



Child Care Financial Aid Policies Fiscal Year 2017-2018 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 April 1, 2017.

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 within 5 days (decrease in hours, medical leave, loss of employment, etc.).

Wage Forms:

- **A wage form can only be accepted with the parent/RA's initial child care financial aid application or when the parent/RA has a job change.**
- A wage form must show name of employer, location of employment, rate of pay, pay schedule, name and working phone number of person completing the form.
- CCRI may contact the person who completed the form (employer or direct supervisor) to verify information before application or continued eligibility can be approved.

Check Stubs:

- **Parent/RA must provide check stubs to support employment and continued eligibility. Failure to provide check stubs when requested by CCRI will result in termination of child care services.**

Self-employment:

- Parent/RA who is self-employed must be gainfully employed, per definition of gainful employment.
- Parent/RA who is self-employed must provide written documentation (time sheets, expenditure documentation, etc.) that shows a gross income minus the standard 20% deduction equal to an average of thirty (30) hours per week at the current minimum wage. The Parent/RA may request an expense deduction greater than the standard 20%; however the Parent/RA must provide documentation of income and operational expenses. Verification must indicate the date the expense was paid, to whom it was paid and what the expense was for.
- Federal tax forms are required to determine eligibility at application, reviews, or at redetermination.
- Time sheets must support hours that child care is needed.

- 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
- CCRI may authorize child care for preschool child/ren who attends Head Start, More at Four, Bright Beginnings or other publicly funded preschool education programs or for school-age children during the summer if requested and hours that the parent/RA attended GED labs for the prior six (6) months demonstrate a need.
- 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 and Periodic Updates
- Parent/RA must sign a new application and be determined eligible for child care financial aid yearly.
- **Parent/RA must report changes in employment (decrease in hours, loss of employment, medical leave, etc.), change in household size, changes in school schedules and grades, self-employment documentation within five (5) days of the change to support continued eligibility through the year. Once a change is reported all information to support eligibility (check stubs, school schedule, grades, self-employment documentation, etc.) for child care financial aid must be provided to CCRI by the date requested. Failure to provide information will result in termination of 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 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.
- Once the signed voucher is returned to CCRI the voucher information can be entered into NCFAS. It is the child care provider's decision if they will allow the child/ren to enroll before the voucher is entered into NC FAST.
- Separate vouchers must be issued for each child for whom child care financial aid eligibility documentation supports a need and has been approved by CCRI.

PARENTAL FEES:

- Monthly parental fee is based 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.
- CCRI strongly encourages the parent/RA to discuss a payment schedule with the child care program.
- 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 or work out a repayment plan with the child care program. If after the ten (10) day period the outstanding fee is not paid in full or a repayment plan has not been established, 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 in employment (decrease in hours, loss of employment, medical leave, etc.), change in household size, changes in school schedules and grades, self-employment documentation within five (5) days of the change.**
- CCRI will only pay for ten (10) days of child care when a parent/RA moves out of Mecklenburg County.
- 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) working 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 **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”.
- If a child care program drops below a 4-star rating, the following will occur within 30 days of the date CCRI is made aware of the change in license status:
- The parent/RA will be given thirty (30) days written notice to find a new 4- or 5-star rated child care program.
- If the parent/RA does not select a new 4- or 5-star child care program by the thirty (30) day deadline, the financial aid for that child/ren will be terminated.
- The parent/RA is not allowed to appeal or have a hearing concerning a drop in stars.
- If 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:

- Demand for child care financial aid exceeds child care financial aid funding available to Mecklenburg County, a waiting list is maintained by CCRI.
- 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 _____

Fax: **704 376-7865** CCRI office and mailing address:
4600 Park Road, Suite 400, Charlotte, NC 28209

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

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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.

