

# January 2024 Program Guidelines Update

## *Summary of Changes*

As policies change, as required by state law, regulation or per guidance of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) CDA updates the *Program Guidelines*. The *Program Guidelines* are the written materials that inform parents and providers of the policies and requirements of participation on the Alternative Payment Program. Parents and providers should familiarize themselves with the new *Program Guidelines* and contact their Child Care Eligibility Specialist or Provider Specialist if they have any questions.

**Below is a summary of policy updates reflected in the January 2024 Program Guidelines:**

### **Child eligibility**

Children who are 12 years of age at certification or recertification will be certified for not less than 12 months. [\[Page 5\]](#)

### **Eligibility categories**

Child only cash aid cases have been added to the allowable means-tested government programs for determining eligibility at certification or recertification. [\[Page 6\]](#)

### **Admissions priorities**

Assembly Bill (AB) 321 made changes to admissions priorities adding priority to children whose primary language is a language other than English. These children have priority after children with exceptional needs when two or more families have the same priority. [\[Page 7\]](#)

### **Approved child care provider**

To complete the enrollment or recertification process a parent must have a CDA approved child care provider in place. [\[Pages 7 and 25\]](#)

### **Income documentation requirements for families with fluctuating income**

Families with fluctuating income must supply at least 2 months or up to 12 months of income for income calculation purposes. [\[Page 9\]](#)

### **Family fee waiver for CPS families must be updated at 12 months**

Family fee waivers for CPS families are limited to 12 months and families will be required to provide an updated waiver at the 12<sup>th</sup> month of their certification or provide income to determine family fees. [\[Page 21\]](#)

### **Revised definition of full-time and part-time care (implementation March 2024)**

Senate Bill (SB) 140 revised the definition of full-time care to 25 or more hours per week and part-time care to less than 25 hours of care per week. [\[Page 26\]](#)

### **Reimbursement rate categories (implementation March 2024)**

When a child care provider's rate could be construed as either full-time weekly or full-time monthly, the RMRC that most closely aligns with the provider's rate sheet will be selected. RMRC selection will be weekly with the exception of those providers who have a monthly rate ONLY, as the weekly RMRC yields a higher payment to the provider. [\[Page 26\]](#)



### **Exceptions to when a parent may have two child care providers**

Policy has been updated to allow for a parent to have two child care providers in situations where the primary provider cannot accommodate all care due to enrollment capacity. Child care providers will be required to document their enrollment and submit documentation for approval by Provider Services. [\[Page 35\]](#)

### **Temporary Suspension of Services (TSS) approval at recertification**

In the event a family does not have a need at the time of recertification but indicates they will have a need during the certification period, the parent may complete the recertification. At the time of the following recertification, if the parent again requests to continue under TSS, the case must be elevated for evaluation. [\[Page 39\]](#)

### **Updated list of reasons child care services may be terminated**

Additional reasons for when child care services may be terminated have been added; parent failing to have an approved CDA provider at enrollment or recertification, a 13-year-old child has reached the end of their certification period, failure to supply an updated CPS family fee waiver or updated income. [\[Page 40\]](#)

### **Megan's law**

Child care providers are to post information for parents regarding Megan's Law (sex offenders' website). [\[Page 44\]](#)

### **Updated Subsidized Provider Report (SPR) reporting requirements**

Senate Bill (SB) 140 made changes to what agencies must report monthly to the state regarding subsidized child care providers. Additional reporting items include: Provider licensed or license-exempt, facility license number, primary language, contract type, and effective July 1, 2024 the amounts of subsidies paid to each provider must be reported. [\[Page 47\]](#)

### **Parent signature requirements**

Senate Bill (SB) 140 amended WIC code to allow for attendance records or invoices to be processed without a parent's signature when a parent has abandoned child care and when the provider has followed abandoned care procedures outlined in Title 5. [\[Page 49\]](#)

### **Child care paid based on certified need through June 2025**

Child care for all schedule types will be paid based on a child's maximum certified need of care, regardless of attendance. *(Allows for variable schedules to be paid a "set" amount and not reduced due to absences.)* [\[Page 53\]](#)

### **Plan for timely payment**

Senate Bill (SB) 140 requires a Plan for Timely Payment and procedures to include when provider submits multiple attendance records, if the agency is not able to meet 21-day requirement to issue reimbursement the provider must be notified, procedures to resolve overpayment and underpayment issues, with written consent from the provider (effective 3/1/24). [\[Page 53\]](#)

### **Cost of Care Plus Rate**

Per an agreement with CCPU each child care provider will receive an additional per-child payment each month to supplement the provider's subsidy payment. [\[Page 59\]](#)

- Centers and Family Child Care Homes \$160.00 per child
- License-exempt (Family, Friend or Neighbor) \$112.00 per child

