as the result of an administrative error.

7.3.1 UNDERPAYMENT EXAMPLES

Underpayments may result from the following situations:

- Procedures were not applied correctly
- DCCECE failed to take appropriate action timely

7.4 INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATIONS (IPV)/FRAUD DEFINITION

Intentional Program Violation (IPV)/Fraud is defined as receiving services or payments to which the casehead or the CCDF Program Participant intentionally misrepresents or withholds information.

- IPV/Fraud shall exist for each day the casehead or CCDF Program Participant received child care assistance or payments from date ineligibility was determined.
- IPV/Fraud must be reported within three (3) years from the date of discovery.

7.4.1 INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATIONS (IPV)/FRAUD EXAMPLES

Intentional Program Violation (IPV)/Fraud may result from the following situations, but not limited to:

- Casehead or CCDF Program Participant misrepresents information by making false statements either orally or in writing to obtain services or payments
- Casehead withholds information needed to determine eligibility
- Casehead or CCDF Program Participant falsifies or alters authorization documents to obtain services or payments
- CCDF Program Participant bills for unauthorized days

7.5 IMPROPER PAYMENT REFERRAL PROCESSING

When there is an indication that a casehead or CCDF Program Participant obtained an improper benefit or payment to which the casehead or CCDF Program Participant was not entitled, it is critical that the Family Support Specialist, in consultation with the Program Coordinator, reviews the casehead’s record or the CCDF Program Participant’s files to determine if an overpayment should be processed.

The FSS shall use the following procedures to report overpayments:

1. Enter a Compliance Referral in KidCare
   
   (All referrals must include:)

Revised 09/01/18
• Referral type – case or facility
• Family Support Specialist
• Suspected Fraud start date
• Suspected Fraud end date
• Narrative
• Any additional information that cannot be found in the case record

2. Send an email to the Family Support work unit, copying the Program Coordinator, and include the following information based on which type of overpayment:

**CCDF Program Participant Overpayment**
- Case #
- Children’s Names and authorization #’s
- Dates of overpayment
- Facility #/Facility Name/Contact Person
- Amount per day and total of overpayment
- Explanation of the overpayment

**Casehead Overpayments**
- Case #/Casehead Name/Contact Information
- Children’s Names and authorization #’s
- Dates of overpayment
- Facility #/Facility Name
- Amount per day and total of overpayment
- Explanation of the overpayment
- Attach any supporting documentation (i.e. screenshots from ANSWER)

### 7.6 STATE INCOME TAX REFUND INTERCEPTION (STRI)


### 7.7 DISQUALIFICATION

A disqualification from the CCDF Program may be imposed on a casehead in addition to requiring the repayment of the child care assistance while ineligible for services – Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), Extended Supportive Services (ESS), Foster Care and Protective Service cases are exempt from any child care disqualification.

#### 7.7.1 CASEHEAD DISQUALIFICATION

A casehead disqualification may result from the following:

- An Intentional Program Violation (IPV) was committed and the casehead does not appeal
- Casehead fails to repay a child care overpayment within the established time frames

Disqualification time frames:

- Six (6) months for the first offense, but not to be reinstated until all monies have been repaid
- Twelve (12) months for the second offense, but not to be reinstated until all monies have been repaid
- Permanently disqualified for the third offense
7.7.2 CCDF PROGRAM PARTICIPANT EXCLUSION POLICY

CCDF Program Participants shall be excluded in accordance with DHS Participant Exclusion Policy 1088. The exclusion shall follow the owner/operator and related parties and any business relocation. A CCDF Program Participant exclusion may result from the following:

- An Intentional Program Violation (IPV) was committed and the CCDF Program Participant does not appeal
- CCDF Program Participant fails to repay a child care overpayment within the established time frames
- Any violation of contractual requirements of DHS policy
**SECTION 8 - APPENDIX-DEFINITIONS**

**Administrative Error** – an error in the calculation of child care assistance.

**Adverse Action** – an action that denies the casehead/household child care assistance.

**Applicant** – The person making application to the Child Care Assistance Program on behalf of a household. Also referred to as the casehead.

**ANSWER** – The information technology system utilized by the Division of County Operations for purposes of determining eligibility and maintaining casehead information for the Food Stamp program and Medicaid.

**Authorized Representative** – An individual eighteen (18) years or older given express, written permission to handle any business of the applicant/casehead pertaining to a child care assistance case. The authorized representative may or may not be related to the casehead. Under no circumstances should a child care facility or an employee of a child care facility serve as an authorized representative due to a conflict of interest.

**Better Beginnings** – Arkansas’ Quality Rating Improvement System to ensure high quality child care and the best early childhood education experiences for children, CCDF Program Participants can be rated Level one (1), Level two (2) or Level three (3).

**Business Day** – any week day in which DHS is open, this excludes holidays and weekends.

**Calendar Day** – any day of the week, including holidays and weekends.

**Care Types** – different types of child care services such as full-time, half-time, part-time, night, or weekend provided based on the casehead’s actual work/education schedule.

**Casehead** – an individual eighteen (18) years or older (or an emancipated minor) with an open case that represents a household with the child care assistance program. (casehead may also be referred to as the parent, custodian, or guardian)

**Case Management** – a collaborative, goal-oriented process of assessment, data entry, planning, facilitation, case coordination, evaluation, monitoring and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual’s and family’s comprehensive needs to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.

**Case Number** – The unique identifier assigned to a casehead in the KidCare system.

**CCDBG Act of 2014** – On November 19, 2014, President Obama signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 into law. The new law makes significant advancements by defining health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlining family-friendly eligibility policies, and ensuring parents and the general public have transparent information about the child care choices available to them.

**Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)** – The source of funding for the Child Care Assistance Program that is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

**CCDF Program Participant** – organization or entity providing child care services. (Participant must comply with state, federal, and departmental regulations)

**CCDF Program Participant Agreement** – the contract between a child care provider and DHS for the purposes of providing child care services and billing for said services.

**Certification Time Frames** – Length of authorization period.

**Cessation** – Loss of an eligible activity that exceeds ninety (90) days and is considered non-temporary.

**Child Care Assistance** – child care subsidy for CCDF eligible families to help pay for the cost of child care so they can attend work, school, or a training program.
**Child Care Family Home (CCFH)** – A type of child care provider whereby children are cared for in a caregiver’s own family residence or in some other suitable family type residence. A CCFH must be licensed when one (1) or more persons care for six (6) or more children from more than one (1) family at the same time.

**Co-Pay** – The amount of the daily child care fee owed to a CCDF Program Participant by the casehead. This fee is based on a sliding fee scale and is determined by household size and income. Also referred to as parent fee or customer fee.

**Community Outreach** – building and maintaining a network of relationships, resources and local partnerships that promote self-sufficient families, family engagement, continuity of care and a quality early childhood education.

**Custodian** – with or without legal documentation who is assuming the parental obligations for the minor, including protecting his/her rights.

**De-obligation** – The action taken on an authorization or specific dates within an authorization to remove a CCDF Program Participant’s ability to bill for that time period without deleting the entire authorization and can be re-obligated if circumstances warrant. Days in which a casehead is ineligible to receive services within an authorization period must be de-obligated by the caseworker.

**Disqualification** – action taken against a casehead or CCDF Program Participant found guilty of fraud or failure to repay a child care overpayment, during disqualification period casehead or CCDF Program Participant is not allowed to participate in the child care assistance program. Caseheads may not be placed on the waiting list for services. The exact duration of disqualification depends on the severity and frequency of the infraction.

**Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** – The division within the Department of Human Services responsible for adoptions, child protective services and foster care services.

**DCFS Protective Services** – services provided to a family after a child maltreatment report has been founded true or during the investigation to prevent removal of the children from the home.

**Earned Income** – income derived from paid employment consisting mainly of wages and salaries, income is counted towards total monthly income for the household.

**Eligibility Unit** – A family’s eligibility unit is made up of one (1) or more adults and children related by blood or law, and residing in the same house when at least one of the adults has physical custody of the child(ren) for whom application is made.

**Emancipated Minor** – any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years who is either: Currently or previously legally married; legally emancipated by a court order; living outside the home of a custodial adult with no indication that his/her parent or custodians regard themselves as being responsible for his/her care or control.

**End-Date** – The action taken on specific dates within an authorization to permanently remove a CCDF Program Participant’s ability to bill for that time period.

**EPSDT** – a well-child health screening or verification of preventative care visit for children over the age of twelve (12) months.

**Facility Number** – A number assigned by the Licensing Unit of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to identify a licensed or registered child care facility.

**Family Engagement** – family-centered and strengths-based approach to partnering with families in making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes. It is founded on the principle of communicating openly and honestly with families in a way that supports disclosure of culture, family dynamics, and personal experiences in order to meet the individual needs of every family and child.

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Family Support Specialist (FSS) – Family Support Unit staff assigned to process cases and coordinate services.

Family Support Unit (FSU) – unit within the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education that provides assistance for eligible families to participate in high quality child care and early childhood education programs.

Foster Care – When, due to issues of safety or neglect, children have been removed from their home and have been placed with foster care parents. Foster care homes are closely monitored by DCFS.

Fraud – An attempt by a casehead or CCDF Program Participant to receive services or payments to which the casehead or provider is not entitled by willfully making a false statement, misrepresentation, or impersonation.

Gross Monthly Income – total earned and unearned income before tax deductions unless excluded.

Homeless – children or youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence including: sharing housing with others, living in motels, hotels, trailer parts, or camping grounds, living in emergency or transitional shelters, or living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live.15

Inactive Status – A temporary time frame for up to ninety (90) calendar days, one (1) time per twelve (12) month period, when the case remains open without an active authorization.

In-Kind – any gain or benefit that is not in the form of money paid directly to the household.” Examples, meals, housing, clothing, etc.

In Loco Parentis – A person having physical custody of the child. The person has assumed guardianship and responsibility for the child. Child care can be provided for this person to enable employment training or education; however, the income of that person (regardless of relationship to the child) shall be counted in determining eligibility and setting fees for service.

Intentional Program Violation (IPV) – A violation that occurs as a result of the casehead or CCDF Program Participant intentionally misrepresenting or withholding information.

Internal Review – The process within DCCECE by which a casehead may register a complaint and ask for a reconsideration of an adverse action taken on a case or application.

Job Search – three (3) month period in which a casehead can actively search for employment and remain eligible pending the availability of funds.

Job Skills Training Program – Activities designed to enhance the employability and self-sufficiency of parents and which lead to employment at the end of the job skills training program.

KidCare – The data management system to manage all case data generated by the Child Care Assistance Program. Family Support Specialist shall utilize this tool for case initiation and ongoing case management.

Lifetime Limit – child care assistance is capped at sixty (60) months per casehead for open cases.

Non-Temporary – is defined as a change in the ongoing status of the child’s parent or custodian employment, education, or job skills program that exceeds three (3) months.

Notice of Action – notification to applicant or casehead in order to request information or to communicate a pending case action.

Office of Payment Integrity and Audit (OPIA) – conducts performance, compliance and some financial related audits, and consults on operational and program issues. It also coordinates the development of audit requirements and guidelines and monitors program resolution.

15 McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 2001 Overview
**Overpayment** – a payment made in excess of the amount the casehead or CCDF Program Participant was eligible to receive.

**Paid Time Off** – hours the employer gives the employee in sick days, vacation days, and personal days in which the employee is paid but is not present at work.

**Parental Choice** – giving parents the right to choose the specific CCDF Program Participant their child(ren) attend rather than having them assigned.

**Pended** – a case that has been placed in pending status and information has been requested in order to continue processing the case.

**Prioritization of Services** – process of exempting an applicant from meeting specific eligibility requirements and removes them from the waitlist.

**Provider and Family Support** – The work unit within the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education responsible for processing overpayment claims. This unit directly supports the entire division and serves as the liaison to all CCDF Program Participants and the Office of Payment Integrity and Audit.

**Recipient** – The person receiving assistance for child care services on behalf of a household. Also referred to as the client or casehead.

**Reconnect** – opportunity for Family Support Specialist to connect to ensure each family is being provided with the resources and referrals needed to assist them in becoming self-sufficient.

**Redetermination of Eligibility** – process by which a casehead who has been receiving child care services shall be assessed by the case worker to determine continuing eligibility.

**Reduction** – decrease in employment, education, job skills training program or combination of any eligible activity.

**Relative Child Care Family Home (Relative Provider)** – A situation in which five or fewer children are cared for by a relative. The relationship must be that of a grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, or sibling residing out of the home.

**Residing with** – Living with or in a household with a parent, custodian, or legal guardian or other individual standing in loco parentis.

**Rights and Responsibilities** – privileges afforded to the casehead by the Family Support Unit and the obligations or duties the casehead shall comply with.

**Service Authorization Worksheet** – certificate issued by the computer system to a CCDF Program Participant giving permission for the Participant to submit bills to DHS for child care rendered to the child(ren) listed on the authorization. In addition to the names of the casehead and eligible child(ren), a valid service authorization shall include the start and ending dates of service, the level of service authorized the name of the facility providing the service and the name of the caseworker.

**Special Needs** – A child whose physical condition has lasted or is expected to last at least two (2) years as diagnosed by a licensed medical or psychological practitioner and/or a child determined eligible for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for whom a current IFSP or IEP exists.

**State Median Income (SMI)** – the median annual (yearly) income per household in Arkansas, a chart is attached with the SMI for Arkansas at eighty-five percent (85%).

**Supportive Services** – A DCFS term designating the degree of DCFS involvement in overseeing the wellbeing and safety of a child. In order to open a Supportive Services case, the parent(s) MUST request the case be opened by DCFS. Rationale behind this type case is to keep the family unit together while at the same time monitoring and assisting the household, monetarily, physically and emotionally.
**Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)** – a number issued by the Internal Revenue Service to report income paid to an individual. (TIN may be either an individual’s social security number or employer identification number)

**Teen Parent** – any person twenty (20) years or younger who is the parent of a child that resides in the same household. (teen parent must live with responsible adult or be declared as emancipated)

**Temporary** – is defined as a change in the ongoing status of the child’s parent or custodian employment, education, or job skills program that does not exceed three (3) months.

**Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)** – a program for unemployed and underemployed families managed by the Department of Workforce Services. (TEA requires the family engage in a work activity in order to receive child care assistance)

**Unearned Income** – any personal income received by an adult that comes from other sources unrelated to employment services, income is counted towards total monthly income for the household.

**Waitlisted** – approved application placed on a list to receive services pending the availability of funds. (application expires after one (1) year on the list)