

Changes in Child Care Subsidy Rules June 2009

Rule Changes	Impact
Expanding definition of children in protective services to those who are being cared for by kinship relative care	Income of relatives who are caring for children under a plan by the Department is not counted when determining eligibility for child care services
Legal, unregulated Child Care Provider must be 18 years of age and not be living in the child's home	Federal requirements do not allow older siblings to receive subsidy for caring for younger siblings unless they live in a separate residence.
Providers receiving child care subsidy are required to enroll in the Child Care Quality Rating System	Legislators have requested the Department track the level of quality being purchased with child care subsidy dollars
Full eligibility re-determination changed from six months to one year. A six-month report will require parents to verify current income information at six months. Re-determination will be aligned with Food Supplement or Maine Care, if the parent receives these benefits.	Time line changed to increase efficiencies and to align with other programs. This will allow parents to submit pay stubs and other eligibility verification for a number of programs at the same time.
Sliding parent fee will continue to be a sliding fee based on parents gross income and will be capped at 10% of gross family incomes as recommended by the federal rules. But the fee will be the same amount for full-time, ¾ time, ½ time or ¼ time care which is a change from prior rules.	The parent fee is a sliding fee based on gross family income to determine affordability of child care expenses and will not exceed 10% of the gross family income. Not changing the parent fee every time the weekly child care hours change creates efficiencies; the provider and parent know what the parent fee will be; changes are not needed in food supplement benefits each time the hours of care change as the parent fee will remain constant.
DHHS will pay for no more than two (2) weeks of care for a child who is absent from child care during the Parent's maternity or paternity leave. If the child who has been receiving subsidy attends child care while the Parent is on maternity or paternity leave, the provider shall be paid for the hours of care the child receives based on the original Award Letter.	Reduction from six weeks of care during maternity leave to two weeks if the child receiving subsidy is not attending.

<p>Increase in interim child care subsidy from one month to up to two (2) months for current recipients who have lost work or who have completed school and are looking for work. This is limited to one job search per six (6) month period and to twenty hours a week</p>	<p>The current increase in unemployment may increase the time required to find employment.</p>
<p>Parents must participate in self-employment activity a minimum average of twenty (20) hours per week and show an income of at least the state minimum wage per hour. If both Parents are self employed, jointly or separately, the minimum work hour/minimum wage requirement applies to each.</p>	<p>Clarification of self-employment requirements were needed to level the requirements with those parents who are working for an employer and needing child care subsidy.</p>
<p>Parents with seasonal employment or a planned lay-offs shall not be required to re-apply for their child care voucher when they return to work, if they meet certain requirements</p>	<p>Maine has many seasonal jobs. This allows parents to continue subsidy when they return to work if their employer states that they will return to work within 60 days.</p>
<p>Verification of citizenship of the children receiving subsidy</p>	<p>This federal requirement is being enforced</p>
<p>Change of definition of family size based on “economic unit” to family size based on biological children, step-children, adopted children and all other children under eighteen (18) years of age legally related and residing with the applicant who is maintaining a home for them and assuming parental responsibility</p>	<p>This definition aligns with eligibility for other benefits</p>
<p>All biological parents applying for Child Care Subsidy for children of an absent parent must submit a copy of child support order and show proof of child support received or pursued from each absent parent.</p>	<p>The requirement is waived in cases of shared/joint custody in which neither Parent owes the other support due to shared parenting or if there is good cause for the applicant not to establish child support</p>
<p>The income and eligibility of parents who receive a DHHS Child Care Subsidy Voucher will be verified through an income and eligibility verification system (IEVS) Parents will be notified before any adverse action is taken based on information gained through this system</p>	<p>Access to information from Maine Employment Security Commission (MESC) Social Security Administration (SSA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Maine Employment Security Commission (MESC) will improve accuracy of information used to determine eligibility</p>
<p>A Legal, Unregulated Child Care Provider</p>	<p>Federal CCDF requirement</p>

<p>will assure in writing that the children receiving Child Care Subsidy are age-appropriately immunized. A ninety (90) day grace period shall be granted while Parents are taking the necessary actions to comply with the immunization requirement. The following may be exempted from the immunization requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Children who are cared for by relatives b. Children who receive care in their own home c. Children whose parents object to immunizations on religious grounds d. Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization 	
<p>A legal, unregulated child care provider who cares for children in the providers home where the home's water, used for drinking and cooking purposes, is from any source other than an approved public water supply, shall submit a satisfactory water analysis report</p>	<p>Health requirement of licensed family child care providers. Same concerns for health of children in unregulated homes.</p>
<p>Annual background checks from Child Protective Services (CPS), State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) are required of the legal, unregulated child care provider and all adults residing in the home.</p>	<p>Changed to include not only the provider but other adults in the house; this requirement aligns with licensed family child care. Same concerns for safety of children in unregulated homes.</p>
<p>Recreational programs must have an inspection by a fire marshal and sign a health and safety checklist</p>	<p>Recommendations of after-school task force; the fire marshal inspection is a health requirement of licensed facilities. Same concerns for safety in unlicensed facilities.</p>
<p>Clarification of rules related to termination of subsidy and definition of improper payment</p>	<p>Rules needed to implement the federal requirement to measure improper payments</p>