



## Child Care Financial Aid Policies Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Parent and/or Responsible Adults

Child Care Financial Aid services may be provided to families who demonstrate a need for child care and who are determined eligible for services based on the following:

- Applicant or child must legally reside in the United States and must be a resident of Mecklenburg County.
- Applicant must be a United States citizen or have a child that is a US citizen or a legal US non-citizen.
- Applicant who is a non-citizen can receive child care services for Child Protection, foster care or child development services.
- Maximum family gross income must be less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for children ages 0-5 years and children with special needs and 133% of the Federal Poverty Level for children ages 6-12 years, effective July 2019.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF NEED**

#### **Eligibility:**

- Parents/RA must be gainfully employed and maintain employment of an average of thirty (30) hours each week and provide official verification (check stubs); OR
- Parent/RA must be enrolled and attend school at least twenty (20) hours a week (16 hours for high school completion course) and must provide official verification, grades and course schedule each grading period; OR
- Parent/RA must provide official verification of a combination of work and school of at least thirty (30) hours per week; OR
- Parent/RA must be actively participating in Work First Employment Services activities at least thirty (30) hours per week and justify need for child care as part of his/her Mutual Responsibility Agreement.

#### **Employment:**

- **Parent/RA must maintain gainful employment an average of thirty (30) hours each week.** Gainful employment is defined as: earning a gross salary equivalent to an average of thirty (30) hours per week at the current minimum wage:
  - \$7.25 per hour or \$217.50 weekly, effective July 24, 2009
- **Parent/RA is responsible for providing all information necessary to document the family's income and need to determine eligibility for child care financial aid.**
- Consistency and stability of employment is an expectation to receive child care financial aid and changes in employment must be reported to CCRI within 10 business days of change (decrease in hours, medical leave, loss of employment, etc.).
- New applicants who are self-employed will be given twelve months (12) to provide information and documentation to support hours child care is needed and that his/her gross income, after allowable deductions, is equal to an average of thirty (30) hours per week at the current minimum wage.

#### **Education:**

##### ➤ **Public School (Elementary, Middle or High School)**

- Parent/RA who is enrolled in a publicly funded school (Charlotte Meck Schools, Charter School or Central Piedmont Community College High School, etc.) working toward graduation must attend school at least twenty (20) hours a week (16 hours a week for high school completion courses) and must provide official verification of enrollment and; grades and course schedule each grading period.
- Teen parents in school must maintain good attendance.

➤ **GED**

- Parent/RA Must provide official verification of enrollment in GED program.
- The parent/RA should develop career goals and a specific plan for completing her/his education within a reasonable time.
- Attendance cards must be provided to CCRI periodically to verify attendance and support the need for child care.
- Attendance must support need of hours child care is authorized.
- In order to receive full-time child care, parent/RA must provide attendance cards that support need for full-time child care. Three-quarter (75%) or part-time (50%) child care may be authorized.
- Parent/RA whose only need for child care is to attend a GED program (no employment) will not receive child care during the school year if he/she has: Preschool child/ren enrolled in Head Start, More at Four, Bright Beginnings or other publicly funded preschool education programs or School-age children.

➤ **Post-Secondary Education**

- Parent/RA enrolled in post-secondary education must attend school at least twenty (20) hours per week and must provide official verification and course schedule each grading period.
- Child care financial aid for post-secondary education can only be authorized for a lifetime maximum of twenty (20) months.

**DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY:**

**Yearly Redetermination**

- Yearly Redetermination packets are mailed by NC FAST to last reported address one month prior to the end of the certification period.
- Parent/RA can complete all information in packet, provide prior month check stubs/school schedule, etc. (documentation to support need for child care and income) and return the completed and signed packet to CCRI thirty (30) days prior to the end of the certification period. CCRI must receive the packet before the last day of the month, in order to process and prevent gap in child care services; or
- Parent/ RA can call for an appointment to come to CCRI to complete the yearly eligibility determination.
- Failure to be determined eligible will result in termination of services on the last day of the month.

**Reporting Changes:**

Parent/RA must report directly to CCRI the changes listed below within ten (10) business days of occurrence:

- ❖ Change in your contact information (address and telephone number);
- ❖ Change in member of your household;
- ❖ Child receiving services moves out of your home;
- ❖ increase in income that exceeds 85% State Medium Income (chart attached);
- ❖ increase or decrease in income from child support, or other sources;
- ❖ Loss of current employment, change in an education setting or hours attending or has any other temporary change in their need for child care;
- ❖ Change in the number of hours child care is needed;
- ❖ to end child care services.

**ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:**

- Parent/RA should call Child Care Search at 704-348-2181 for information about selecting a child care program to meet his/her needs. Parent/RA should visit child care programs before requesting placement and notify his/her CCRI social worker of his/her program choice.
- Children must enroll in licensed child care providers.
- A voucher will be generated from NC FAST and the Parent/RA will sign the voucher while at CCRI. Once the Parent/RA signs the voucher the CCRI social worker will enter the voucher information into NC FAST, where the child care provider will approve once the child enrolls.
- If the Parent/RA has not selected their child care provider they must contact their assigned CCRI social worker with their choice within thirty (30) days of application and can choose to come to CCRI to sign the voucher or have the voucher mailed to them, which they must sign and it is the Parent/RA's responsibility to return the signed voucher to CCRI.

### **PARENTAL FEES:**

- Monthly parental fee is based on 10% of the countable gross income not the cost of the program selected. The parental fee is usually assigned to the youngest child receiving child care financial aid.
- Parent/RA is responsible for paying the assigned parent fee to the child care program each month.
- All parents/RAs must receive a receipt from the child care program for the amount paid, service paid for and date of payment.
- Parent/RA who does not pay the parental fee can be terminated by the child care program at any time, without notice, in accordance with the child care program's established payment policies for private paying parents.
- Parent/RA terminated for nonpayment of fees will be given ten (10) days to pay the outstanding fee in full. If after the ten (10) day period the outstanding fee is not paid in full all child care financial aid services will be terminated.
- All unpaid fees must be paid before the parent/RA can re-enter the child care financial aid program, unless the parent/RA and the child care program mutually agree to a repayment plan.
- Parent/RA is responsible for a parent fee even if the child is absent from the child care program.

### **Additional out of pocket charges for Parent/RA**

- Parent/RA is responsible for paying registration fees, late pick-up charges and activity fees, transportation fees, etc. that the child care program may charge.
- Some child care programs charge tuition rates that are higher than the maximum allowable payment from CCRI. The parent/RA will have to pay the additional charge in addition to the assigned parent fee or choose another child care program.

### **HOURS OF CARE**

- CCRI will only pay for one plan (up to 55 hours) of child care per week, per child, based on the documented need for care.
  1. Full time child care is defined as: an average of 32 hours to a maximum of 55 hours per week.
  2. Three-quarter time child care is defined as: an average of 18 to 31 hours per week.
  3. Part-time child care is defined as: less than 18 hours per week.
- Employment/school enrollment hours, must match hours that child care is authorized.
- The parent/RA must report any change in the hours he/she needs child care to his/her CCRI social worker. This change must be approved by CCRI before a change in the plan of care (hours) will be authorized.
- If the parent/RA wishes to use additional hours, other than those authorized, the child care program can charge the parent/RA its private rate for the time requested.
- Children are expected to attend child care regularly.
- Any child absent from child care ten (10) or more days in a month without the parent/RA reporting the reason to their CCRI social worker will be terminated.

### **CHANGING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS (Transfer)**

- A ten day (10 working days) notice must be given by the CCRI social worker to the current child care program.
- If parent/RA wishes to change child care programs, he/she must call his/her CCRI social worker to request the new child care program. A new voucher will be needed to enroll the child at a new child care program.
- The CCRI social worker then creates the new voucher, prints the voucher from NC FAST and places the voucher at the front desk of CCRI for the parent/RA to come to CCRI and sign the new voucher.
- Or the parent/RA can request the voucher to be mailed to their address, once the parent/RA signs the voucher, it is their responsibility to return the signed voucher to CCRI.
- Once the parent/RA has signed and returned the voucher to CCRI, the CCRI social worker will enter the information (with start date) into NC FAST and the child care provider can electronically approve the voucher in NC FAST, once the child enrolls.
- Parent/RA is responsible to pay all parent fees during the ten (10) day notice.

### **TERMINATION:**

- Parent/RA is expected to plan with both the CCRI social worker and the child care program when care is no longer needed.
- CCRI social worker will always notify the parent/RA with a Notice (to the last known address) if parent/RA becomes ineligible for child care financial aid.
- Child care will not be continued past the last day for child care financial aid eligibility indicated on the application for child care services.

- To receive child care services for the entire eligibility period, the parent/RA should maintain eligibility and **report changes as list above within ten (10) business days of the change.**
- Parent/RA must contact CCRI when a parent/RA moves out of Mecklenburg County and child care services will be transferred to the new county of residence in North Carolina (only). This does not apply to children with time limited- County funding.
- Parent/RA receiving child care to support family services by either Mecklenburg County DSS Youth and Family Services or Work First Employment Services will have ten (10) business days to provide documentation of eligibility (ex: gainful employment) once CCRI is notified by Mecklenburg County DSS staff that services are no longer authorized.

**SUSPENDED CHILD CARE:**

- Child care financial aid payments may be temporarily suspended for these established reasons:
- Parent/RA requests that the child attend another (unlicensed summer camp, summer school, etc.) program for a specific amount of time.
- Parent/RA provides documentation that child must be absent for an extended period of time due to a medical situation or visit with absent parent.
- The child will be allowed priority access to child care financial aid when the parent/RA requests child care **ONLY IF:** child care funding is available and parent/RA provides proof of eligibility. Access is determined case by case.

**SMART START FUNDING:**

- The Mecklenburg Partnership for Children (Smart Start) subsidy program assists eligible families with children ages birth to five years.
- All children funded through Smart Start child care financial aid must be enrolled in 4- or 5- star rated child care programs.
- New Smart Start funded children will also be allowed to enroll during the temporary license issued for “expansion and location change”.
- Only siblings of Smart Start funded children currently enrolled will be allowed to enroll in a child care program that receives a temporary license due to a change of ownership”.
- No Smart Start funds may be used for new placements of children in facilities operating with a provisional, probationary or special provisional license is issued by the North Carolina Division of Child Development as a result of findings of conditions that are hazardous to the health and safety of children or staff, all Smart Start funded children will be removed with thirty (30) days of the date CCRI is made aware of the change in license status.

**WAITING LIST:**

- Parent/RA receiving child care financial aid who wish to place **additional child/ren** in child care may have to be placed on the waiting list until funding becomes available.
- Parent/RA whose child care financial aid is terminated should call 704-348-2181 once they feel they are eligible and if determined to be eligible will be placed on the waiting list from date of call.

**Any questions contact:**

**CCRI Social Worker**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

CCRI office and mailing address:  
**200 B Regency Executive Park Drive Suite 240,  
Charlotte, NC 28217  
Fax 704 376-7865**

**Email: CCRI child care financial aid social worker email:  
First initial and full last name @childcareresourcesinc.org  
Ex: Jane Doe = [jdoe@childcareresourcesinc.org](mailto:jdoe@childcareresourcesinc.org)**

**(June 2020)**

To report abuse/neglect/licensing complaints or inquiry about program history, call 1-800-859-0829 the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education.



## Income Limits for Child Care Subsidy

Maximum Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Limits and Fee Percentage  
(200% of Federal Poverty Level) for Children  
**Birth Through 5 Years Old and All Special Needs Children**

<b>Family Size</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Maximum Gross Monthly Income</b>	\$2,082	\$2,818	\$3,555	\$4,292	\$5,028	\$5,765	\$6,502	\$7,238	\$7,975

Maximum Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Limits and Fee Percentage  
(200% of Federal Poverty Level) for Children  
**6 Through 12 Years Old and No Special Needs**

<b>Family Size</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Maximum Gross Monthly Income</b>	\$1,384	\$1,874	\$2,364	\$2,854	\$3,344	\$3,834	\$4,324	\$4,813	\$5,303

Gross family income is determined by number of monthly pay periods:

- 4.3 if paid weekly
- 2.15 if paid bi-weekly
- 2 if paid twice per month