

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Child and Family Services
11 State House Station
2 Anthony Avenue
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel.: (207) 624-7900; Toll Free: (877) 680-5866
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-5282

MEMORANDUM

To: Child Care Subsidy Families and Providers
From: Office of Child and Family Services
Subject: Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) Transition Plan
Date: January 9, 2024

The Maine Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) was signed into law on July 11, 2023. 22 MRSA §3731-A established the program in the Department to provide child care subsidies in accordance with the principles described under §3732. The program supports high-quality child care needs of children and working families while also providing a living wage to early childhood educators. Eligibility for child care subsidies under the Maine Child Care Affordability Program are determined in accordance with Title 22, Chapter 1052 and adopted rules.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) has created a transition plan for moving from the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) into the Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) based on dates set within the statute, established rulemaking processes, and the funding made available to the Department on October 25, 2023.

The following items will either begin immediately or will be implemented in the upcoming months:

- Renaming of the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) to the Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP). The CCSP website is being updated as changes to the program are made. As printed materials need restocking, they will be updated replacing CCSP with CCAP as the program name.
- Hiring of staff as created by the law. Since funding for the new positions was not available until October 25, 2023, the Department is currently working with required state agencies to create and hire the four positions needed to implement CCAP.
- Eligibility decision within 15 days; retroactive reimbursement. The Department will determine eligibility for child care programs administered under CCAP within 15 days of receiving a completed application. The Department will also provide retroactive reimbursement to a child care program that provides tuition assistance to an applicant during the application period. This initiative will be enacted once rules are promulgated and appropriated positions are filled

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enabling the Department to comply with the policy. Rules will be promulgated in accordance with rulemaking processes.

- Changes in eligibility. The Department will notify a provider of child care services within 2 business days of when a recipient's eligibility changes. This is currently happening as CCSP includes notification by mail/or email to the child care provider at time of determination and notification to the parents.
- Payments to providers within 15 days. The Department will reimburse a provider for child care services rendered within 15 days of receiving a complete and accurate invoice satisfying all the state procurement and payment requirements. CCSP is currently reimbursing providers on a bi-weekly cycle for approved invoices.
- Beginning January 1, 2024, increase eligibility for child care subsidies from 85% of the State's median income to 125% of the State's median income. Rules will be promulgated in accordance with rulemaking processes. OCFS anticipates rules to be effective Spring 2024.
- Add eligibility for an employee of a licensed child care center or family child care provider. If the employee otherwise meets the eligibility requirements after the Department disregards all the employee's earned and unearned income and verifies the employee's employment, the child care employee would be eligible for subsidized child care payments. Implementation is dependent on rules which will be promulgated in accordance with rulemaking processes. OCFS anticipates rules to be effective Spring 2024.

As policies and rules change, OCFS will be providing outreach to child providers, families, and key stakeholders statewide.

In addition, OCFS has created a new email CCAP.DHHS@maine.gov and phone line, 207-624-7999 for CCAP.

