

CONNECTICUT'S CCDF STATE PLAN 2016-2018: KEY APPROACHES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

BACKGROUND

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act is the law that authorizes the federal child care subsidy program known as the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). It is the primary Federal funding source devoted to providing low-income families that are working or participating in education and training with help paying for child care and to improving the quality of care for all children. Connecticut's subsidy program is Care 4 Kids.

On November 19, 2014, President Obama signed into law legislation that reauthorizes the CCDBG Act for the first time since 1996. The new law makes significant advancements focused on strengthening child care in this country to better support the success of both parents and children.

CONNECTICUT'S KEY STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PLAN

Section 1: Statewide Leadership and Coordination

- Utilize resources of the Departments of Education, Public Health and Emergency Services and Public Protection to create a statewide emergency disaster preparedness plan for child care providers serving children birth to age 12.

Implementation date: September 30, 2016

Section 2: Promoting Family Engagement through Outreach and Education

- Create a consumer-friendly website to include results of licensing inspections in plain language.

Implementation date: November 19, 2017

- Develop materials to help families make informed decisions when choosing of a child care provider.

Implementation: Ongoing

Section 3: Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

- 12-month eligibility period for Care 4 Kids recipients to allow families continuity of child care regardless of change in income or work status.

Implementation date: July 1, 2016

- Support families during a graduated phase out of the Care 4 Kids program for 12 months.

Implementation date: September 30, 2016

- Support a 3-month period of job search for families who lose employment.

Implementation date: September 30, 2016

Section 4: Ensure Equal Access to High Quality Child Care for Low-Income Children

- Work with national experts on an Alternative Methodology Study (AMS) using the "Provider Cost of Quality Calculator" to identify key elements and associated costs for the delivery of high quality care.
- Analyze payment rates in order to ensure equal access and family choice.
- Increase reimbursement for Care 4 Kids providers serving children with special needs from 15% to 25%.

Implementation date: March 1, 2016

- Provide tiered reimbursement for providers who achieve national accreditation.

Section 5: Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

- Limit number of license-exempt providers eligible for Care 4 Kids subsidy to:
Implementation date: July 1, 2016
 - Relatives, age 20 years or older, caring for children from birth to three years of age.
 - Relatives, age 20 years or older, caring for children ages three to twelve only during non-standard hours.
 - Programs administered by a public school system or municipal agency.
- Limit the capacity of care provided by license-exempt relatives to a total of three children with no more than two children under the age of two.
Implementation date: September 30, 2016
- Require license-exempt providers to comply with health and safety standards, submit to a background check and complete professional development requirements.
Implementation date background check: September 30, 2017
Implementation date professional development: September 30, 2016
- Require all licensed child care providers, staff and household members to submit to the same expanded background check as license-exempt providers receiving Care 4 Kids subsidy.
Implementation date: September 30, 2017

Section 6: Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce:

- Require all Care 4 Kids providers to complete 18 hours of orientation training within 3 months of caring for children through Care 4 Kids.
Implementation date: September 30, 2016
- Require all Care 4 Kids providers to complete annual professional development as follows:
Implementation date: September 30, 2016
 - Licensed child care center/ group child care home providers and license-exempt providers - 1% of hours worked annually
 - Licensed family child care providers -18 hours annually

Section 7: Support Continuous Improvement

- Develop a Quality Improvement System (QIS) to serve as an umbrella for all professional learning and technical assistance for child care providers including:
Implementation date: September 30, 2016
 - Orientation and annual professional development requirements
 - Technical assistance for programs to become licensed
 - Technical assistance to achieve NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation
- All support activities delivered through the QIS will be evaluated by provider and program surveys of supports delivered.

Section 8: Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

- The OEC will maintain overall responsibility for the administration of the CCDF program and will continue to monitor Connecticut's Child Care Resource and Referral Agency's (United Way of Connecticut) performance.
- The OEC will continue to set policies consistent with the CCDF plan.
Implementation: Ongoing