

Eligibility

Families needing child care must meet both income and need requirements. A family must need child care for one of the following reasons: to support employment, to support developmental needs, to support education/job training activities, to support child protective services, or to support child welfare services.

- Parent/Responsible Adult (RA) and children must reside in Caldwell County.
- If Caldwell County DSS is maintaining a Waiting List, Parent/RA must be employed 30 hours a week or more **OR** be enrolled and attend school full time **OR** a combination of work and school averaging 30 hours per week. Official verification must be provided to receive full time care. **Child Care to support post secondary education can be used for a maximum of 20 months.**
- If a Parent/RA is working part-time, Caldwell County Department of Social Services (DSS) will pay for full time care if part-time is not available.
- Self-employed parents are required to record days and hours worked as well as income received. This documentation will be required at each quarterly review and annual redetermination. Failure to provide this detailed information will result in termination.
- Child Care through Work First Employment Services must be requested by the Work First social worker via the Mutual Responsibility Agreement.
- Families who need child care as a result of a natural or national disaster may be given priority over other categories of need.

Waiting List

- Due to demand exceeding funding, Caldwell County DSS maintains a waiting list.
- Priorities governing the establishment of a waiting list are determined by the NC Division of Child Development in conjunction with the Caldwell County DSS. A current list of waiting list priorities is available upon request.
- Children are placed on the waiting list for child care assistance based on date of application and need category.
- A reduction in services may be implemented if funds are not available to support the number of children receiving assistance.

Enrollment Procedures

- Once the voucher is received, the parent/RA must find a childcare program that meets the families needs.
- At the time of enrollment, the voucher must be presented to the provider along with any other information the provider requires.
- Vouchers must be returned within 10 days or the Voucher will be voided.
- **PARENTS/RA MUST COME INTO THE AGENCY TO BE ISSUED A VOUCHER.**
- **CHANGING CENTERS:** Before a Voucher can be issued for a new child care program, the Parent/RA must give the old program a 10 day notice except if it is a case of abuse or neglect in which case the child can be moved without notice and double payment is covered.

Parent's Choice of Child Care Providers

- It is a parent's right to choose the provider they want to care for their children. Provider must be licensed by the NC Division of Child Development or be a non-licensed home approved through DSS in order to accept subsidy payments from Caldwell County DSS.
- Choices in Child Care (426-2422) can assist parents with information regarding child care providers.
- Contact information for the Division of Child Development is on the back page.

Parent Fees

- The NC Division of Child Development policies require that parents with countable income must pay a fee based on family size and gross monthly income. All parents must receive a receipt from the provider for the amount paid and service for which it was paid.
- Parent/RA monthly parent fee is based on family size and gross income and is assigned to the youngest child in care.
- Parent/RA is responsible for their fee, registration fee, late pickup fee, activity fees, and summer program fees. Please remember to ask your provider for a receipt of these payments.
- Providers have the right to assess late fees if your child is left in the program after the pick up time noted on your Voucher.
- If the parent fee is past due and the provider has requested termination of services due to non-payment, a new voucher may not be issued to the Parent/RA until the past due fees are paid in full or a repayment agreement has been established.
- Parent/RA may have to pay an additional charge if their chosen provider's fees are above the maximum allowable payment from Caldwell County DSS.

Hours of Care

- Arrival and departure times are based on the authorized hours of care that are noted on the Voucher or Action Notice. Extra fees may be assessed by the provider if your child is not picked up by the pickup time listed on your most recent Voucher or Action Notice.
- Employment and/or school hours must match hours of child care. No extra time will be given to complete personal errands.

Changes

- Parent/RA must report the following changes to the Child Care worker within **5 working days**:
 - ◆ Increase or decrease in income from employment, child support, etc.
 - ◆ Loss of employment including leave of absence or temporary layoff
 - ◆ Change in job, work shift, number of hours and/or days worked
 - ◆ Marriage, separation or divorce
 - ◆ Child no longer in the home and other changes in family size
 - ◆ Change of address or telephone number
 - ◆ Change in school attendance, enrollment, and proof of grades
- Failure to report changes within 5 days may result in a termination of services and/or repayment for services rendered based on the outcome of an investigation by the DSS Program Integrity Investigator.

Terminating Child Care Services

- Parents/RA are expected to plan with both the Child Care worker and the child care program when care is no longer needed.
- If a parent/RA changes jobs more than 3 times per year without good cause, day care assistance will be denied for 90 days and proof of 30 days of continuous employment will be required to reapply.
- The Child Care Worker will notify the Parent/RA and the child care provider by Action Notice or letter within 10 working days if a Parent/RA becomes ineligible for child care subsidy. **EXCEPTION: For Annual Reviews, letters are mailed out 30 days in advance and no 10 day notice will be issued.**