TITLE 18: HUMAN SERVICES

PART 17: DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM POLICY MANUAL

CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP) POLICY MANUAL

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT
200 SOUTH LAMAR STREET
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39201

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Page	Subject
1000	**INTRODUCTION**
1000	GENERAL
1000	LEGAL AUTHORITY
1000	PURPOSE
1001	NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT
1001	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF CCPP
1001	MDHS as Lead Agency
1001	SECAC (State Early Childhood Advisory Council) Role
1002	Partner Roles in Administration of Program
1003	CONTENTS OF THE CCPP POLICY MANUAL
2000	**DEFINITIONS**
2000	ABSENT DAY
2000	ABUSED CHILD
2000	ACTUAL CLASSROOM HOURS
2000	ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY APPEAL HEARING
2000	ADMINISTRATIVE DISQUALIFICATION HEARING
2000	ADULT
2000	AGENCY ERROR (AE)
2000	AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
2000	CARE GIVER
2001	CCPP-APPROVED PROVIDER
2001	CENTER BASED PROVIDER
2001	CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF)
2001	CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE
2001	CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CCDBG)
2001	CHILD CARE PAYMENT LEDGER
2001	CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP)
2001	CHILD CARE PAYMENT SYSTEM (CCPS)

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
2001	CHILD CARE REFERRAL & RESOURCE CENTER (CCR&R)
2002	CHILD CARE SERVICES
2002	CHILD CARE SLOT PROVIDER
2002	CHILD CARE STAFF
2002	CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
2002	CHILDREN IN PROTECTIVE SERVICES
2002	COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE CENTER
2002	CONSUMER EDUCATION WEBSITE
2002	CO-PAYMENT FEE
2002	CRITICAL VIOLATION
2003	DEGREES OF KINSHIP ACCORDING TO THE LAW
2003	DESIGNATED STUDY HOURS
2003	DIRECTOR
2003	DIRECTOR DESIGNEE
2003	EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY (ECA)
2003	EDUCATIONAL HOURS
2003	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM/JOB TRAINING
2003	Attending Educational Program/Job Training
2003	ELIGIBLE CHILD
2004	ELIGIBILITY PERIOD
2004	EXCESSIVE ABSENCES
2004	FAMILIES WITH VERY LOW INCOMES
2004	FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER
2004	FAMILY UNIT
2004	FULL-TIME CHILD CARE
2004	GROSS INCOME
2004	HEALTHY FAMILIES MISSISSIPPI (HFM)
2004	HOMELESS CHILDREN

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
2005	IMPROPER PAYMENT
2005	INCOME
2005	INFANTS
2005	IN LOCO PARENTIS
2005	INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION (IPV)
2005	LEAD AGENCY
2005	LICENSE-EXEMPT CHILD CARE PROVIDER
2006	LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDER
2006	LICENSING OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
2006	MISSISSIPPI EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS
2006	NATURAL DISASTER
2006	NEGLECTED CHILD
2006	NON-TRADITIONAL CARE
2007	NOTICE OF REDETERMINATION (PARENT)
2007	NOTICE OF REDETERMINATION (PROVIDER)
2007	PARENT
2007	PARENT WITH A DISABILITY
2007	PART-TIME CHILD CARE
2007	PROVIDER INTEGRATED PORTAL (PIP)
2007	PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILD
2007	PRIORITY POPULATION
2007	PROVIDER
2007	PROVISIONAL CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE
2008	REDETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
2008	RESIDING/LIVING WITH
2008	SCHOOL-AGED CARE
2008	SCHOOL-AGED CHILD
2008	SEASONAL WORKERS

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
2008	SERIOUS INJURY
2008	SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS
2008	STANDARD CHILD CARE CENTER
2008	STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (SECAC)
2008	STATE MEDIAN INCOME (SMI)
2009	SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE
2009	SUMMER CARE
2009	SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)
2009	TEEN PARENT
2009	TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)
2009	TEMPORARY CHANGE
2009	TEMPORARY LONG-TERM ABSENCES
2009	TERMINATED CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE
2009	TODDLER
2010	TRANSITIONAL CHILD CARE (TCC)
2010	UNINTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION (UPV)
2010	WORK REQUIREMENT
3000	**PRIORITY POPULATIONS**
3000	ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES BY PRIORITY GROUP
3000	TANF and TCC Clients
3000	Homeless Clients
3001	Children in Custody or Supervision of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS)
3001	Children Being Served By Healthy Families Mississippi (HFM) Home-Visitation Program
3001	Teen Parent
3001	Special Needs Populations

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
3002	Children of Parent(s) Deployed in the Mississippi National Guard or Reserve
3002	Very Low-Income and Low-Income Families
4000	**PARENT APPLICATION PROCESS**
4000	Before Initiating Application
4000	Initiating Application
4001	After Submitting Application
4002	DECCD Application Processing
4002	PARENT APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SLOT PROVIDERS
4002	NON-AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS/WAITLIST
5000	**PARENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**
5000	PARENTAL CHOICE
5000	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
5000	PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
5001	Proof of Age
5001	Proof of Income
5001	INCOME CALCULATIONS
5002	Calculating Income
5002	Countable Income
5002	Non-Countable Income
5003	Proof of Work/Education or Training
5004	Proof of Relationship or Guardianship
5004	Proof of State Residency
5005	Proof of Identity
5005	Proof of Child Support Cooperation
5005	Proof of Special Needs/Disability
5006	TEEN PARENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
5006	REASONS FOR INELIGIBILITY

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
5006	ELIGIBILITY PERIOD
5007	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
5008	REDETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
5009	TERMINATION REASONS DURING REDETERMINATION PROCESS
5009	REASONS FOR TERMINATION
6000	**REGISTRATION AND CO-PAYMENT FEES**
6000	REGISTRATION/ACTIVITY FEE
6000	CO-PAYMENT
6000	Determining Who Pays a Co-Payment Fee
6000	No Co-Payment Fee
6000	Minimum Co-Payment Fee
6001	ASSESSING CO-PAYMENT FEES PER CHILD
6001	NON-PAYMENT OF CO-PAYMENT FEES
6001	CO-PAYMENT REIMBURSEMENTS
6001	Higher Rate
6002	Lower Rate
6002	PRORATING CO-PAYMENT FEES
7000	**PROVIDER APPLICATION PROCESS**
7000	CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP) APPROVES THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
7000	Center Based Child Care Providers
7000	Family Child Care Provider
7000	In-Home Child Care Provider
7000	CCPP PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS
7002	COMPLETION OF APPLICATION PROCESS
7002	MSDH PERFORMS THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED CCPP FUNCTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
7002	Licensure/Regulatory
7003	Criminal Background Checks
7004	STANDARD DESIGNATION
7004	COMPREHENSIVE DESIGNATION
7005	CCPP HEALTH AND SAFETY ORIENTATION TRAINING
7006	ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
7006	Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases
7006	Prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and the Use of Safe-Sleep Practices
7007	Administration of Medication, Consistent With Standards for Parental Consent
7008	Prevention of and Response to Emergencies Due to Food and Allergic Reactions
7008	Building and Physical Premises Safety
7009	Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome, Abusive Head Trauma, and Child Maltreatment
7009	Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning for Emergencies Resulting From a Natural Disaster or a Human-Caused Event
7010	Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials and Appropriate Disposal of Bio-Contaminants
7010	Precautions in Transporting Children
7011	Pediatric First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
7012	Recognition and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect
7012	DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN
7012	Suspension and Expulsion of Children
8000	**APPROVED PROVIDER PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
8000	CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP) APPROVED PROVIDER PROCESS AND PROCEDURES
8000	REIMBURSEMENT RATES
8000	CO-PAYMENT AND OTHER FEES
8001	PAYMENT PROCESS
8001	PARENT CHOICE OF PROVIDER
8002	PARENT COMPLIANCE
8002	ALLOWABLE LEAVE TIME FOR PARENTS
8004	PAYMENT LEDGER CYCLE
8004	LEDGER PAYMENTS
8004	LEDGER ADJUSTMENTS
8004	Payment Adjustment Form
8005	Overpayment/Underpayment
8005	Certificate Error
8005	Duplicate Children on the Ledger
8005	TYPES OF CARE
8005	Standard Care
8005	Full-Time
8005	Part-Time
8005	Non-Traditional Care
8006	REIMBURSEMENT
8006	Full-Time Reimbursement Rates
8006	Part-Time Reimbursement Rates
8006	GARNISHMENTS/LEVIES
8006	LICENSURE REVOCATION OR CLOSURE BY MSDH
8007	PROVIDER CHANGE OF STATUS
8007	Procedure for Transfer of Ownership
8007	New Owner

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
8007	Previous Owner
8007	TAX IDENTIFICATION
9000	**PROGRAM COMPLIANCE**
9000	CHILD CARE FACILITY COMPLAINT PROCESS
9000	Making a Complaint
9000	Record of Complaints
9000	Types of Complaints
9000	Health and Safety Regulatory
9001	Financial or Program Violations
9001	REFERRALS TO MSDH
9001	MONITORING RESPONSIBILITIES
9001	Licensed Child Care Centers
9001	License-Exempt Providers
9002	Unlicensed Providers (Family Child Care)
9002	Training of Monitoring Agents
9002	Record Reviews
9003	Fines
9003	Findings for Health and Safety Violations
9004	Public Posting Of Inspection Reports
9004	IMPROPER PAYMENT
9004	Threshold
9004	Types
9004	Agency Error (AE)
9004	Unintentional Program Violation (UPV)
9004	Intentional Program Violation (IPV)
9004	Definition
9004	Examples of IPV
9005	Findings

Revised 02-01-19

PAGE	SUBJECT
9005	Penalties for Providers
9005	First Offense
9005	Second Offense
9005	Third Offense
9005	Penalties for Recipients
9006	First Offense
9006	Second Offense
9006	Third Offense
9006	RECOVERY OF FUNDS
9006	From Child Care Providers
9006	Recoupment
9006	Repayment Agreement
9006	ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY APPEAL
9007	CIVIL ACTION
9007	CRIMINAL PROSECUTION
10000	**CHILD CARE CONSUMER EDUCATION**
10000	Website
10000	Additional Consumer and Provider Education
10000	Inspection Reports
10000	Social-Emotional and Behavioral Issues
10001	DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Revised 02-01-19

GENERAL

The Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) is administered by the Division for Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) at the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS). The CCPP is designed to provide child care assistance to qualifying parents and guardians.

The CCPP is designed to assist low-income Mississippi families by offering a seamless system of high-quality child care through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy program. The CCDF provides federal funds to subsidize the cost of child care for low-income families who are engaged in work, education, or job training and who have children under the age of 13 or children under age 19 who have special needs. Information contained in this manual is in compliance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014, CCDF regulations, and the CCDF state plan. The CCDBG is designed to improve the overall quality of child care by defining health and safety standards for child care providers, enhancing the child care workforce, and offering CCDF recipients a choice in affordable child care from all available child care providers who participate in the CCPP. DECCD assists eligible parent(s) in pursuing child care assistance by providing access to a list of CCPP-approved providers, and information on child development while helping parents make informed consumer choices. DECCD also provides assistance and support to child care providers who aspire to offer the best quality child care possible. CCPP-approved providers are responsible for providing early childhood learning in an environment that meets health and safety standards outlined in the CCDBG.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

CCDF is authorized under the CCDBG which was enacted under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. The CCDBG Act was amended and reauthorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, and again by the CCDBG Act of 2014.

PURPOSE

The CCDBG enhanced the statutory purposes of the CCDF program to better balance the dual purposes of promoting children's healthy development and school success and to support parents who are working or in training or education:

- To allow each State maximum flexibility in developing child care programs and policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within that State;
- To promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suits their family's needs;
- To encourage States to provide consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care services and to promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings;
- To assist States in delivering high-quality, coordinated early childhood care and education services to maximize parents' options and support parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance;

- To assist States in delivering high-quality, coordinated early childhood care and education services to maximize parents' options and support parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance;
- To assist States in improving the overall quality of child care services and programs by implementing the health, safety, licensing, training, and oversight standards established in this subchapter and in State law (including State regulations);
- To improve child care and development of participating children; and
- To increase the number and percentage of low-income children in high-quality child care settings.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Individuals shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in the provision of child care services.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF CCPP

MDHS as Lead Agency:
The Governor of Mississippi has appointed MDHS as the Lead Agency of the CCDBG. As Lead Agency, MDHS has primary responsibility for compliance with all requirements of the grant, and for administering, and coordinating all functions of the grant.

SECAC (State Early Childhood Advisory Council) Role:
SECAC (State Early Childhood Advisory Council) is an advisory body in Mississippi and provides counsel to the governor on issues related to early childhood education and development programs, and services for children from birth to school entry including CCPP.

MDHS serves as a voting member of SECAC, and thereby influences decisions made by SECAC. As an executive agency MDHS policies are influenced by strategic planning and goals as set forth by the Governor of Mississippi and SECAC.

SECAC is comprised of experts in education, health care, child welfare, and mental health and serves as the central meeting place for stakeholders in Mississippi's early childhood system, including public and private agencies, the early care and education workforce, parents, and the general public. SECAC has voting representatives from the federally funded childhood programs, state funded programs, and direct services providers. This council convenes on a monthly basis to ensure ongoing communication and information sharing. The overall goal of coordination is to expand accessibility and continuity of care and improve quality within the early childhood system.

The State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC) website (secac.ms.gov) serves as the official consumer education website for the CCDF program in the state of

Mississippi. The SECAC website provides child care information to parents, providers, as well as the community.

Partner Roles in Administration of Program:
CCPP must perform numerous federally mandated functions in order to remain compliant. MDHS enlists several partners through formal agreements to perform some of those functions.

The following summarizes those roles:

1. ECA (Early Childhood Academies):
   - Teaches professional development for providers
   - Locations throughout state for convenient access
   - Technical Assistance (TA) through trained coaches who visit providers onsite-includes curriculum development, childhood behavior, developmental screening, business advising
   - Coaches assist providers with meeting curriculum and other requirements in Standard Designation
   - Provides Resource and Referral Centers throughout state
   - Director of designee serves on CCPP Management Team to ensure seamless delivery of services, and provide input on governance of program
   - Assists with policy revision and provides data and reports as needed

2. MECIC (Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center) all services related to inclusion of special needs children:
   - Teaches professional development for providers
   - Provides onsite TA, consultation/coaching
   - Trains providers to use developmental screening tools
   - Director of designee serves on CCPP Management Team to ensure seamless delivery of services and provide input on governance of program
   - Assists with policy revision and provides data and reports

3. MSDH (Mississippi Department of Health)
   - Oversight of childcare licensure; promulgation of licensure regulations
   - Oversight of Professional Development structure for providers
   - Maintain consolidated catalogue and calendar of Professional Development classes
   - Establish and monitor minimum educational requirements for childcare staff
   - Establish and monitor continuing education for childcare staff
   - Conduct federally mandated Criminal Background checks for all childcare staff
   - Accept registration of license-exempt and unlicensed childcare providers
   - Monitor all licensed childcare providers for compliance with regulations
   - Monitor license-exempt and unlicensed providers at least once annually
   - Provide TA on regulation violations

- Maintain searchable list of all providers and substantiated complaints
- Director of designee serves on CCPP Management Team to ensure seamless delivery of services and provide input on governance of program
- Assists with policy revision and provides data and reports as needed

4. NSPARC (National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center):
   - Designs and maintains the consumer education website
   - Designs and maintains Provider Integrated Portal (PIP)
   - Provides technology technical support related to PIP usage
   - Performs research as needed by MDHS including Market Rate Survey
   - Performs data analysis and reports as needed by MDHS
   - Assists MDHS in implementing the Standard and Comprehensive Designation project by contacting providers to assess need for additional support in completing Standard Designation by October 1, 2019 deadline, and by assisting with documentation management of required health and safety trainings for child care staff
   - Assists MDHS with technical writing to include grant applications, assistance with State Plan writing, and policy revision
   - Director of designee serves on CCPP Management Team to ensure seamless delivery of services and provide input on governance of program

5. Curriculum Reviewer
   - MDHS will contract with a neutral third party from a University level Early Childhood Education program to provide curriculum review when requested on appeal for Standard Designation applications. Contracts are being solicited at this time. This policy will be revised when the reviewing entity is named.

6. ITS (Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services)
   - Administers and maintains the Child Care Payment System (CCPS) which is the information management system for child care certificate eligibility, and provider payment accounts

7. MCEC (Mississippi Community Education Center)
   - Provides family support, education and behavioral intervention for CCPP participants
   - Administers Child Care Resource and Referral Centers

CONTENTS OF THE CCPP POLICY MANUAL

CCPP Policy Manual is divided into chapters which contains the following material:

1. Introduction – Summarizes general information pertaining to the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP).
2. Definitions – Provides the meaning to CCPP terminologies.

3. Priority Populations – Describes the referred groups of individuals who are given priority within the CCPP.
4. Parent Application Process – Outlines the parent procedures for submitting an application for child care services through CCPP.
5. Parent Eligibility Requirements – Describes all federal and program eligibility requirements for participating in the CCPP.
6. Registration and Co-Payment Fees – Provides guidance for the CCPP providing registration fees and parents paying co-payment fees.
7. Provider Application Process – Outlines the federal and program policies and procedures that child care providers must follow when participating in the CCPP.
8. Approved Provider Process and Procedures – Provides program policies and procedures for child care providers participating in the CCPP.
9. Program Compliance – Describes possible CCPP violations and the consequences associated with the violations, and agency efforts to ensure compliance with program requirements.
10. Child Care Consumer Education – Summarizes the details and information displayed on the consumer education website.

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ABSENT DAY
Any day in which a child does not attend the child care center for the scheduled hours he/she is enrolled.

ABUSED CHILD
A child whose parent, guardian or custodian or any person responsible for the care or support, whether legally obligated to do so or not, has caused or allowed to be caused, upon the child, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, emotional abuse, mental injury, nonaccidental physical injury or other maltreatment. An "abused child" also means a child who is or has been trafficked within the meaning of the Mississippi Human Trafficking Act by any person, without regard to the relationship of the person to the child.

ACTUAL CLASSROOM HOURS
The time actually spent in a classroom setting.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY APPEAL HEARING
An informal proceeding held before an impartial Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) administrative hearing officer, in which an applicant or recipient appeals an adverse agency action.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISQUALIFICATION HEARING
A hearing initiated by MDHS whenever there is documented evidence to substantiate that a claimant of a state or federal program committed an act that constitutes a violation of said regulations or any related state statute, with the exception of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

ADULT
A person who is age eighteen (18) years or older.

AGENCY ERROR (AE)
Occurs when MDHS staff incorrectly takes action or fails to take action that causes an improper payment.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
An individual who, via written authorization by the parent or legal guardian, may speak or act on the parent's behalf. Written authorization must come to the Division of Early Childhood Care & Development (DECCD) directly from the parent or legal guardian and be maintained in the parent or legal guardian's case file in the Child Care Payment System (CCPS).

CARE GIVER
An individual at least eighteen (18) years of age with at least a high school diploma or equivalent GED who provides direct child care, supervision, and guidance to an eligible child.

CCPP-APPROVED PROVIDER
A child care facility that has been determined eligible by DECCD to meet the minimum requirements to participate in the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP).

CENTER BASED PROVIDER
A non-residential facility that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) to regularly provide shelter and personal care for six (6) or more children who are not related to the operator within the third degree computed according to the civil law and who receive care for any part of a 24-hour day (Miss. Code § 43-20-5).

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF)
A federally funded program designed to improve the quality of child care and provide access to child care services for eligible low-income families so they can work or attend an education or job training program provided under the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE
Issued by DECCD directly to the parent of a child who has been determined eligible for CCDF funds. A child care certificate (voucher) is assistance to the parent, not assistance to the provider that allows a CCPP approved provider to claim CCPP reimbursement for child care services delivered.

CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CCDBG)
The primary source of the United States federal funding for child care subsidies for low-income working families and funds to improve child care quality.

CHILD CARE PAYMENT LEDGER
The method used in the Child Care Payment System (CCPS) for providers to record attendance of enrolled children. Providers are paid based on the claims submitted on the payment ledger.

CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP)
Child Care Payment Program is the name Mississippi uses for the CCDF program which is administered by MDHS to provide child care assistance to eligible low-income families through the CCDF.

CHILD CARE PAYMENT SYSTEM (CCPS)
This system is used by DECCD staff to process parent applications and to determine eligibility. The system is also used by parents to submit applications, as well as, by providers to submit payment ledgers.

CHILD CARE REFERRAL & RESOURCE CENTER (CCR&R)
Function as a resource for educational materials for parents and child care providers to utilize as educational support.

CHILD CARE SERVICES
Care provided for a fee by a child care provider to an eligible child or children in the parent or guardian's absence.

CHILD CARE SLOT PROVIDER
A child care provider in receipt of funds to provide child care services according to the requirements in a formal agreement with MDHS, for a designated number of children.

CHILD CARE STAFF
A person who cares for a child(ren) when the parent(s) and other family members are unavailable. Including the child care director, hired staff, volunteers, and drivers.

CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
A child under the age of 19 who meets the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) definition of disability by having a medically determined physical or mental impairment that results in marked and severe functional limitations, that can be expected to result in death, or that has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months.

CHILDREN IN PROTECTIVE SERVICES
Children that are court ordered to receive Protective Services or supervision from the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS).

COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE CENTER
A comprehensive designation is in the development phase with anticipation that a pilot program will be implemented over the next two years. The comprehensive designation will be an optional achievement for providers and represents a commitment on the part of a standard-designated child care center to achieve a heightened level of quality that assures a child receives continuity of care and learning as the child moves from one environment to the next, e.g. child care center to public school.

CONSUMER EDUCATION WEBSITE
The State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC) website serves as the consumer education website for Mississippi. The website is available to parents, providers, and the general public to ensure access to information and services within the state.

CO-PAYMENT FEE
A mandatory parent or guardian contribution to the cost of child care in the CCPP that is paid directly from the parent or guardian to the provider and is determined by DECCD through application of a sliding fee scale.

CRITICAL VIOLATION
Violation of rule(s) identified by the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) in the *Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities* as most critical because non-

compliance with those rules poses a threat to the health, safety, or well-being of the children in care and to the operation of the center.

DEGREES OF KINSHIP ACCORDING TO THE LAW
The first degree of kinship refers to parents and children. The second degree of kinship refers to siblings (brothers and sisters), grandparents, and grandchildren. The third degree of kinship refers to uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, great-grandparents, and great-grandchildren.

DESIGNATED STUDY HOURS
Stud hours that are allowed in a 1:1 ratio with actual classroom hours and cannot exceed actual classroom hours.

DIRECTOR
The person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management of a child care center.

DIRECTOR DESIGNEE
Any individual designated to act as the director, having all responsibility and authority of a director, during the director's short-term absence, as defined by the MSDH.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY (ECA)
Provides ongoing high quality technical assistance and professional development to child care providers and families through coaching, teaching, and referral & resource services to promote a nurturing learning environment that encourages school readiness.

EDUCATIONAL HOURS
Hours which may be a combination of actual classroom hours and designated work hours and cannot be carried over from week to week.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM/JOB TRAINING
A program offering educational or job training content. These programs must be accredited by the State of Mississippi or a national organization. Participation may be used to meet the work requirement for CCPP eligibility.

- Attending Educational Program/Job Training - Full-time enrollment in an education and/or job training program resulting in a degree or certificate designed to promote job skills and employability, or a combination of the two (2). Full-time enrollment is defined by the institution providing the education and/or job training program.

ELIGIBLE CHILD
A child whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) meet the eligibility requirements as set forth by the CCDBG Act.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD
A period of at least twelve (12) months that a family is determined eligible for CCDF child care subsidy.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES
A child absent from the child care provider for sixty (60) consecutive days or more.

FAMILIES WITH VERY LOW INCOMES
A family with the total family income at or below 50% of the State Median Income (SMI).

FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER
A place which provides shelter and personal care for five (5) or fewer children who are not related within the third degree computed according to the civil law to the operator and who are under 13 years of age, for any part of the 24 hour day, whether such place be organized or operated for profit or not. This facility must be registered and monitored by the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH). Previously known as In-home/Unlicensed Provider Child Care Facility.

FAMILY UNIT
Any person living in the household who is financially or legally responsible for the care of the child(ren) applying for CCPP child care.

FULL-TIME CHILD CARE
Child care provided for six (6) or more hours of a 24-hour day. Full-time child care should meet the needs and reflect the work, education, or job training schedule of the parent.

GROSS INCOME
The income before any deductions of any member of the family as defined above.

HEALTHY FAMILIES MISSISSIPPI (HFM)
A home-visiting program offered by MDHS through Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) federal grant funding that serves low-income pregnant mothers and families with children younger than three (3) years old.

HOMELESS CHILDREN
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 defines homeless children and youth as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." Examples of homeless children and youth include those who 1) share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up); 2) live in motels, in hotels, or on camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations; 3) live in emergency or transitional shelters; 4) were abandoned in hospitals; 5) await foster care placement; 6) have a primary nighttime residence that is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; 7) live in caves, parks,

public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, and bus or train stations; and 8) are migratory children and youth living in any circumstances described above.

IMPROPER PAYMENT
A payment made to a provider on behalf of a parent or guardian for CCDF subsidy at the time the payment was made. The error may have been due to Agency Error (AE), Unintentional Program Violation (UPV), or Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

INCOME
Funds received by all applicable individuals as described in this policy that are not supplemented by any public assistance other than medical assistance or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Income that is counted towards the maximum allowable income limit includes: wages or salary (gross income of any family unit as defined above), base pay for military personnel, net income from self-employment, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, alimony (regular and ongoing payments), court-ordered and direct child support payments (when regular and ongoing payments are received), veteran's benefits, military allotments, capital gains, rental income (regular and ongoing payments), dividends (regular and ongoing payments), retirement/pension, commission, cash bonuses, and regular or lump sum payments.

INFANTS
Children from birth through 12 months.

IN LOCO PARENTIS
An individual who functions in place of a parent, if the child's parent is unable to act as the parent or has delegated his or her parental authority. The term describes someone who provides care and supervision like a parent but without going through the formalities of legal adoption or guardianship. Requires submission of a Guardianship/In Loco Parentis Verification form as part of the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) application process.

INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION (IPV)
An intentional act by the parental authority or a child care provider to misrepresent or mislead by providing false documentation or verification or intentionally omitting documentation or verification in an effort to wrongfully obtain eligibility for services or payment, which is proven by clear and convincing evidence.

LEAD AGENCY
The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is the state entity that serves as the Lead Agency for the administration of programs and services funded by the Child Care and Development Fund.

LICENSE –EXEMPT CHILD CARE PROVIDER
A child care provider that is exempt from licensure by Mississippi statute or MSDH regulations, because they are otherwise regulated and monitored by a separate governing entity, giving

reasonable assurances as to health and safety. License exempt status is determined solely by MSDH.

LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDER
A provider licensed to deliver child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting.

LICENSING OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
Requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state or locality, including regulations and requirements established under State, Local, or Tribal law. The Mississippi Child Care Licensing Law (see Miss. Code §43-20-3) provides the legal authority under which the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) regulates health, safety, and welfare in licensed child care facilities.

MISSISSIPPI EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS
Goals for children from birth through four-years old. These standards include appropriate infant and toddler developmental milestones, as well as learning for three-year-old children and learning standards for four-year old children.

NATURAL DISASTER
Catastrophic events that cause, or may cause, substantial damage or injury to civilian property or persons, per Section 602(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1)). Examples of these events include but are not limited to hurricanes, tornados, floods, earthquakes, fires, or snowstorms.

- Each child care center is required to have an emergency preparedness plan - all activities and processes designed to prepare for an unsafe event and deal with the immediate emergency conditions created by or associated with the event, per the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1)).

NEGLECTED CHILD
A child i) whose parent, guardian or custodian or any person responsible for his care or support, neglects or refuses, when able so to do, to provide for him proper and necessary care or support, or education as required by law, or medical, surgical, or other care necessary for his well-being; (ii) who is otherwise without proper care, custody, supervision or support; or (iii) who, for any reason, lacks the special care made necessary for him by reason of his mental condition, whether the mental condition is having mental illness or having an intellectual disability; or (iv) who, for any reason, lacks the care necessary for his health, morals or well-being.

NON-TRADITIONAL CARE
Includes week night care and supervision of children for less than 24-hours per day within the twelve hours between 6:00 p.m. and 5:59 a.m., or weekend care and supervision of children between 6:00 p.m. Friday and 5:59 a.m. Monday.

NOTICE OF REDETERMINATION (PARENT)
Informs the parent and provider of a child's upcoming redetermination of eligibility.

NOTICE OF REDETERMINATION (PROVIDER)
Informs the provider of an upcoming redetermination of eligibility.

PARENT
A mother or father by blood, marriage, or adoption; a legal guardian; or another person standing in loco parentis.

PARENT WITH A DISABILITY
A parent who meets the SSI definition of disability by being unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or that has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months.

PART-TIME CHILD CARE
Child care provided for fewer than six (6) hours of a 24-hour day.

PROVIDER INTEGRATED PORTAL (PIP)
The online portal through which providers access and manage information about child care centers and staff, submit DECCD program requirements, and submit renewal of standard applications. DECCD plans to use this online system to process provider applications for standard designation and eventually all provider application processes.

PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILD
Children from three (3) years of age up to their first day of kindergarten.

PRIORITY POPULATION
A designated population that is treated differently than the general population for eligibility and access purposes, in order to address a particular need of that population.

PROVIDER
The entity providing child care services as defined in this policy manual.

PROVISIONAL CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE
A child care certificate that is issued to children of parents with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families **(**TANF) and Transitional Child Care (TCC) cases who are no longer qualified due to TANF guidelines, with the exception of cases excluded for intentional program violation. The provisional certificate is issued at the end date of the TANF or TCC case closure and allows for a full consecutive twelve (12) months of child care subsidy. The provisional certificate is issued upon closure of TANF or TCC cases for the remainder of a twelve (12) month period from the initial issue date of the original certificate.

REDETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
Eligibility for child care assistance through the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP), which is to be conducted no more frequently than every twelve (12) months for each certificate.

RESIDING/LIVING WITH
Living with, including taking meals and sleeping in the same house, for a majority of a seven (7) day period beginning Sunday and ending Saturday.

SCHOOL-AGED CARE
Child care services for school-age children or those attending other educational programs such as Head Start or public pre-K during the hours before and after the regular school day. The regular school day is defined by the educational program providing the child care services. Extended day care child care is available before and after school for Early Head Start and Head Start children (6 weeks to 5 years) and school-age children (ages 5-12) who need such care due to the work, education, or job training schedule of their parent(s).

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD
A child who is five (5) years of age or older and eligible to be enrolled in public school.

SEASONAL WORKERS
Individuals who are temporarily unemployed due to the nature of their work.

SERIOUS INJURY
Injuries that require medical attention by a licensed health practitioner or as defined by the MSDH regulations.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS
Benefit payments to individuals or certain family members based on how long the individual worked and whether the individual paid sufficient Social Security taxes, considered as countable income for eligibility purposes.

STANDARD CHILD CARE CENTER
A standard designation sets a minimum standard for quality for CCPP child care providers.

STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (SECAC)
The State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) provides counsel to the Governor on issues related to young children and their families. SECAC is comprised of experts in education, health care, child welfare, and mental health and serves as the central meeting place for all stakeholders in Mississippi's early childhood system, including the early care and education workforce, parents, and the general public.

STATE MEDIAN INCOME (SMI)
The median income of all Mississippi employees.

SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE
Cases occurring in the child care center that have been confirmed by law enforcement and/or Mississippi Department of Human Services or a state authorized agency.

SUMMER CARE
Child care for eligible children during the summer months, when primary school settings are not in session.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)
A monthly payment to a person for having a medically proven physical or mental condition that causes marked and severe functional limitations that are expected to last at least twelve (12) months in duration. Unlike Social Security Benefits, SSI benefits are not based on prior work or a family member's prior work. SSI is considered as countable income for eligibility purposes.

TEEN PARENT
Any student parent under the age of 18 who is either enrolled in high school full-time or attending a full-time educational program.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)
A federal subsidy program that provides time-limited benefits to eligible families.

TEMPORAY CHANGE
A temporary change occurs when a parent experiences temporary job loss, medical leave, change in work schedule, or if a parent is temporarily not attending classes. A temporary change is defined as temporary job loss, or if a working parent is temporarily absent from employment due to extended medical leave, has changes in seasonal work schedule, or if a parent is enrolled in a training or educational program that is temporarily not attending classes between semesters. Assistance will not be terminated due to a temporary change.

TEMPORARY LONG-TERM ABSENCES
A child's absence of more than sixty (60) days due to special circumstances such as chronic illness of the child, custody situation that requires the child to spend extended time with a non-custodial parent, or a temporary move out of state. If pre-approved by DECCD, the CCPP certificate will not be terminated.

TERMINATED CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE
A certificate that has been used as payment for child care services for a period of time and is no longer valid. Reasons that certificates could be terminated include but are not limited to, providing false information used to issue/maintain a certificate, change in a provider, or lack of a request for reimbursement on a child care certificate within sixty (60) days after the certificate has been issued.

TODDLER
Any child who is more than twelve (12) months old but less than 36 months old.

TRANSITIONAL CHILD CARE (TCC)
Up to 24 months of subsidized child care for eligible parents, issued by the MDHS Division of Economic Assistance to assist parents in making a successful transition from TANF to self-sufficiency.

UNINTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION (UPV)
An improper payment made on behalf of a parent/guardian to a child care provider, due to a misunderstanding of policy or an unintended error on the part of the parent or child care provider.

VENDOR PAYMENT
A payment made on behalf of a household by a third party to the household's creditors or a person or organization providing a service to the household. Vendor payments are not countable as income.

WORK REQUIREMENT
A parent requirement for CCPP eligibility. The work requirement is met through performing duties to earn a wage, or participation in job training, or enrollment as a full-time student in an accredited program or a combination of the three.

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PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Priority Population is a designated population treated differently than the general population for eligibility and access purposes, in order to address a particular need of that population. Priority Populations include:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients,
- Transitional Child Care (TCC) recipients,
- Homeless children, as defined by McKinney-Vento Act,
- Children served by the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS),
- Children served by the Healthy Families Mississippi (HFM) home visitation program,
- Teen parent,
- Special needs populations, these clients include:
    - Children with documented special needs or
    - Parent(s) with a documented disability
- Parent(s) deployed in the Mississippi National Guard or Reserve, and
- Children of very low-income working parent(s) whose income is at 50% or below the SMI.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES BY PRIORITY GROUP

- **TANF and TCC clients**:
    - Not required to complete a Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) application form.
    - Eligibility for CCPP is determined by the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) full or part-time care.
    - Must meet TANF/TCC eligibility requirements.
    - Receive a certificate based on the referral date entered by the MDHS Case Manager.
    - Parent is required to comply with all of the requirements for the TANF/TCC program in order to remain eligible for child care assistance.
- **Homeless clients**:
    - Not required to complete a CCPP application form.
    - Eligibility for CCPP shall be determined by MDHS and/or an approved agency serving homeless families.
    - Must meet the definition of homeless, as defined by McKinney Vento Act.
    - Homeless clients shall receive a certificate based on the referral date entered by the referring agent/case manager.
    - Homeless children who receive child care payment assistance may be granted a 24 hour grace period from the date of admission into a child care payment-approved program to obtain the necessary immunization records. Payment for these children during the grace period shall not be considered an error or an improper payment. The timeframe for immunizations is established by the

Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) for the enforcement of health, safety, and welfare.

- **Children in custody or supervision of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS)**
    - Not required to complete a CCPP application form.
    - Eligible for child care services without regard to income of the guardian.
    - Children in custody or supervision of MDCPS shall receive funding based on the referral date entered by the case manager.
    - Children in foster care who receive child care payment assistance may be granted a 24 hour grace period from the date of admission into a child care payment-approved program to obtain the necessary immunization records. Payment for these children during the grace period shall not be considered an error or an improper payment. The timeframe for immunizations is established by the MSDH for the enforcement of health, safety, and welfare.
- **Children being served by Healthy Families Mississippi (HFM) home-visitation program**
    - Not required to complete a CCPP application form.
    - Must meet the eligibility requirements for HFM.
    - Served based on the referral date received from HFM Family Support Workers.
- **Teen parent**
    - Must complete a CCPP application. The teen parent must make the application in his/her own name as a family unit separate from his/her parent.
    - Must be enrolled full-time in high school or attending a full-time educational program.
    - If the teen parent is living with his/her parent(s), the parent(s) of the teen must meet the work requirement or be enrolled full-time in an educational/training program; however, income of the parent(s) of the teen parent should not be counted.
    - If the parent of the teen meets the special needs requirement (as described in Chapter 5: Parent Eligibility Requirements), the work requirement is waived.
    - If the teen parent has been legally emancipated from his/her parent(s), the teen parent must meet the work requirement or be enrolled full-time in an educational/training program.
- **Special Needs Populations:**
    - **Parent(s) with a documented disability**
        - Must complete a CCPP application form.
        - Must meet the SSI definition of disability by being unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or that has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months.
        - Spouse must meet the twenty-five (25) hour per week work requirement.

- Current documentation of SSI benefits is necessary to determine priority eligibility for child care.

- **Children with documented special needs**
  - Must complete a CCPP application form.
  - The parent(s) must be working at least twenty-five (25) hours per week or be enrolled full-time in an educational program, or engaged in an approved job training program; or a combination of both.
  - Must be at or below 85% of the SMI.

- **Children of parent(s) deployed in the Mississippi National Guard or Reserve**

- Must complete a CCPP application form.
- Must meet the twenty-five (25) hours per week work requirement, unless they are 65 years of age or provide proof that they have retired from full-time employment.
- The non-deployed responsible guardian's income shall not be counted.
- Must be at or below the 85% of the SMI.
- When parents are enlisted in the United States Military and deployed, the eligibility shall remain the same until the parent can provide the Military Income. The parent shall provide the Military Income as soon as he/she has documentation.

- **Very Low-Income**

- Must complete a CCPP application form.
- The parent(s) must be working at least twenty-five (25) hours per week or be enrolled full-time in an educational program, or engaged in an approved job training program; or a combination of both.
- Must be at or below 50% of the SMI.

PARENT APPLICATION PROCESS

The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) accepts applications throughout the year. When funding is available, eligible families shall be served on a first-come, first-serve basis by date of application. When funding is not available, eligible families shall be added to the waitlist.

Client referrals from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Transitional Child Care (TCC), Healthy Families Mississippi (HFM), are accepted throughout the year from Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) staff. Referrals for homeless children, and the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS) are accepted throughout the year from case managers.

Applications must be completed online on the consumer education website. Parents, not providers, must fill out the application; however, providers may make computers available to parents for the completion of the application. Parents may visit any child care resource center to receive technical assistance in applying for child care services. In addition, parents requiring technical assistance in completing the application may contact DECCD.

A paper application can be made available upon written or verbal request from DECCD. In addition, Spanish translators may be available by appointment for non-English speaking parents by contacting DECCD.

The applicant may be the biological or adoptive parent, or a designated guardian serving *in loco parentis*.

Before Initiating Application:

An eligibility checklist that includes a list of the required documentation to complete the application process is available on the consumer education website for parents to review.

Parents must select a child care provider prior to submitting an online application. Parents may search for an approved provider by name, type, city, county, or zip code on the consumer education website. No payments will be issued for child care provided before a provider becomes an approved provider.

Initiating Application:

Applications should be submitted through the Child Care Payment System (CCPS) found on the consumer education website. The application must be completed and submitted before MDHS can review the application for eligibility.

All applicants are required to submit a current email address, address, and telephone number so MDHS eligibility workers can contact the applicant if necessary. All notices will be sent to the email address provided.

All required supporting documents must be submitted within sixty (60) calendar days of submitting an application. If the documents are not submitted within that timeframe, the application will be considered abandoned, and will be deleted from the CCPS. The applicant will need to start a new application if child care is still needed.

After Submitting Application:

- **Document Submission**- Parents must include the application number on all documents submitted to MDHS. If the application number is not clearly legible on necessary documents, MDHS will attempt to match the document to the correct application, but may deny the application for lack of documentation if unable to determine a positive match.
- Parents must submit all required documentation by mail, fax, email, or in person to any local MDHS county office. The MDHS employee in the county must scan and upload the documents to WorkSite or email the documents to DECCD email address, cc.payment@mdhs.ms.gov, the same or next business day. In addition, the parent may submit any required documents by mail or in person to the MDHS State Office, attention DECCD.

- **Notices from DECCD to applicant:**
  - **Acknowledgment/Request for Documents:** After the parent/guardian completes and submits his/her CCPP application, he/she is immediately notified of the required documents needed to determine eligibility. The applicant will have sixty (60) calendar days to submit the required documents needed to determine eligibility. DECCD will issue the following notices reminding the applicant to submit required documents:

  - **Request for Information:** If the required documents have not been submitted when the caseworker initially reviews the case, the parent/guardian will be sent a request for information notice, notifying the parent/guardian to provide the requested documents. This notice will contain the deadline date as well as a list of the documents needed to determine eligibility.

  - **Reminder: 30-day Notice:** On the 30th day from the application submission date, if the parent/guardian has not submitted all required documents, a 30-day reminder notice will be sent to the parent/guardian. This notice will include a list of any missing required documents needed to determine eligibility along with the deadline date.

  - **Denial: 60-day Notice:** On the 60th day from the application submission date, if the parent/guardian has not submitted the documents, the application will be denied for failure to provide requested documents. A denial notice will be sent to the parent/guardian notifying them of ineligibility. Once the application is denied, the parent/guardian may complete and submit a new application, along with the required documents needed to determine eligibility, or the applicant may appeal the denial

through the Administrative Agency Appeal Hearing Process, incorporated herein by reference.

DECCD Application Processing - Applications cannot be approved until the application is complete. No application is complete until all required documentation has been submitted. The applicant must complete the application within sixty (60) days of application submission date.

PARENT APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SLOT PROVIDERS

Parents may choose to enroll their child(ren) with a provider who has agreed to supply a given number of child care slots. These child care providers are referred to as slot providers. Slot providers may have slots available to CCDF-eligible families even when a family has been placed on the waitlist. A searchable list of providers is available to parents through the consumer education website.

In order to apply for an open child care slot, parents must:

1. Select the slot provider of choice from the consumer education website.
2. Obtain pre-approval from the slot provider.
3. Complete the slot provider's registration process.
4. The slot provider will generate and issue a unique approval code. By generating an approval code, the slot provider guarantees the parent the center will hold a slot(s) for the child(ren) for an agreed upon amount of time.
5. The approval code is automatically sent to the parent(s) email after the registration is completed by the provider.
6. Applicant must submit the online child care application entering the approval code for each individual child. Each child must meet DECCD eligibility requirements to qualify for a slot certificate.
7. Applicant must submit all required documents to DECCD to determine eligibility.
8. If the parent is unable to complete the application before the expiration date, the parent must contact the slot provider to arrange an extension of the expiration date. If the slot provider still has an available slot, he or she can extend the expiration date.

NON-AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS/WAITLIST

DECCD accepts applications for child care services throughout the year. When available funds have been exhausted, the following steps will apply:

1. The parent submits an application to CCPP.
2. A DECCD caseworker will determine eligibility.
3. DECCD will email the parent a notice of eligibility or ineligibility.
4. The parent will be placed on the waitlist, if eligible.
5. DECCD will send the parent a notice to update the application when funding is available.
6. If the parent fails to update the application with current documentation within sixty (60) days from the date of notice to update, the application will be closed.

7. If the parent updates the application with the current documentation within sixty (60) days from the date of notice to update, the application will be processed to determine eligibility.

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PARENTAL CHOICE

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) regulations require that child care assistance provided through certificates permit parents to choose from child care categories and be provided information regarding the range of provider options.

MDHS makes the following choices available to parents:

- **Child Care Provider Categories**
  - Center Based
  - Family Child Care
  - In-Home Care, to be implemented by 10/1/20
  - Slot

- **Providers are regulated in one of three categories:**
  - Licensed
  - Registered
  - License Exempt

Parents participating in the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) must select a CCPP approved provider.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Unless a member of an excepted priority population, a child must meet the following requirements to receive CCDF subsidy:

1. Be under the age of 13 (or under the age of 19 with special needs); and
2. Reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) for a family of the same size and whose assets do not exceed $1,000,000; and
3. Reside with a parent(s) who is working, attending a job training program, or enrolled in an educational program; and
4. Reside with a parent who is a Mississippi resident; and
5. Parent(s) must be in cooperation with child support, if applicable

PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Parents/applicants must prove eligibility requirements through the submission of documents. When possible, MDHS will access other documentary evidence in available data bases, however, proof of eligibility requirements is the applicant's responsibility.

Social Security Numbers - provision of social security numbers is NOT an eligibility requirement, and is strictly optional. Eligibility will not be denied due to failure of the parent to provide a Social Security Number. Social Security numbers may be used, if

applicants choose to provide them, to assemble research data sets that do not identify individuals or to verify other requirements.

If the parent chooses to voluntarily provide the Social Security Number, acceptable forms of verification include:

- Social Security card
- Tax returns for the previous year

A document may serve to prove more than one requirement and need not be submitted more than once. The following is a list of acceptable proof for each requirement:

a. **Proof of Age (child)**
   - Long Form Birth Certificate
   - Record of Birth for newborns until birth certificate is received

b. **Proof of Income (family)** - Eligibility is based on gross family income. Applicants must provide proof of income for the last thirty (30) days to include one (1) of the following:
   - Check stubs
     - One (1) if paid monthly; or
     - Two (2) if paid bi-monthly; or
     - Four (4) if paid weekly
   - Estimated quarterly tax report
   - Federal 1040 tax form – line 22 (total income)
   - Schedule C Form 1040 – line 7 (gross income)
   - **New Employment or Temporary Agency Employment -** letter from the employer on company letterhead verifying employment, income, rate of pay, and number of hours worked, to be followed by submitted check stubs within sixty (60) days.
   - **Paid in Cash -** letter from the employer verifying employment, income, rate of pay, and number of hours worked. The letter must include the employer's name, address, and telephone number.
   - **Self-Employed with Filed Tax Return:** copy of an Estimated Quarterly Tax Report or a Federal 1040 Tax Form with the Profit/Loss Statement (Schedule C).
     - The Total Sales and Receipts amount located on the Profit/Loss Statement will be used to determine if the work requirement has been met.
     - The amount located on Line 22 of the Federal 1040 Tax Form to determine income eligibility.

INCOME CALCULATIONS

Income- the total of all countable income, excluding non-countable income (see below) received by the parent(s) or responsible adults of the child.

Calculating Income - the CCPS calculates income automatically based on documentation provided by the applicant and entered into the system by MDHS staff. The following business rules are applied for calculations:

- All income above or less than forty (40) hours per week is considered irregular income. Irregular income and commissions shall be averaged.
- For commissions and tips, the amount on the check stub or statement from an employer shall be averaged over a period of twelve (12) months and added to regular work income.
- Bonus monies shall be considered as income and averaged into yearly income.
- Eligibility is based on gross income.
- Parents who experience seasonal fluctuations in income must submit income documentation at initial application or redetermination which shows the increase is seasonal or irregular. A temporary increase in income, even if it exceeds the 85 percent of SMI, will not affect the eligibility of the parent. Irregular hours of employment, seasonal increase in income, commissions, bonuses, and tips are added to regular work income and averaged over a period of twelve (12) months.

Countable Income:

- Wages or salary (gross income of all adults in the family unit as defined in chapter 2)
- Base pay for military personnel
- Gross income from self-employment
- Unemployment compensation
- Worker's compensation
- Alimony (regular and ongoing payments)
- Court-ordered and direct child support payments (when regular and ongoing payments are received; irregular payments to be averaged over a 12 month period)
- Veteran's benefits
- Military allotments
- Capital gains
- Rental income (regular and ongoing payments)
- Dividends (regular and ongoing payments)
- Retirement/pension
- Commission, bonuses, tips (averaged over 12 months)
- Lump sum payments
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for both the parent(s) and child(ren)
- Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits for both the parent(s) and child(ren)

Non-Countable Income:

- Spouse income, if separated and residing in a separate residence
- Pell Grants

- Student/Educational income
- Student Scholarships
- Student loans
- Non-monetary or in-kind benefits
- Vendor payments
- Flexible Employee benefits
- Earned Income Tax credits (EITC)
- Loans
- Census bureau income
- Combat pay
- Reimbursements
- Unavailable income from trust fund
- Energy assistance payments
- Earned income of students under 18
- HUD's family self-sufficiency program
- Gift cards
- Income specifically excluded by other laws

c. **Proof of Work/Education or Training (parent/applicant) -** Parent(s) must work at least twenty-five (25) hours per week; or be enrolled in a full-time educational program; or a combination of both. In two parent families, both parents must meet the work/education requirement.

a. Proof of Work - parents must provide proof of work for the last thirty (30) days to include one (1) of the following:

- Check stubs
  - One (1) if paid monthly; or
  - Two (2) if paid bi-monthly; or
  - Four (4) if paid weekly

- **New Employment or Employment at Temporary Agency -** letter from the employer on company letterhead verifying employment, income, rate of pay, and number of hours worked, to be followed by submitted check stubs within sixty (60) days.

- **Paid in Cash -** letter from the employer verifying employment, income, rate of pay, and number of hours worked. The letter must include the employer's name, address, and telephone number.

1. Proof of Education/Job Training - if the parent is not working at least twenty-five (25) hours per week, he/she must be enrolled in an approved full-time educational or training program resulting in a degree or certificate designed to promote job skills and employability, including but not limited to GED classes. The program must be accredited by the State of Mississippi or a national organization. Full-time enrollment is defined by the institution providing the education and/or job training program. Acceptable proof includes:

- Letter from the institution confirming current full time enrollment, or
- Printout of the class schedule verifying full-time status with parents name on schedule

b. Combination of Employment and School - if the parent shows proof of less than twenty-five (25) work hours per week, or less than full-time enrollment in an educational or job training program, educational hours from an approved educational or training program may be combined with work hours, to meet the requirement.

- Educational hours- may be a combination of actual classroom hours and designated study hours; cannot be carried over from week to week
- Actual classroom hours- the time actually spent in the classroom setting
- Designated study hours- allowed in a 1:1 ratio with actual classroom hours, and cannot exceed actual classroom hours

4. Proof of Relationship or Guardianship (child to parent/applicant) - documents must contain both parent/applicant and child's name

- Long form birth certificates
- Court documents
- School registration documents produced by the school

If the child's parent is unable to act as the parent or if the parent has delegated his or her authority to someone else acceptable forms of guardianship verification include:

- MDHS Guardianship/In Loco Parentis Verification form (if the signing parent's identity and relationship can be verified)
- Court Order

5. Proof of State Residency (parent/applicant)

The address on the documents must verify a Mississippi address, and at least one (1) must verify the address listed on the application. The address listed on the application should accurately reflect where the applicant resides, even if on a temporary basis. Acceptable forms include:

- Valid Mississippi driver's license
- Valid state issued ID
- Current bank statement
- Current cell phone bill
- Current utility bill
- Current cable bill
- Current employment records
- Rent/lease agreement effective as of the date the document is submitted to MDHS
- MDHS Transitional Living form

Current documents must be dated, with a date no more than thirty (30) days prior to application submission date. If the applicant resides at a temporary address and cannot

produce a corroborating document, the applicant and applicant's host must complete and submit a MDHS Transitional Living form.

If a parent attends school in/out of state, the application shall be made in the parent's name using the address where the child(ren) reside(s). Parents and children must reside in the State of Mississippi to participate in the CCPP. CCDF has subsidy programs in all 50 states, and out of state residents are encouraged to apply for subsidy in the state of residence.

6. Proof of Identity (parent)

Acceptable forms include:

- One (1) Photo ID:
  - Driver's license, or
  - Other state issued photo ID, or
  - Passport or other government issued photo ID
- If no Photo ID available, must submit two (2) forms of identity verification.
  - Work or school ID
  - ID for health benefits
  - Voter registration card
  - Birth certificate
  - EBT card

7. Proof of Child Support Cooperation (parent, if applicable) - All single, unmarried, or divorced parents must be in cooperation status with the Mississippi Division of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) requirements, in order to be eligible for child care assistance. Parents must be in cooperation status for **all children** listed in the household.

All affected parents who do not currently have an open child support case must contact the nearest Child Support Enforcement District Office for an appointment to open a case(s) or to request a statement stating the child(ren) is exempt and the parent is excused from cooperating. Exemptions must be established and confirmed by CSE.

Child Support requirements do not apply to a child's married biological parents.

8. Proof of Special Needs/Disability (child and/or parent, if applicable)

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) award letter; or
- Social Security Administration (SSA) award letter

Award letters must be dated, with a date no more than twelve (12) months prior to application submission date.

If a parent meets the special needs requirement, the work requirement is waived for that parent only.

TEEN PARENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Any teen parent enrolled full-time in high school or attending a full-time educational program must make the application for child care services in his/her own name as a family unit separate from his/her parent.
- If the teen parent is living with his/her parent(s), the parent(s) of the teen must meet the work requirement or be enrolled full-time in an educational/training program; however, income of the parent(s) of the teen parent should not be counted.
- If the parent of the teen meets the special needs requirement (described above), the work requirement is waived.
- If the teen parent has been emancipated from his/her parent(s), the teen parent must meet the work requirement or be enrolled full-time in an educational/training program.

REASONS FOR INELIGIBILITY

After an application for child care services has been submitted, a MDHS employee will determine program eligibility based on the information and documents submitted by the parent. If the parent does not meet all of the eligibility requirements or does not submit all required documents, the application will be denied. Once determined ineligible, a denial notice will be sent to the parent by email stating the reason of the ineligibility. Reasons for ineligibility include but are not limited to:

- Child is over 13 years of age or 19 years of age (special needs).
- Household income is over 85% of the SMI.
- Family assets over $1,000,000.
- Parent, spouse, or biological parent not working at least twenty-five (25) hours per week or enrolled in a full-time educational program or job training program.
- Child is not a Mississippi resident.
- Failure to submit required documents.
- Parent is not cooperating with the Division of Child Support Enforcement, if applicable.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

Families who are determined eligible to participate in the CCPP shall be afforded a minimum of twelve (12) months of eligibility for assistance provided the family income does not exceed 85% SMI on a non-temporary basis, or the parents do not experience a non-temporary change in meeting the work/education requirement. The 12-month eligibility period begins on the date the client is determined eligible and a child care certificate is issued. At the end of the 12-month eligibility period, a redetermination of eligibility for families who receive assistance from CCPP will occur.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

MDHS requires parents participating in the CCPP to report any changes in circumstances or information that occur during the 12-month eligibility period. Failure to report any changes in circumstances affecting eligibility for the CCPP (family unit income, work hours, employment or education/job training, relocation to another state, or voluntary withdrawal from CCPP) may subject the parent to sanctions as described in Chapter 9: Program Compliance.

MDHS is required to act on information reported by the family if it will reduce the family's co-payment or increase the family's subsidy. MDHS is prohibited from acting on information reported by the family that would reduce the family's subsidy unless the information reported indicates that the family's income exceeds 85% of SMI after considering temporary or irregular fluctuations in income or the family has experienced a non-temporary change in meeting the work/education requirement.

MDHS deems the last reported contact information to be accurate unless notified otherwise by the parent. Any notice sent to the last reported contact information will be considered adequate constructive notice if the parent has not reported the change in contact information within the ten (10) day deadline or prior to the notice date.

- Parents must report any of the following changes within ten (10) days of the change:
  - Family unit income
    - Parents must report all changes in income
  - Work Hours
    - Parents must report if work hours fall below twenty-five (25) hours per week
  - Marital status
  - Household size
  - Address change
  - Email address
  - Phone number
  - Parent or Guardian name
  - Parents must report any changes in designation of child care providers
  - Parents must report when he/she voluntarily withdraws a child from the program
  - Employment or Education/Job Training
    - Any cessation in employment (i.e. resignation, retirement, termination, or reduction in workforce) must be reported to MDHS
    - Any cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program
- Parents are granted a 3-month job search period. If by the end of this period the parent has not provided MDHS with proof of new employment or enrollment in an educational/job training program, child care payment program services may be terminated. If the parent provides the requisite verification, the certificate will remain active until it expires by its own terms or is renewed for another year through redetermination.

Providers are notified no later than the date MDHS becomes aware of a family's eligibility status change. The notification gives providers a two-week notice of the pending change.

REDETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

A redetermination of eligibility for families who receive child care assistance from the CCPP shall occur no sooner than twelve (12) months from the date eligibility is determined. The eligibility requirements for redetermination are the same as for initial application. However, documentation will only be required for proof of income, work/education or training, state residency, and child support cooperation.

The redetermination process:

- MDHS will email the parent (at the last reported email address of the parent) and the designated child care provider a 60-day notice which includes instructions for submitting the online redetermination application and a list of required documentation needed to confirm eligibility. The parent must submit the online redetermination application and return the required documentation by the due date indicated on the Notice.
- MDHS will email a Notice of Missing Documents to the parent and the designated provider, and if the application with supporting documents is not complete,
- MDHS will email a 30-day Notice of Redetermination, which includes instructions for submitting the online redetermination application and a list of required documentation needed to confirm eligibility. The parent must submit the online redetermination application and return the required documentation by the due date indicated on the Notice.

If the MDHS staff determines the parent meets all eligibility requirements during redetermination, child care services shall be extended for twelve (12) months. A certificate will be issued and emailed to the parent as well as the selected child care provider within one (1) business day of completion of the redetermination process.

When income is recalculated for redetermination and there is an increase in a co-payment fee, a notice shall be sent to the parent and the provider in the form of an amended certificate. The updated co-payment fee is effective on the first day of the newly issued certificate.

Parents are not required to complete any portion of the redetermination application in person or during standard work hours, in efforts to minimize disruption of employment, education, or job training. The application for child care services can be completed online and the required verification documents can be submitted by mail, fax, email, or in person.

All priority populations are redetermined according to the above procedure except TANF/TCC, whose eligibility is redetermined by MDHS Economic Assistance staff based on TANF/TCC eligibility requirements.

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TERMINATION REASONS DURING REDETERMINATION PROCESS

Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to:

- Parent does not submit an application for redetermination.
- Parent does not provide the required documents needed to redetermine eligibility.
- Child who has reached age 13 (or age 19 if the child has special needs as defined by the SSI definition of disability).
- Families whose income increased above 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).
- Parent does not meet the work/education requirement.

If the parent fails to comply with the redetermination process, a two (2) week notice of termination will be emailed to the parent's last reported address and to the provider. A new application must be submitted if the parent wishes to continue to receive child care services after the date of termination. New applications will be processed by date received and are subject to eligibility and available funding.

REASONS FOR TERMINATION

MDHS **shall** terminate child care certificates in the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) for any of the following reasons:

1. Family income has increased to greater than 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) on a non-temporary basis.
2. Non-temporary interruption in work/education requirement. A 3-month job search period will be allowed to search for a replacement to meet the work/education requirement. At the end of the search period, if the parent has not started new employment or enrolled in an educational/training program, the certificate shall be terminated. The parent must notify MDHS within ten (10) days of job loss.
3. Expiration of the twelve (12) month eligibility or redetermination period, if the child/family no longer meets eligibility requirements.
4. Family change of residence to a state other than Mississippi.
5. Upon request of the parent.
6. MDHS finds that the documents that were used to establish eligibility were false, falsified, or manipulated and all components of eligibility cannot otherwise be verified.

CCPP Certificates **may** be terminated for the following reasons:

7. Habitual nonpayment of provider fees and/or co-payments.

MDHS will give a two (2) week notice to the parent and provider before terminating the certificate, unless the provider has been closed by the MSDH.

REGISTRATION/ACTIVITY FEE

The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) will pay an annual registration/activity fee of $50 for each child enrolled in the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP). This payment will **only** be paid once a year when a new child care certificate is issued. Payment will occur at initial application for new applicants and at redetermination for existing parents.

The parent will be responsible for the difference of the amount, if the child care provider charges more than $50. If the registration/activity fee has already been paid to the current provider and the parent wishes to transfer his/her child(ren), an additional fee will not be paid by DECCD to transfer to the new provider.

CO-PAYMENT FEE

Co-payments are based on the full-time and part-time status, and the child's age. Parents must pay the designated fee once a month to the child care provider, in which his/her child(ren) is enrolled.

Co-payment fees are divided evenly between the number of children receiving services in the family. For example: If the total co-payment is $10 for a family with three (3) children receiving child care services, two (2) children will have a co-payment fee of $3.33 and one (1) child will have a co-payment fee of $3.34.

Determining Who Pays a Co-Payment Fee

No Co-Payment Fee

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients,
- Homeless families with no countable income

Minimum Co-Payment Fee (No More than $10)

- Transitional Child Care (TCC) recipients,
- Teen Parents,
- Children served by the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS),
- Children served by the Healthy Families Mississippi (HFM) home-visitation program,
- Parents with a disability who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and
- Children with special needs. If there are other children in the family who are receiving child care services, the monthly co-payment fee shall be $10 or the child's prorated share of the family's co-payment fee, whichever is less.

For all other parents, co-payment fees are calculated in CCPS based on family size and income by applying the CCDF Child Care Monthly Co-Payment Fee Scale for Parents.

ASSESSING CO-PAYMENT FEES PER CHILD

The child care provider shall not charge parents any cost over the assigned co-payment fee unless the cost for child care to the general public is higher than the amount paid by the CCPP. Full-time and part-time status is based on the child's age and the time of year the child is attending the child care center.

- If a parent has a child receiving full-time child care services, the total co-payment fee shall be stated on that child's certificate.
- If a parent has a child receiving part-time child care services, only half of the total co-payment fee shall be stated on the child's certificate.
- If a child is in full-time child care and part-time child care during the same month, the co-payment fee shall be assessed on the majority of the type of care provided.
  Example: If a child is served 16 (sixteen) part-time days and 5 (five) full-time days, the part-time co-payment fee shall be assessed for the month.

NON-PAYMENT OF CO-PAYMENT FEES

Co-payment fees shall be paid during the current month directly to the child care provider according to the child care certificate issued by DECCD. Child Care providers shall maintain proof of collection of co-payment fees, identified separately from tuition overage payments made by parents.

Providers must provide proof of co-payment fees to parents in the form of a receipt that must include the following:

- Parent's name,
- Payment amount,
- Date of payment,
- Child care provider's name and signature, and
- Child care center's name (if applicable).

If a parent fails to pay the co-payment fee prior to the end of the month, the provider shall notify DECCD. If the parent requests a change in child care provider with an outstanding balance of co-payment fees to the current provider, the parent must pay all co-payment fees before a new certificate is issued.

CO-PAYMENT REIMBURSEMENTS

When incorrect co-payments amounts are assessed, the amount must be reimbursed to the parent or child care provider.

- **Higher Rate**
  If a parent's fee was assessed at a rate higher than the correct fee and the parent has made payment to the provider, the parent must be reimbursed by the provider for the difference

for each month paid. The correct fee shall be noted on the certificate and a notice of the change forwarded to the provider and the parent.

- **Lower Rate**
  If a parent's fee was assessed at a rate lower than the correct fee, the parent must be responsible for reimbursing the provider for the difference between the corrected co-payment amount and the incorrect co-payment amount that was paid.

PRORATING CO-PAYMENT FEES

The assessed co-payment fee reflects a monthly rate regardless of attendance. If a child is enrolled between the 1st and 15th of the month, the full monthly co-payment fee shall be assessed for the first month of service. If the child is enrolled between the 16th and last day of the month, one-half of the monthly co-payment fee shall be assessed for the first month of service. If a parent desires to change a provider during the month, the parent shall pay the appropriate co-payment fee to any subsequent providers.

CHLD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP) APPROVES THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

1. **Center Based Child Care Providers -** A non-residential facility that regularly provides shelter and personal care for six (6) or more children who are not related to the operator within the third degree and who receive care for any part of a 24-hour day.
   ***MUST** be licensed by Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH).

2. **Family Child Care Provider (2 types) -** provides shelter and personal care in a residential setting for:
   a. no fewer than six (6) and no more than twelve (12) children with two (2) adult staff
      ***MUST** be licensed by MSDH, will be monitored by MSDH, and may also be monitored by Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) for any aspect of program compliance.
   b. for five (5) or fewer children
      ***MUST** complete voluntary registration with the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH), and will be monitored at least one time annually in an unannounced inspection by MSDH, to ensure compliance with health and safety training, fire safety standards, criminal background checks, and maintenance of sign-in sheets. Additionally, may be monitored by MDHS for any aspect of program compliance.

3. **In-Home Child Care Provider** – Care provided in the child's home. This type of provider is currently not available in Mississippi. MDHS has a target implementation date of October 1, 2020 by which to begin a pilot program to be limited to special needs care, and will at a minimum require compliance with all health and safety training requirements as well as background check requirements.

*No parent or guardian receiving assistance from the CCPP may provide care for their own child in any setting.

CCPP PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS:

Any child care provider interested in participating in the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) must complete an application through the Division of Early Childhood Care & Development (DECCD), and meet the following requirements **before** CCPP approval:

1. Licensure Requirement (may be met in 1 of 3 ways);
   a. Licensed- must hold a current license from the MSDH, or
   b. License-exempt-qualifies for exemption by the MSDH, as defined by Mississippi Statute, or
   c. Ineligible for licensure, but registered with MSDH (MSDH licensure regulations may be found at www.msdh.ms.gov or at www.secac.ms.gov)
2. Compliance with minimum education requirements as established by MSDH-Director and staff of licensed providers; license-exempt providers must comply with any minimum education requirements as established by the governing entity that

sanctions the provider; license-exempt and unlicensed caregivers must be 18 years or older.

MSDH regulates the following types of child care staff (all regulations are established by the MSDH, and can be found in detail in the MSDH Regulations (www.msdh.ms.gov or www.secac.ms.gov):

a. Director- 21 years or older, and meets MSDH minimum education requirements
b. Director Designee
c. Caregiver-18 years or older, and meets MSDH minimum education requirements
d. Caregiver Assistant-16 years or older, may only work under supervision

3. Completion of the e-Ledger Training Webinar - Director and Owner DECCD provides e-Ledger training webinars on a regular basis. Applicants must register on the DECCD website or the consumer education website, and the webinar orients providers to participation in the CCPP, including how to receive payment for care. The e-ledger training webinar may be submitted before or after application submission, however the application cannot be approved until the training webinar is successfully completed.
4. Completion of Basic Health Safety and Nutrition Assurances Form- certifies that provider will comply with CCPP Health and Safety requirements, and a copy must be kept on the provider premises- must be signed by Director and Owner
5. Completion of Health and Safety orientation training (contents discussed in detail below) by the Director and all staff
6. Completion of Criminal Background checks (details discussed below)- Director and all staff
7. Maintains a Standard Designation by completing/updating the application in the Provider Integrated Portal (PIP), and compliance with recommendations for Technical Assistance (TA if applicable. Includes implementation of curriculum that aligns with the Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE) Early Learning Standards-

   *Standard Designation requirement is in the process of being phased into the program, with a final deadline of October 1, 2019 for compliance by all providers. (Details discussed below).
8. The child care facility must be located within the State of Mississippi.

After the Application is accepted by DECCD, the provider must submit:

1. W-9 Internal Revenue Service Tax form- required to receive payment, must be signed by the owner
2. Provider Statement of Agreement- an agreement between the provider and DECCD wherein the provider agrees to comply with CCPP policies and requirements, must be signed by the owner and the director if the owner is not the same person as the director.

The CCPP application, forms, and information about becoming a provider are available on the consumer education website www.secac.ms.gov under the provider tab, and may be submitted by mail, email, fax, or in person.

COMPLETION OF APPLICATION PROCESS

Once all requirements have been met, DECCD will process the application, and email the approved provider an eligibility effective date. No payment may be issued prior to the effective date.

MSDH PERFORMS THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED CCPP FUNCTIONS FOR PROVIDERS (as mandated by Mississippi Statute and on behalf of DECCD through formal agreement):

1. **Licensure/Regulatory**
   Including but not limited to promulgation of health and safety regulations, compliance monitoring, and investigation. All child care centers participating in CCPP must have a valid license issued by MSDH, unless exempted or ineligible by statute.

   If MSDH revokes a license for any reason, DECCD must be notified and the child care facility must be closed in the DECCD database. Once closed, the provider must meet the requirements of MSDH and DECCD to reopen, unless the child care facility is permanently disqualified for providing child care services.

*In the event of closure, DECCD will notify the parents of all affected children of the closure and offer assistance to find a new center.

MSDH recognizes three (3) types of regulatory categories:

a. **Licensed-** governed by Mississippi statute and MSDH regulations (www.msdh.ms.gov or www.secac.ms.gov).
b. **License Exempt**- Some providers are exempted from licensure by Mississippi statute or MSDH regulations, because they are otherwise regulated and monitored by a separate governing entity, giving reasonable assurances as to health and safety. License exempt status is determined solely by MSDH.
c. **Unlicensed (Family Child Care)-** Some providers are ineligible for licensure. According to Mississippi Statute, any family child care home in which shelter and personal care is regularly provided for five (5) or fewer children is ineligible for licensure. Additionally, licensing statutes do not apply to in-home caregivers.

To ensure health and safety compliance as required by federal regulations, all license-exempt and family child care providers are required to complete an application with the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) and to register with MSDH in order to receive payment in the CCDF subsidy program. MDHS through a formal agreement

with the MSDH will monitor family child care providers. The monitoring will include, at a minimum, one (1) unannounced visit per year to ensure health and safety standards, fire safety standards, and criminal background checks are in compliance. MDHS may also monitor for program compliance.

2. Criminal Background Checks

A comprehensive criminal background check is federally mandated for all child care providers participating in the CCPP, and must be completed before CCPP approval for every adult, age 18 or older in any type of child care provider, including, but not limited to directors, owners, staff, volunteers, interns, and any adult, age 18 or older who may be present during caregiving hours in a residential setting, to include house guests.

The requisite background check must be conducted within ten (10) days from the hiring date for new employees, and providers must pay the cost of obtaining the requisite checks.

The comprehensive criminal background check is conducted by MSDH for licensed and registered unlicensed staff. License-exempt provider staff must obtain a commercial background check. All shall include:

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal records, based on fingerprints
- The National Sex Offender Registry
- The child abuse central registry, including every state where the individual resided in the preceding five (5) years, when available
- The state criminal registry check using fingerprints, including every state where the individual resided in the preceding five (5) years, when available
- The state sex offender registry, including every state where the individual resided in the preceding five (5) years, when available

An individual shall be denied employment in a child care facility and/or a provider will be deemed ineligible for assistance for any of the following:

- Refusal to consent to the background check
- Knowingly making a materially false statement in connection with the background check
- Confirmed sex offender status, registered or otherwise
- Convicted of a felony consisting of:
  - Murder
  - Child abuse or neglect
  - Crime against children, including pornography
  - Spousal abuse
  - Rape or sexual assault
  - Kidnapping
  - Arson
  - Physical assault or battery
  - A drug-related offense committed in the past five (5) years

- Convicted of a violent misdemeanor as an adult against a child

MSDH issues letters of suitability to confirm that the staff member has completed the requisite criminal background checks and is deemed suitable to work or volunteer in a childcare facility. No individual may work or volunteer in a childcare center that cares for CCDF children until the facility receives notification from MSDH verifying the employee's suitability for employment. License-exempt providers must maintain documentation on site of all required checks for all staff.

New background checks are required every five (5) years for each staff member.

STANDARD DESIGNATION

Standard designation is an aforementioned minimum quality requirement to be a child care provider. All providers must have a standard designation prior to October 1, 2019, and the designation will be renewed no more than once per year. DECCD is in the process of assisting providers in achieving a standard designation. All providers who complete a standard application in the Provider Integrated Portal (PIP) in good faith will be granted a standard designation. Based on the content of the application, the provider may be approved without technical assistance (TA) or with TA. TA will be provided at no charge to the provider by the Early Childhood Academies (ECA).

The requirements to receive a standard designation include:

- Must be licensed, registered, or otherwise license-exempt by the MSDH and
- All staff must complete the Health and Safety training. Mandatory preservice and ongoing professional development related to early childhood care and development.
- Delivery of curricula and/or learning activities that are aligned to State Early Learning Guidelines and Standards as adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).
- Engagement in continuous quality improvement.

COMPREHENSIVE DESIGNATION

A comprehensive designation is in the development phase with anticipation that a pilot program will be implemented over the next two (2) years. The comprehensive designation will be an optional achievement for providers and represents a commitment on the part of a standard-designated child care center to achieve a heightened level of quality that assures a child receives continuity of care and learning as the child moves from one (1) environment to the next, e.g. child care center to public school. Comprehensive Child Care Centers will demonstrate that high quality care and education is planned, implemented, and continuously improved in all of the following ten (10) goal areas:

1. Continuous quality improvement
2. Professional development trainings
3. Curriculum standards

4. Child assessments
5. Family engagement
6. Community partnerships
7. Kindergarten transition practices
8. Business management operations
9. Technology infrastructure
10. Program evaluation

The Comprehensive designation places a center in the position to partner with other entities to expand the opportunities for children to continually benefit from all the available resources that can help facilitate continuity of care and learning between the ages of 0 to 8. A Comprehensive center would be in a position to:

- Provide continuity of care and learning to provide holistic experiences for the child.
- Enhance the role of the families as equal partners in the delivery of care and opportunities for learning.
- Facilitate delivery of growth by transitions into K-12 experiences that will increase the likelihood of community integration into college or the workforce.
- Facilitate the evaluation of center effectiveness to improve the success of a program and the educational outcomes of a child to engage in continuous quality improvement.

CCPP HEALTH AND SAFETY ORIENTATION TRAINING

The Health and Safety Orientation training is one of the aforementioned requirements to become a CCPP approved provider. It is a three (3) hour training, and all existing staff, including Directors, employees, and volunteers, as well as new hires must complete the training within ninety (90) days of the hire date or prior to obtaining CCPP approval for the center.

The Early Childhood Academy (ECA) will conduct face to face and online trainings to all approved child care providers on behalf of MDHS. Caregivers are required to register in advance for the training and must attend the entire orientation session.

All providers must maintain documentation of completed orientation training for caregiver staff and volunteers who engage in child care. This documentation must be made available to MSDH or MDHS monitors upon request. Caregivers should retain documentation of orientation training, as it may be transferred to other child care facilities within the state.

Health and Safety topics include:

1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization)
2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices
3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent
4. Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment
7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility)
8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants
9. Precautions in transporting children (if applicable)
10. Pediatric first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification
11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect
12. Child development

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The health and safety orientation training must be completed every two (2) years by every staff member. Additionally, licensed providers must follow MSDH regulations requiring 15 contact hours of professional development each year. License exempt providers must adhere to professional development requirements as prescribed by the organization that sanctions the program and upon which its license exempt status is based.

The training sets the following expectations and requirements for all CCPP providers:

1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization)

CCDBG federal regulations mandate that each child receiving CCDF subsidy and any caregiver providing subsidized childcare have current immunizations. Providers must maintain the following records for each child and each caregiver on site, and readily accessible for review by MDHS or MSDH:

Certificate of Immunization Compliance (MSDH Form 121, signed by the District Health Officer, a physician, nurse, or designee); **or**

Certificate of Medical Exemption (MSDH Form 122, must be approved and signed by the MSDH District Health Officer from the public health district or the State Epidemiologist).

Homeless children and children in foster care who receive CCPP assistance may be granted a twenty-four (24) hour grace period from the date of admission into a CCPP-approved child care program to obtain the necessary immunization records. Payment for these children during the grace period shall not be considered an error or an improper payment.

2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices

A safe sleep environment for infants to lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is required as follows:

- An infant shall be placed on his/her back for sleeping unless written physician orders to the contrary are in the child's record. Sleeping infants shall be within the view of the staff

and visually checked regularly when sleeping. Nothing shall obstruct the view of the staff or prevent the staff from clearly seeing infants or children.

- Infants shall be dressed in clothing appropriate for sleeping that is designed to keep the infant warm without the possible hazard of head covering or entrapment. The room shall be kept at a draft-free seasonally appropriate temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit to 78 degrees Fahrenheit. If a child is already asleep and not dressed in clothing appropriate for sleeping, the caregiver does not need to awaken the infant to change his or her clothes.
- Facilities shall use a firm mattress covered by a fitted sheet.
- Items such as but not limited to pillows, blankets, sheepskins, bumpers, soft objects, stuffed toys, loose bedding, etc., shall not be in the crib.

The use of safe sleep practices for children is required as follows:

- Individual beds, cots, mattresses, pads, or other acceptable equipment shall be used for rest periods, and children shall not be placed directly on the floor for rest periods. Bed linens, such as blankets or sheets, cannot be used in place of a bed, cot, mattress, or pad. These shall be kept in a sanitary condition. Once a sheet or blanket has been used by a child, it shall not be used by another child until it has been laundered.
- Rest period equipment shall be clean and covered with a waterproof cover.
- Nap pads/cots are designed for use by one (1) child only at a time.
- Nap pads utilized by more than one (1) child shall be sanitized after each child's use. Nap pads utilized by only one (1) child shall be sanitized immediately when soiled or at least weekly.
- Nap pads and nap cots without mattresses are not acceptable for use in 24 hour programs. Beds, cribs, or roll away cots are the only acceptable bedding for 24 hour centers.
- The facility shall provide a crib or other similarly commercially purchased bed unit, approved and designated for the purpose of sleeping. Mobile infants, at a minimum of eight (8) months, may be placed on a mat during the transition period of crawling to walking. If such mat is used, it shall be a flame retardant, minimum of two (2) inch commercially purchased sleep mat, especially designated for the purpose of sleeping. All cribs, sleep units, and mats must be maintained clean, in sanitary condition and without chips, holes, fraying, tears, or stains. Cribs, cots, and mats are to be a minimum of 24 inches apart or separated by a solid barrier. A minimum of 36 inches is recommended.
- Children are not allowed to sleep in shared places, such as infant seats, strollers, swings, cozy areas, or on tables. If a child falls asleep in such shared place, he or she should be moved immediately to a sanitary individual sleeping place

3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent

A record shall be maintained of any medication administered by the director or caregiver showing the date, time, and signature of dispensing employee. A medication record may be destroyed ninety (90) days after administered the medication. Signed written authorization to obtain emergency medical treatment and to administer medication must be signed by parent or guardian and kept in child's record/file. The use of any food or medication in any manner or for any purpose other than that for which it was intended is prohibited.

4. Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions

A child requiring a special diet due to medical reasons, allergic reactions, or religious beliefs, shall be provided meals and snacks in accordance with the child's needs. If medical reasons exist for the special diet, a medical prescription from the child's physician stating that the special diet is medically necessary is required.

Information required for dietary modifications include:

- Child's full name and date of instructions, updated annually
- Any dietary restrictions based on the special needs
- Any special feeding or eating utensils; any foods to be omitted from the diet and any foods to be substituted
- Limitations of life activities
- Any other pertinent special needs information
- What, if anything, needs to be done if the child is exposed to restricted foods

5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

All child care facility buildings shall meet all fire safety standards listed on the MSDH Form #333 and all applicable local fire safety standards and/or ordinances.

- All fire extinguishers, as required in the fire safety plan, shall be serviced on an annual basis by a qualified fire extinguisher technician.
- Unused electrical outlets shall be protected by a safety plug cover.
- No extension cords shall be used in areas accessible to children.
- Every child care facility which uses nonelectric heating and/or cooling systems, cooking stoves, and/or hot water heaters or other nonelectric equipment, shall have sufficient carbon monoxide monitors placed appropriately throughout the child care facility.
- All glass in doors, windows, mirrors, etc., in the child care facility shall have a protective barrier at least four (4) feet high when measured from the floor. Doors, windows, mirror, etc., using safety grade glass or polymers (e.g., Lexan®) are not required to have a protective barrier.
- A separate space in the child care facility shall be provided for the use of an ill or injured child until the child can be picked up by the parent. Space shall be located in an area that is supervised at all times by an employee.
- All parts of the child care facility used by children shall be lead-safe, well lighted, ventilated, and free of hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions, such as but not limited to, open stairs and unprotected low windows.
- The child care facility shall be equipped with an outdoor playground area that directly adjoins the indoor facilities or that can be reached by a route free of hazards and is no farther than 1/8 mile (660 feet) from the child care facility.
- The outdoor playground area shall be free of hazards and not less than 30 feet (measured horizontally parallel to the ground) from electrical transformers, high-voltage power lines, electrical substations, railroad tracks, or sources of toxic fumes or gases.
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- Hazards, including but not limited to air conditioner units and utility mains, meters, tanks, and/or cabling shall be inaccessible to children.
- Fencing at least four feet high shall be provided around the outdoor playground area. Fencing higher than four feet but not to exceed eight feet may be required if the licensing authority determines that a hazard exists.
- Outdoor playground areas shall be free from unprotected swimming and wading pools, ditches, quarries, canals, excavations, fishponds, or other bodies of water.
- The soil in outdoor playground areas of the child care facility shall not contain hazardous levels of any toxic chemical or substances. The child care facility shall have soil samples and analyses performed where there is good reason to believe a problem may exist.

6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment

Shaken baby syndrome (SBS) and abusive head trauma (AHT) are the constellation of signs and symptoms resulting from violent shaking or shaking and impacting the head of an infant or small child. Shaken baby syndrome is a subset of abusive head trauma with injuries having the potential to result in death or permanent neurologic disability. SBS/AHT is a form of child abuse. Caregivers are trained to recognize the possible signs and symptoms of SBS/AHT and the consequences of SBS/AHT.

Additional child maltreatment is defined as prohibited behaviors. The following behaviors are prohibited by anyone (i.e., parent, caregiver, or child) in all child care settings:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, beating, shaking, pinching, biting, and other measures that produce physical pain.
- Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities.
- Abusive or profane language to include but not limited to yelling at, and/or using harsh tones toward the children or in close proximity (hearing distance) to children.
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional abuse, including rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolating (out of view of a caregiver), or corrupting a child.
- Use of any food product or medication in any manner or for any purpose other than that for which it was intended.
- Inappropriate disciplinary behavior includes, but is not limited to, putting soap or pepper in a child's mouth.
- Any acceptable disciplinary action that is not age-appropriate for the child or is excessive in time or duration

7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility)

CCCPP-approved providers are required to have a written Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan to be implemented in the event of a fire, natural disaster, or other threatening situation that may pose a health or safety hazard to children. Plans must describe procedures for relocation, evacuation, shelter in place, and lockdown. MSDH also has an agency-wide

emergency preparedness plan which describes agency procedures for relocation, evacuation, shelter in place, and lockdown.

8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants

Garbage and trash shall be removed from the child care facility daily and from the grounds at least once a week. Garbage and trash shall be stored inaccessible to the children, and in insect and rodent resistant containers.

The child care facility shall comply with all regulations promulgated by the Division of Sanitation of the Mississippi State Department of Health for:
1. Food Service
2. On-site Wastewater Systems
3. Vector (pest) Control

9. Precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

Occupant Restraints:

- All children will be properly restrained whenever they are being transported in a motor vehicle.
    - Every person transporting a child under the age of four (4) years in a passenger motor vehicle, and operated on a public roadway, street or highway, shall provide for the protection of the child by properly using a child passenger restraint device or system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards, e.g., child safety seat.
    - Every person transporting a child in a passenger motor vehicle operated on a public roadway, street or highway, shall provide for the protection of the child by properly using a belt positioning booster seat system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards if the child is at least four (4) years of age, but less than seven (7) years of age and measures less than four (4) feet nine (9) inches in height or weighs less than sixty-five (65) pounds.
    - Any vehicle equipped with seatbelts is subject to the requirements listed above.
- No vehicle shall be occupied by more individuals than its rated capacity. No children shall be transported in the front seat of vehicles equipped with passenger side air bags.
- All vehicles under 10,000 lbs. GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rated) shall be equipped with occupant restraints appropriate for the age and/or weight of the children being transported. A child under the age of four shall be transported only if the child is securely fastened in a child safety seat that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS, 49 CFR 571.213), which shall be indicated on the child safety seat. The child safety seat shall be appropriate to the child's weight and be installed and used according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Vehicles (e.g., school buses) with a GVWR 10,000 lbs. or more at a minimum shall meet the current Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) for buses of that size. It is the responsibility of the child care facility operator to have documentation verifying that a bus meets the current FMVSS.

- An individual seat restraint must be used for each child. The use of an individual seat restraint for two or more children is not allowed. NOTE: Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) means the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration's standards for motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment established under Section 103 of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 (49 CFR Part 571) as they apply to school buses.

Staff-to-Child Ratio:

- On vehicles with a GVWR of less than 10,000 lbs., the staff-to-child ratio shall be maintained at all times. The driver of the vehicle shall not be counted as a caregiver while transporting the children.
- On vehicles with at GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or more, the staff-to-child ratio shall be one caregiver to each 25 children or fraction thereof. The driver of the vehicle shall not be counted as a caregiver while transporting the children. In facilities that are dually licensed, i.e., licensed to provide care for both preschool and school age children, if the vehicle is only transporting school age children (no preschool children, infants, or toddlers are being transported), the driver may be counted as a caregiver while transporting the school age children.

10. Pediatric first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification

Programs that operate in a central location shall have at least one caregiver on the premises at all times the facility is in operation that has a current certification in CPR and first aid. When groups of children are away from the central location for field trips etc., there shall be at least one caregiver with the group that holds a current certification in CPR and first aid. All caregivers in summer day camps are required to have current CPR and first aid certification, copies of which shall be kept with their personnel records.

First Aid Supply:

1. A first aid supply shall be kept on-site and easily accessible to employees, but not in reach of the children.
2. A first aid supply shall be taken on all field trips and excursions and shall be easily accessible to employees, but not in reach of the children.
3. Medicine shall be kept out of the reach of the children.
4. All vehicles used by the facility in transporting children shall be equipped with a first aid kit.
5. It is recommended that first aid kits contain items pursuant to American Red Cross guidelines.
6. Some items in this kit may have expiration dates. All first aid kits should be periodically inspected for contents. Depleted and out of date materials should be replaced.
7. Special attention should be exercised when utilizing first aid supplies or any medication for children who have allergies or other special medical needs.

11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

The Health and Safety training covers the topics of child abuse and neglect including definitions of types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), maltreatment of children, recognizing signs of abuse, and reporting policies.

All child care providers and all responsible parties must report child abuse and neglect immediately if they suspect or have evidence that a child in their care is being abused or neglected by a parent, family member, child care worker, or other individual with access to the child. Providers and all responsible parties shall submit criminal child abuse reports directly to the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services for investigation, and shall notify MDHS. MDHS may also notify MSDH if warranted.

Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services reports can be made online at www.mdcps.ms.gov or verbally by calling the Mississippi Abuse Hotline at 1-800-222-8000.

DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

All child care providers should establish practices for promoting developmentally appropriate social-emotional-behavioral health practices and procedures for discipline and intervention. These procedures and practices shall be clearly communicated to all staff, families, and community partners.

Suspension and Expulsion of Children

MDHS strongly discourages the use of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary discipline practices; these practices should only be used as a last resort. Child care providers are encouraged to access the technical assistance (TA) and resources provided by MDHS through the Early Childhood Academies (ECA) and the Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC) to assist the provider in maintaining therapeutic inclusion of the child if at all possible. The provider should document evidence of appropriate behavioral interventions. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional have been exhausted and it has been determined that transitioning a child to another program is necessary for the well-being of the child or his or her peers, providers are encouraged to take a series of documented steps to ensure a smooth transition into another setting that offers a rich social context and opportunities for interactions with socially competent peers so that the child's learning and social skills practice are optimized in a natural environment. If the child has a disability and is receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the provider and MDHS shall ensure that additional applicable procedural safeguards and requirements are met.

Revised 02-01-19

CHILD CARE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CCPP) APPROVED PROVIDER PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

REIMBURSEMENT RATES

- The CCPP is a third-party reimbursement model, paying providers a fee for services, based on agency established reimbursement rates. The current rates were established by conducting a Market Rate Survey (MRS) of the state's average child care rates, and multiplying those rates by 75 percent, with variants for age of the child, child's full or part-time status, facility type, and special needs.
- Reimbursement rates shall be reviewed once during each three (3) year federal state plan cycle to ensure the rate is adequate and to ensure equal access to services for children in the CCPP.
- The current rates and methodology for the most current MRS are posted on the consumer education website and on the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) website.
- CCPP providers may charge more than the reimbursement rates established by MDHS, but to do so, they must publish the rates to the public, and in all marketing materials, and file a copy of the published rates with MDHS annually. Providers shall not charge a different rate to families in the certificate program than the rate charged to the general public. All rates, fees, and discounts charged to CCPP participants must be offered and equal to those charged to non-participants. This means universal application of advertised tuition rates.
- The established rates are intended to subsidize child care costs for low income parents and may not cover the full cost of all centers.

CO-PAYMENT AND OTHER FEES

- MDHS calculates a co-payment fee for each child care certificate based on a sliding fee scale that accounts for family size and household income. The fee is written on the child care certificate when it is issued, and it is mandatory for the provider to collect the designated fee directly from the parent.
- CCPP providers may charge reasonable late fees but they must be published to the public, and in all marketing materials, and must apply equally to CCPP and non-CCPP children.
- If CCPP providers elect to charge more than the published reimbursement rate, the provider is responsible for collecting the overage from the parent or any responsible party.
- All fees shall be paid by the parent during the current month directly to the provider according to the child care certificate issued by MDHS. Providers shall maintain proof of collection of co-payment fees, identified separately from tuition overage payments made by parents.
- All outstanding fees must be paid to the provider before MDHS will grant a change of provider request unless the parent demonstrates emergency circumstances.

Providers must provide proof of payment to parents that must include the following:

- Parent's name
- Payment amount
- Date of payment
- Child care center's name
- Child care provider's name and signature

PAYMENT PROCESS

CCPP providers must submit a ledger in the Child Care Payment System (CCPS). All child care providers are required to maintain a record of accurate attendance and absences on sign-in/out sheets and on daily class rolls for each child. Providers shall retain sign-in/out sheets for a period of three (3) years.

The sign-in/out sheets must show the following:

- Child's first and last name (as listed on the child care certificate),
- Full name of the parent/guardian or parent's authorized representative,
- Time the child is signed in with the signature of the person signing the child in each day, and
- Time the child is signed out with the signature of the person signing the child out each day.

It is mandatory for sign-in/out sheets to be maintained and made available upon request. Refusal to provide sign-in/out sheets upon request to any MDHS or Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) staff may result in further administrative investigation and/or sanctions.

If sign-in/out sheets are lost or damaged by an unforeseen occurrence such as fire, flood or natural disaster, the child care provider must report the occurrence, and submit evidence to MDHS within ten (10) days of the occurrence. Evidence of the occurrence must include the date and time of the occurrence. The evidence can be submitted by mail, fax, email or in person to MDHS.

PARENT CHOICE OF PROVIDER

Parent choice is a fundamental tenet of the CCDF program. Parents are free to choose any provider that has been previously approved to participate in the CCPP. The selected provider is listed on the certificate after the child has been approved for program participation.

Parents may change child care providers for any reason, but the parent must adhere to the following MDHS procedure for doing so:

- Submit a Change in Provider Form to MDHS signed by the parent and the current provider. An incomplete form will not be processed.

- Ensure that all outstanding fees are paid to the current provider.
- Provide a minimum two (2) week notice to the current provider prior to withdrawing the child, unless under emergency circumstances.
- **Emergency Circumstances** - The minimum two (2) week notice period may be waived under certain circumstances. The parent may make a written request to the DECCD Division Director explaining the emergency circumstance for transfer or withdrawal. Examples of emergency circumstances include, but are not limited to:
    - Physical Altercation between the Parent and Staff Member (including Director). If an issue arises at the child care center between the parent and staff member (including director) of the child care center resulting in police involvement, a transfer may be requested. The DECCD Director may also contact the child care provider to obtain additional evidence, and will weigh all evidence as a whole.
    - Injury of a Child: If an issue arises at the child care center resulting in an injury of any child enrolled in the center such as neglect, lack of supervision, or physical harm, a transfer may be requested.
    - If emergency circumstances are established, the DECCD Director will make a determination as to whether outstanding fees must be paid prior to authorizing the transfer or withdrawal.

Slot Facility Provider Change: If the child is enrolled in a slot certificate, the parent may only transfer the child to another approved slot provider. The approval of this request may be subject to the availability of funds at the slot facility. Parents must adhere to the forgoing change of provider process.

PARENT COMPLIANCE

Parents and providers receiving CCDF subsidy are expected to follow MDHS and the selected child care provider's internal policy. Failure to do so may result in sanctions in the program, however, each parent enters into a contractual relationship with each provider, and disputes that fall outside of the CCDF program must be resolved by the contracting parties or in a court of proper jurisdiction.

ALLOWABLE LEAVE TIME FOR PARENTS

- Natural Disaster – Child care services shall be continued when parents are off work due to circumstances beyond the parent's control, such as hurricanes, floods, and tornado. Child care providers shall be reimbursed when the center is closed temporarily in the event of an emergency declared by the President of the United States or Governor of Mississippi or an event that results from a natural disaster or human-caused event for up to ten (10) business days per occurrence, unless the parent needs to make alternate child care arrangements.

- Absences – A child shall be allowed up to five (5) paid unexcused absence days per month. Child care providers are paid for a full month for up to five (5) absent days. If a child is absent for more than five (5) days, the child care provider shall be paid on a daily basis. No documentation is needed for these absences.
  Excessive absences – Absences are considered excessive whenever a child(ren) is absent from a child care center for sixty (60) consecutive days or more.

  Exception to the excessive absence rule:
  Temporary long-term absences – May be granted for special circumstances such as chronic illness of the child, custody situation that requires the child to spend extended time with a non-custodial parent, or a temporary move out of state. Requests should be made in writing to MDHS if absences will exceed sixty (60) consecutive days, and will be granted on a case by case basis. If granted, the certificate will continue to remain active, regardless of attendance, but the child care provider will only be paid for five (5) days of absence per month. However, the child care provider has the option to disenroll the child from his or her child care center.

- Voluntary withdrawal – Participants and providers must notify MDHS of any move out of state, or intent to withdraw from child care. MDHS will then terminate the certificate. Failure of a parent or provider to notify MDHS may constitute as an intentional program violation. Absence of a child for thirty (30) consecutive days without a ruling from MDHS that the absence is temporary (see above), shall be considered a voluntary withdrawal from the program.

- MDHS will pay for up to eleven (11) holidays (see chart below) per year. If the Governor of Mississippi allows days in addition to the list below in observance of a holiday, providers shall be notified they are also allowed these extra days.

DATE	HOLIDAY
*January 1	New Year's Day
January – 3rd Monday	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday and Robert E. Lee's Birthday
Spring (date varies annually)	Good Friday
May – Last Monday	Memorial Day
*July 4	Independence Day
September – 1st Monday	Labor Day
*November – 4th Thursday and Friday	Thanksgiving Day & the Friday After
*December 24	Christmas Eve
*December 25	Christmas Day
December 31	New Year's Eve

Six (6) of the holidays shall be fixed and must be observed on the day designated for state holiday observance. Those holidays are denoted by an asterisk. The remaining five (5) holidays may be used at the discretion of the child care center on the date designated, or on any date deemed necessary by the child care center. If the child care center elects to use the holiday on a date other than the designated date, the center must notify DECCD seven (7) days prior to the

designated date of the flexible holiday. Parents must be notified by the child care center fourteen (14) days prior to the holiday change.

A child care center shall remain open on days when children are taken on field trips, or any other day outside of the approved holiday list provided by MDHS, for any children who cannot attend the field trips or who still need child care during holidays not approved by MDHS.

PAYMENT LEDGER CYCLE

Payment ledgers shall be submitted electronically through the Child Care Payment System (CCPS) once a month. Providers may choose to submit ledgers during one (1) of two (2) payment cycles during the month; however, providers shall only receive one (1) payment per month for services rendered.

- Payment ledgers shall open to providers on the first day of the month and remain open until 11:59 p.m. CST on the fifth day of the month. Child care providers who submit ledgers by the fifth day of the month will be issued payment by the 15th day of the month.
- Child care providers who fail to submit the ledger by the fifth day of the month have the option to submit the ledger by 11:59 p.m. CST on the 15th day of the month. Providers who submit their ledgers by the 15th day of the month will be issued payment by the last day of the month.

DEECD cannot issue provider payments outside the scheduled payment cycle. If the child care provider fails to submit the payment ledger for any reason, the child care provider must wait to submit the payment ledger at the next available time.

LEDGER PAYMENTS

Ledger payments contain a list of disbursements issued to the child care provider for attendance for services rendered on behalf of children who are participating in CCPP.

LEDGER ADJUSTMENTS

An adjustment shall be made in CCPS reflecting a change, if it is necessary to adjust the amount of funds issued based on the attendance information submitted to MDHS by the child care provider.

Payment Adjustment Form

MDHS's Payment Adjustment Form must be used for reporting any necessary adjustment(s) by the child care provider to MDHS. This form is available on both MDHS and SECAC websites. Child care providers must submit this form, along with supporting documents, to MDHS to report any of the following:

1. **Overpayment/Underpayment –** If a child care provider discovers an over-payment or under-payment on the payment ledger. The child care provider must submit supporting sign-in/sign-out sheets in order for the adjustment to be processed. Questionable payments or incorrect payments shall be adjusted during the next regularly scheduled payment cycle. Once MDHS processes the overpayment/underpayment request, payments will be issued/deducted from the next month payment.
2. **Certificate Error -** Any error listed on the child care certificate that will cause payments to calculate incorrectly must be submitted to MDHS. Such errors include, but are not limited to:
    - Incorrect payment rates
    - Incorrect care type (full-time vs full-/part-time)
    - Incorrect date of birth for the child
3. **Duplicate Children on the Ledger -** If a child care provider discovers that a child is listed more than once on the payment ledger. Providers should claim payment for the certificate that has the accurate payment amount for the child. The duplicate entry should be listed as absent "A" for correct payment.

TYPES OF CARE

- **Standard Care**
    - **Full-Time Child Care** – Full time care is assigned to children ages 6 weeks to 5 years of age who attend the facility more than six (6) hours.
    - **Part-Time Child Care** – Child care provided for fewer than six (6) hours.
- **Non-Traditional Care** – Child care providers have the option to provide child care services during standard or non-traditional hours. Non-traditional hours include week night care and supervision of children for less than 24 hours per day within the twelve hours between 6:00 p.m. and 5:59 a.m., or weekend care and supervision of children between 6:00 p.m. Friday and 5:59 a.m. Monday. To provide non-traditional child care the provider must ensure that doing so will not cause the child care provider to exceed MSDH maximum capacity for that facility by obtaining approval from MSDH.

  Additionally, the child care provider must:
  1. Submit a written request to MDHS
  2. MDHS will verify MSDH approval in CCPS
  3. If MSDH has approved the request, the child care provider must submit a roster of the children in CCPP needing non-traditional care hours.
  4. The child care provider will be instructed to inform the parent to submit verification that non-traditional care hours are needed. The parent must provide a copy of their work schedule demonstrating the need for non-traditional care.
  5. The parent must submit this verification to MDHS before the child can start the non-traditional care hours.

REIMBURSEMENT

Full-time Reimbursement Rates

Full-time reimbursement rates shall be issued to child care providers for the following:

- Full-time care provided by CCPP-approved centers when the primary school setting is closed.
- Full-time care provided by CCPP-approved centers when the child is given an out-of-school suspension.
- Summer child care for school-age children for up to five (5) absences and approved holidays.
- For three (3) and four (4) year old children enrolled in public or private pre-kindergarten programs where tuition is assessed.
- Five (5) year old children not enrolled in a public kindergarten program, until they reach the age of six (6).
- Non-traditional child care.
- Full-time certificate payments for school-age children shall not be issued to students enrolled in first grade through 12th grade unless full-time care is needed during nontraditional hours and/or the primary/secondary school setting is closed.

Part-time Reimbursement Rates

Part-time reimbursement rates shall be issued to child care providers for the following:

- School-age children and children who attend other programs, such as Head Start, for excused absences and during holidays. Except during times when it is documented the child(ren) attended the child care center for the full day because the school was not open or for out-of-school suspension during the school year.
- Any care provided when the child's primary school setting is open, such as afterschool care.

GARNISHMENTS/LEVIES

Garnishment/levies are court ordered recoupment of a debt owed by a provider to a third party. When MDHS receives notice of a garnishment or levy action against a child care provider, MDHS must submit payment to the garnishing party until the provider's debt has been paid in full, or until a Notice of Release has been received. The provider must contact the garnishing party to dispute the action or make alternate payment arrangements.

LICENSURE REVOCATION OR CLOSURE BY MSDH

Any child care center closed by MSDH Licensure Department will be immediately closed in the CCPP.

CCDF funds cannot be used to pay a child care provider if the license has lapsed at any time. Funds may be recouped for any lapse in time the license was not valid. If a provider is reinstated by MSDH Licensure Department within the MSDH thirty (30) days from the date of the closure, MDHS will not require the child care provider to submit a new child care provider application, but instead will allow the CCPP status to be reinstated.

If the death of a child occurs in a CCPP provider, and the death is determined to be due to a health and safety violation, the child care provider will be terminated from the CCPP upon a final determination of the cause of death. MDHS staff will assist with locating alternate childcare for other CCPP children if needed.

PROVIDER CHANGE OF STATUS

A significant change of status requires completion of a new CCPP application and new e-Ledger training webinar (if more than 6 months since completion of the last webinar) and includes the following:

- Address change
- Tax ID Number change
- Change of Ownership

Procedure for transfer of ownership:

- **New Owner must**: Comply with all requirements to become a CCPP approved provider. Children enrolled in CCPP and MDHS Provider ID numbers do not automatically transfer to the new owner. If the new owner fails to complete the CCPP approval process prior to the first date of operation under new ownership, there shall be a lapse in payment until the new owner completes the CCPP approval process.
- **Previous Owner must**:
  1. Notify MDHS in writing of the pending transfer of ownership prior to the effective date so that all certificates may be terminated and reissued to the new owner upon the last day of operation. The certificates will only be issued to the new provider with parent approval.
  2. Submit a written statement certifying the provider will no longer claim funds issued by CCPP after a designated date, and the designated date
  3. Provide MDHS a forwarding address for any future payments and tax information

This information can be submitted by mail, fax, email, or in person to MDHS. All changes must be approved by MDHS before payment will be issued.

TAX IDENTIFICATION

- MDHS shall only issue payments through the CCPP to the individual or entity attached to the Employee Identification Number (EIN), also referred to as the Tax Identification Number (TIN) or Social Security Number (SSN) on record.

- The TIN or SSN is required by the Internal Revenue Services for tax purposes, and the provider elects which of the two identifying numbers to provide.
- If a provider elects to change from an EIN/TIN to a SSN, MDHS shall only approve the change if there is no lien or levy against the EIN/TIN of record.
- MDHS shall not approve an application for an individual or center to become a CCPP-approved provider if information on the W-9 is missing or incorrect. The W-9 must be signed and dated in order to be complete.
- If a CCPP-approved provider has a missing or incorrect TIN, MDHS shall deduct the Backup Withholding (BWH-B) Rate of 28 percent from future payments through the CCPP program until the correct TIN or name is supplied to MDHS. A TIN shall be considered to be missing or incorrect if it is not provided, has more or less than nine numbers, has an alpha character as one of the nine positions, or is in an improper format with a NAME/TIN combination that does not match or cannot be found in IRS or SSA files.
- If a CCPP-approved provider has a missing TIN, MDHS shall notify the provider via certified mail and immediately apply backup withholding until a W-9/TIN is supplied.
- If a CCPP-approved provider has an incorrect name/TIN, MDHS shall send via certified mail a First B-Notice and a W-9 form. The envelope shall be clearly marked that important tax information is enclosed. The provider shall be given thirty (30) business days to respond to complete the W-9 with a correct name/TIN. Failure to respond to the first B-Notice within thirty (30) business days will result in immediate backup withholding until the completed W-9 is returned.
- If MDHS receives a second notification from the IRS within a three-year period that the provider TIN is incorrect, MDHS shall issue a Second B Notice to the provider. The Second B Notice shall not include a copy of the W-9. The provider shall be given thirty (30) business days to provide MDHS with a copy of his or her Social Security Card or a 147C. Failure to respond to the second B-Notice within thirty (30) business days shall result in immediate backup withholding until the documentation is provided.

Tax-exempt organizations, government agencies, and corporations may be exempt from backup withholding according to IRS regulation. MDHS shall keep a record of withholdings in order to submit an Annual Return of Withheld Federal Income Tax Form 945 to the IRS.

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PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

As lead agency for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) has responsibility for ensuring compliance with all federal statutes and regulations, state statutes, and policy. MDHS employs multiple mechanisms to ensure compliance, including internal quality control monitoring, formal agreements with other state or private agencies, investigations, and sanctions if necessary.

CHILD CARE FACILITY COMPLAINT PROCESS

Making a Complaint

Any person may file a program related complaint or submit a tip about waste, fraud, or abuse of the program through the following methods:

- Call Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) HOTLINE 1-866-489-8734 for complaints related to licensure or child care regulations. Unless ordered by a court, the identity of the individual who reported the complaint shall not be disclosed outside of MSDH and/or MDHS investigative staff.
- Submit the MDHS FRAUD TIP FORM http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/ or call 1-800-299-6905 for complaints related to CCDF program violations or suspected fraud, waste or abuse.

Depending on the nature of the complaint the issue may be resolved wholly by MSDH, or it may be handled jointly by MSDH and MDHS, or referred to the appropriate agency.

Record of Complaints

The Mississippi Department of Health will maintain a record of substantiated parental complaints against child care providers. This function is performed on behalf of MDHS in order to comply with federal requirements by maintaining a Child Care Facility Complaint Hotline for use by the public. The complaint hotline number, and all substantiated parent complaints are available by link on the consumer education website.

Types of Complaints

1. **Health and Safety Regulatory**

Any complaint made to MDHS against a child care provider may be referred to MSDH. All such complaints shall be logged and maintained by MSDH. MSDH is responsible for investigating each complaint filed against a child care provider. MSDH may request assistance from MDHS, as needed, during a complaint investigation. MSDH will maintain records of complaints made against a child care provider, these records may be obtained by making a Public Records request to MSDH.

2. Financial or Program Violations

The MDHS Division of Program Integrity (DPI) will conduct investigations of suspected intentional program violations from child care providers and/or recipients stemmed from fraud tips, data matching, quality control reviews, Child Care Payment Program generated system reports or any other reliable source.

REFERRALS TO MSDH

Any suspicion on the part of a MDHS staff member that a licensed center is not in compliance with the Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities shall be reported immediately to the MSDH. A child care provider with a suspected license violation may remain CCPP approved until MSDH notifies MDHS that official action has been taken to restrict the child care center from operating as a licensed child care center.

Licensure violations that shall be reported to MSDH include, but are not limited to:

- Health and Safety Violations;
- Attendance in excess of licensed capacity;
- Improper child-to-staff ratios;
- Use of corporal punishment or verbal abuse;
- Forged director or staff credentials;
- Forged professional development certificates;
- Substandard facilities; or
- Environmental hazards.

MONITORING RESPONSIBILITIES

All providers participating in CCPP shall be inspected/monitored at least once annually in accordance with federal requirements.

Licensed Child Care Centers

A. MSDH has the primary responsibility of conducting annual unannounced inspections of licensed child care centers.
B. MDHS may also conduct announced or unannounced monitoring visits to CCPP approved licensed child care centers to ensure program compliance.

License-Exempt Providers

- MSDH will perform annual unannounced inspections of license-exempt child care centers on behalf of MDHS.
- MDHS may also conduct announced or unannounced monitoring visits of CCPP approved license-exempt providers to ensure program compliance.

Unlicensed Providers (Family Child Care)

- MSDH will perform annual unannounced inspections of unlicensed child care centers on behalf of MDHS.

- MDHS may also conduct announced or unannounced monitoring visits of CCPP-approved unlicensed providers to ensure program compliance.

Training of Monitoring Agents: MSDH **c**hild care monitoring agents must satisfactorily complete training before visiting child care providers for inspection. The training shall include the procedures for conducting a visit and reporting findings, and program policy.

Record Reviews

Monitoring visits may include, but are not limited to, a review of the following records, which must be made available to the monitoring agent or investigator if requested. Additionally, records must be kept in accordance with MSDH record retention requirements.

- Child Attendance Records
  - Daily attendance roster (sign-in/sign-out sheets) for each child. The attendance recorded on the child care center's attendance roster may be compared to the attendance reported to MDHS. All documentation related to child attendance may be reviewed.
- Staff Records
  - Child care providers must maintain a record/roster of all staff and volunteers, with hire dates and termination dates;
  - A current letter of suitability for all staff and volunteers; and
  - A current record of Health and Safety Orientation training for all staff and volunteers.
- Published Rates
  - The provider's published rates charged to the general public.
- Documentation of Co-Payment Fees Collected
  - A record of the payment of monthly co-payment fees for each CCPP child, must be kept and distinguished from payments of other fees such as late fees or tuition overage.
- Licensure
  - A copy of the center's license, letter of exemption, if applicable, or proof of registration for unlicensed providers.
- Provider Statement of Agreement
  - Copy of the signed CCPP Provider Statement of Agreement.
- Capacity
  - Attendance may be checked to ensure the child care provider is not receiving more CCDF certificates than the licensed or allowed capacity supports. Attendance in excess of licensed or allowed capacity is a health and safety violation, and may result in a recoupment of funds issued for certificates in excess of licensed or allowed capacity. Capacity is established by the following authority depending on the type of provider:
    1. Licensed providers-by MSDH regulations.
    2. License-exempt providers- by the national or local organization upon which the exemption status is based; a copy of the capacity

standards must be kept with the CCPP Provider Agreement in MDHS records, and on site at the child care center.

3. Unlicensed providers- must have five (5) or fewer children unrelated to the caregiver by the third-degree of kinship.

- Immunization Records
  - All CCPP-approved providers (licensed, license-exempt, and unlicensed) must keep and provide documentation of current immunizations or medical exemption, in compliance with MSDH regulations for all staff and children in the facility. (Form 121 Certificate of Immunization issued by the Mississippi State Department of Health, or Form 122, Certificate of Exemption)
  - Homeless children and children in foster care who receive CCPP assistance shall have a twenty-four (24) hour grace period from the date of admission into a CCPP- approved child care program to obtain the necessary immunization records. No provider shall be sanctioned for failure to provide immunization records for homeless children and children in foster care if enrolled in care for fewer than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time of inspection.
- Record of Emergency Drills
  - Licensed CCPP-approved providers must maintain a record of emergency drills as required by MSDH.
  - License-exempt CCPP-approved providers must maintain a record of annual emergency drills in compliance with standards established by the national or local organization upon which the exemption status is based.
  - Unlicensed providers must develop and maintain a written emergency preparedness plan

Fines

In order to participate in the CCPP child care providers must comply with monitoring, both announced and unannounced. Refusal to cooperate in the monitoring process may result in a financial penalty of $1,000 by MSDH for licensed providers. Additionally, refusal to allow monitoring inspections may result in referral to MDHS the Office of the Inspector General, Division of Program Integrity (DPI) for further investigation and possible termination from the program for all providers.

Findings for Health and Safety Violations

MSDH shall record all findings from health and safety violations on an official inspection form. A copy of the completed inspection form shall be given to the child care provider at the time of inspection. A child care provider with findings or violations may be monitored again by either announced or unannounced visits to monitor compliance with corrective action plans. Failure to cure findings may result in additional monitoring visits by MSDH or referral to MDHS for additional monitoring or investigation.

Public Posting of Inspection Reports: MSDH will make inspection reports completed after October 1, 2018, publicly available on the child care consumer education website. Inspection reports will remain posted for a minimum of seven (7) years, along with any Corrective Action Plans (CAP) that address the inspection findings. If the child care provider wishes to dispute the findings, the provider must utilize the MSDH agency appeal process, which is found the in the MSDH Regulations.

IMPROPER PAYMENT

Improper payments occur when MDHS makes a payment to a provider on behalf of a recipient who is ineligible for the CCPP subsidy, or if the payment was calculated in error. Improper payments can occur due to Agency Errors (AE), Unintentional Program Violations (UPV), or Intentional Program Violations (IPV). MDHS may recover the improper payment, regardless of type.

Threshold: MDHS shall pursue recoupment of UPV and IPV improper payments of more than $1000.00, and may pursue those claims of $1000.00 or less. The threshold is applicable to UPV and IPV errors.

Types:

1. **Agency Error (AE):** occurs when MDHS staff takes an incorrect action or fails to take an action that causes an improper payment.
2. **Unintentional Program Violation (UPV):** occurs when a payment was paid to a child care provider, on behalf of the recipient, due to a misunderstanding of policy or by an unintentional error on the part of the parent or child care provider.
3. **Intentional Program Violation (IPV):**
   - **Definition:** an intentional act by the recipient or child care provider to misrepresent or mislead by providing false documentation or verification or intentionally omitting documentation or verification in an effort to wrongfully obtain eligibility for services or payment, which MDHS must prove by clear and convincing evidence at a Programmatic Administrative Disqualification Hearing. MDHS Programmatic Administrative Disqualification Hearing Policy is incorporated herein by reference (See Part 23, Chapter 2).
   - **Examples of an IPV include, but are not limited to**:
     - Intentionally over-claiming payment for child care services rendered;
     - Claiming payment for a child who no longer attends the child care facility;
     - Failing to maintain sign-in/sign-out sheets, forging sign-in/sign-out sheets;
     - Forging change-of-provider forms;
     - Forging signatures;
     - Failing to charge co-payments; or
     - Having multiple certificates for the same child; or
     - Providing manipulated, falsified or false documents to establish eligibility

- **Findings:** must be made by an Administrative Disqualification Hearing, by a court of competent jurisdiction, or by the execution of a waiver.
- **Penalties for Providers:**
  A child care provider or individual working in or for the child care provider who is found to have committed an IPV may be responsible for repayment or recoupment of the improper payment amount and/or be ineligible to participate in the program as follows:

  1. **First Offense**: 6-month probation and may be subject to additional monitoring visits from MDHS or MSDH as indicated by the nature of the offense.
  2. **Second Offense**: 1-year probation and may be subject to additional monitoring visits from MDHS or MSDH as indicated by the nature of the offense.
  3. **Third Offense**: Permanently terminated from participation in the CCDF program.
     When an IPV is committed by an individual acting alone or in concert with others for a third offense, and that individual or individuals are permanently terminated from the program, that individual or individuals may not hold an administrative position in a facility or home in which CCPP subsidies are received. Additionally, the individual or individuals may not hold a position responsible for the recording or tracking of enrollment and attendance or for the completing and reporting of family/child status and/or enrollment and attendance.
     If a child care provider is permanently terminated from the program, DECCD will assist CCPP certificate holders to find an alternative child care provider, unless the parent(s) chooses to keep the child(ren) at the center and forfeit CCPP funding.
- **Penalties for Recipients:**
  If the IPV is due to the actions of a recipient, MDHS may enter into a repayment agreement to recover the disputed funds from the recipient or recoup them from the childcare provider depending on the circumstances.
  If MDHS finds that the documents that were used to establish eligibility were false, falsified, or manipulated and all components of eligibility cannot otherwise be verified, MDHS may terminate the certificate due to lack of eligibility having ever been established, and recoup the improper payment from the provider or enter a repayment agreement with the parent.
  A recipient who is found to have committed an IPV may be responsible for repayment or recoupment of the improper payment amount and/or be ineligible to participate in the program as follows:
  1. **First Offense**: allowed to retain the certificate if eligibility can be established by valid documentation
  2. **Second Offense**: 1-year probation

3. **Third Offense**: Permanently terminated from participation in the CCPP

If a certificate is terminated due to wrongful action by a recipient with no evidence of wrongful action by the provider, MDHS will give the provider a two week notice of the termination.

RECOVERY OF FUNDS

The responsible party may be allowed to continue to participate in the program while paying the improper payment back, unless the responsible party was found guilty of a third intentional program violation.

Recoupment: MDHS may collect payment for AE, UPV and IPV by recoupment, which is a reduction in CCPP payment amounts to the child care provider in subsequent months. In the event the improper payment was due to the action of the parent, the recoupment amount will be added to the parent copayment amount and is to be paid directly to the provider by the parent.

The recoupment amount will be set at a percentage of the total amount of the improper payment, establishing twelve (12) equal deductions to be withheld from CCPP payments within a twelve (12) month period.

Any party subject to recoupment of funds will be notified by email of the recoupment terms and the procedure for negotiating alternate recoupment terms. The party may elect to discharge the debt in less than one year, by increasing the amount withheld, or to request a lower payment if the party can demonstrate that the payment would cause an undue financial burden. The nature and circumstances that caused the improper payment may be taken into consideration by MDHS in determining whether to allow a decreased recoupment amount.

Repayment Agreement: If the child care provider or parent no longer participates in the CCPP program, or if MDHS is unable to recoup payments for any reason, MDHS may enter into a repayment agreement with the provider or parent.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY APPEAL

An administrative agency appeal hearing is available for any child care provider, applicant or recipient upon written request to the Administrative Hearings Division of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of MDHS. An administrative agency appeal hearing provides an opportunity for a more formal review when the child care provider, applicant, or recipient disagrees with an adverse action that was taken directly by MDHS. MDHS Programmatic Administrative Agency Appeal Hearing Policy is incorporated herein by reference (See Part 23, Chapter 3).

Revised 02-01-19

CIVIL ACTION

MDHS may pursue civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction if a parent or child care provider breaches a repayment agreement.

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

A SIPV may be referred to criminal prosecution if the potential improper payment amount is over $50,000. Criminal prosecution shall be consistent with state and federal law. MDHS may collect the improper payment through repayment agreement or court ordered restitution.

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CHILD CARE CONSUMER EDUCATION

1. Website:

In compliance with the reauthorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act, the child care consumer education website is designed to be a current and comprehensive resource regarding child care in Mississippi. The State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC) website (secac.ms.gov) is designated as the official consumer education website for the state of Mississippi. The SECAC website provides child care information to parents, providers, and the community.

2. Additional Consumer and Provider Education

The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) shares information through the SECAC consumer education website, the Early Childhood Academies (ECA) and their Child Care Resource Centers, as well as through DECCD's staff in the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) office. These outlets utilize a combination of the following methods: written materials, electronic communication, and face-to-face meetings.

3. Inspection Reports

The Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) monitoring and inspection reports of all child care centers participating in CCPP shall be accessible on the consumer education website. Parents and other individuals who wish to access these reports may search by provider name, provider type, city, county, or year. Reports include the date of the inspection, any findings or violations, information on corrective action (if applicable), and the date the corrective action was satisfactorily completed. Inspection reports are kept on the website for a minimum of seven (7) years.

4. Social –Emotional and Behavior Issues

The MDHS position statement on social, emotional and behavioral health and the use of suspension and expulsion in early care and education settings states the following: DECCD will work with child care providers and other Mississippi early childhood stakeholders to invest in child care workforce preparation and development. This process shall be designed to ensure that early childhood programs promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health and eliminate or severely limit the use of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary discipline practices.

DECCD strongly discourages the use of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary discipline practices; these practices should only be used as a last resort. Child care providers are encouraged to access the Technical Assistance (TA) and resources provided by DECCD through the Early Childhood Academies (ECA) and the Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC) to assist the provider in maintaining therapeutic inclusion of the child if at all possible. The provider should document evidence of appropriate behavioral

interventions. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional have been exhausted and it has been determined that transitioning a child to another program is necessary for the well-being of the child or his or her peers, providers are encouraged to take a series of documented steps to ensure a smooth transition into another setting that offers a rich social context and opportunities for interactions with socially competent peers so that the child's learning and social skills practice are optimized in a natural environment. If the child has a disability and is receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the provider and DECCD shall ensure that additional applicable procedural safeguards and requirements are met.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

MDHS will collect–and disseminate information through the SECAC on an ongoing basis, continuously updating existing resources and services for conducting developmental screenings and providing intervention services as needed. Also, the ECA and MECIC work to educate providers through professional development to recognize the need for developmental screenings and to provide resources for referrals. This information may be found on the SECAC consumer education website. These referred services include the use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program and development screening services available under the Individuals with IDEA. The website describes how a family or eligible child care provider may utilize the resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children receiving child care assistance and who may be at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays. The consumer education website describes the process for providers receiving CCDF assistance to provide referrals for services to obtain developmental screenings for children.