



Minnesota Department of Human Services

Child Care Advisory Task Force Recommendations

Establishment and Purpose

- Established under 2008 Session Laws, Chapter 361, Article 2, section 4.
- Review child care assistance laws, rules, and policies, and make recommendations to remove barriers facing families applying for or receiving Child Care Assistance.
- By January 15, 2010, DHS must report the Task Force recommendations to remove barriers facing families in applying for and receiving child care assistance.



Task Force Members and Process

- Members included staff from counties and organizations that administer CCAP, a parent receiving child care assistance, child care providers, child care and antipoverty advocacy representatives and DHS staff.
- The Task Force met eight times between December 17, 2008, and December 15, 2009.
- Task Force members reviewed federal and state child care assistance laws, rules, policies, and other documents to gain an understanding of the CCAP requirements and current policies.



Task Force Members and Process

- As directed by legislation, barriers that were reviewed included, but were not limited to:
- The length of application forms
- The consistency of the application and reauthorization forms statewide
- Documentation requirements, including frequency of producing documentation
- Barriers facing parents with limited English
- Length of reauthorization periods.



Task Force Members and Process

- Recommendations were developed based on research, information gained and discussed in presentations, and through discussions among Task Force members. Issues and concerns were brought forward by Task Force members and the constituencies they represent.
- The Task Force believes that targeted changes in CCAP policies and procedures could increase client access and retention of CCAP, reduce agency administrative workloads and expenses, and decrease improper payments.



Guiding Principles

- The changes recommended by the Task Force reflect the guiding principles established by Task Force members that CCAP eligibility should follow a child rather than the parent; should encourage continuity of child care; and that services should be easily available and accessible to applicants and participants in convenient locations and at reasonable times.



Task Force Recommendations

- The Task Force recommendations are organized under the themes of:
 - Funding
 - Increased Flexibility
 - Simplification and Consistency across Programs
 - Customer Focus
- In most cases, Task Force recommendations have financial implications. If proposals are developed for legislative changes, cost analysis through the fiscal note process would be required.



I. Funding

- The Task Force has identified specific areas where the CCAP could be funded to serve more families, to improve family's retention of child care assistance, and child care providers' willingness to continue to serve families receiving child care assistance.



I. Funding

- A. The Task Force recommends increasing funding for the CCAP so services are available to all eligible families.
- B. The Task Force recommends that unspent funds be protected and kept in the CCAP.
- C. The Task Force recommends increasing the minimum provider reimbursement rate to at least the 75th percentile of the current market rate for child care.



I. Funding

- D. The Task Force recommends increasing CCAP eligibility to 75 percent of Minnesota's state median income.
- E. The Task Force recommends changing the BSF waiting list priority order so families without access to child care assistance can access the CCAP.
- F. The Task Force recommends ensuring that administering agencies have sufficient funds to administer the CCAP.



II. Increased Flexibility

- Task Force members believe that flexibility in the CCAP can lead to improved access and retention of child care assistance for families.
- More flexible CCAP authorizations can prevent breaks in eligibility and service, as well as improve results for families.
- Additionally, the necessity to act on every reported change increases the administering agency's workload, and the opportunity for error.
- The Task Force has identified specific areas where the CCAP could be more flexible to better reflect family circumstances.



II. Increased Flexibility

- A. The Task Force recommends that laws requiring families to report, and agencies to act on, all changes that might affect a family's eligibility be changed.
- B. The Task Force recommends that, after the initial CCAP authorization, the amount of child care assistance authorized would not decrease for six months, except in specific situations.



II. Increased Flexibility

- c. The Task Force recommends limiting the situations where administering agencies are required to act on reported information if a family experiences a break in eligibility, or temporarily does not have a need for child care.
- d. The Task Force recommends that the authorization period be extended from six months to 12 months for families whose circumstances are less likely to change during the course of a year.



II. Increased Flexibility

- E. The Task Force also recommends additional flexibility in determining eligibility for teen parents in school-based child care programs, homeless clients, and other mobile, high risk populations.
- Presumptive eligibility
 - Teen parent eligibility based on the school calendar and Immediate services for teen parents
 - Minimized documentation requirements



II. Increased Flexibility

- F. The Task Force recommends increasing flexibility for self-employed, contracted and hourly employees regarding the eligibility requirement that a participant must work at least 20 hours a week at minimum wage.
- G. Increased flexibility for self-employed or contracted workers in the amount of child care assistance that can be authorized.
- H. Increased flexibility for self-employed workers in how income is determined for these clients to reflect the money that is available to families.



III. Simplification and Consistency across Programs

- Simplification and consistency in the CCAP can lead to improved access and retention of child care assistance.
- The Task Force has identified specific areas where the CCAP could be simplified and be more consistent across programs to better reflect family circumstances and agency requirements.



III. Simplification and Consistency across Programs

- A. The Task Force recommends that the forms and associated processes that a client uses when applying for or redetermining eligibility for child care assistance be simplified and consistent across counties.
- B. The Task Force recommends changing the rule language requiring that an agency accept the application received “within 15 calendar days after the date of signature,” to “within 30 calendar days after the date of signature,” so that delays in remitting the application do not lead to client ineligibility.



III. Simplification and Consistency across Programs

- C. The Task Force recommends that policies be implemented to lessen repetitive and excessive documentation requirements.
- D. The Task Force recommends repeal of the absent day policy that limits the cumulative number of absences paid for a child.
- E. The Task Force recommends that the state require that provider payments be made in a timely manner, and require that counties offer online billing for providers through MEC² PRO.



III. Simplification and Consistency across Programs

- F. The Task Force recommends that CCAP policies and procedures should align with other programs administered by DHS, where possible and reasonable.
- G. The Task Force recommends allowing child care assistance for education activities for clients receiving TY or TYE child care assistance.



IV Customer Focus

- Providing services in a customer-friendly manner can increase the likelihood that families receive and retain child care assistance.
- The Task Force has identified specific areas where CCAP services could be provided in a more customer-friendly manner to improve client and provider experiences, improve client retention of child care assistance, and increase the likelihood that child care providers will continue to care for children from families receiving child care assistance.



IV Customer Focus

- A. The Task Force recommends that waiting list information be entered and maintained in MEC2, but that waiting list entry and management remain at the county level.
- B. The Task Force recommends that families have one waiting list date, and that if a family moves while on the waiting list they keep their original waiting list date from the original county.



IV Customer Focus

- c. The Task Force recommends that the CCAP should be fully automated.

- D. The Task Force recommends that the obligation of a family or provider to repay overpayments due to agency error be eliminated.



IV Customer Focus

- E. The Task Force recommends increased and improved county collaboration, particularly in the areas of shared resources, knowledge and interpreter services.
- F. The Task Force recommends that policies and procedures support employment service providers, school-based teen parent program workers, and child care providers in their efforts to help families meet their requirements under the CCAP.



IV Customer Focus

- G. The Task Force recommends that policies and procedures be developed and implemented to improve family-friendly services to clients and providers.
- H. The Task Force recommends improving communication and training to CCAP workers, workers from other programs, and child care providers.

