



OFFICE OF CHILD CARE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Child Care supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. OCC administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and works with state, territory, and tribal governments to provide support for children and their families juggling work schedules and struggling to find child care programs that will fit their needs and that will prepare children to succeed in school. CCDF also improves the quality of care to support children's healthy development and learning by supporting child care licensing, quality improvements systems to help programs meet higher standards, and support for child care workers to attain more training and education. To support CCDF services, we establish and oversee the implementation of child care policies, and provide guidance and technical assistance to states, tribes and territories as they administer CCDF programs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Historic Reauthorization: On November 19, 2014, the President signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 into law. This action reauthorizes the law governing CCDF for the first time since 1996 and represents an historic re-envisioning of the program. The new law makes significant advancements by defining health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlining family-friendly eligibility policies, expanding quality improvement efforts, and ensuring parents and the public have transparent information about the child care choices available to them.

Child Care Services Funded by CCDF: Subsidized child care services are available to eligible families through certificates (vouchers), or grants and contracts with providers. States, territories and tribes define income eligibility and other key aspects of program design in accordance with federal guidelines. Under the new law, States must establish eligibility policies, including a period of at least 12 months before eligibility is re-determined, that promote continuity of care for children and families. Parents may select a child care provider that satisfies applicable state and local requirements, including health and safety requirements. These requirements must address prevention and control of infectious diseases, including immunizations; building and physical premises safety; and minimum health and safety training. Under the new law, States must: ensure that these health and safety requirements address key areas (such as first aid and CPR); require that providers receive training in these areas; complete comprehensive criminal background checks; and conduct monitoring that includes annual inspections. Nearly 1.5 million children receive a child care subsidy from the CCDF program every month.

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Quality Activities: A portion of CCDF funds must be used to improve the quality of child care and other additional services to parents, such as resource and referral counseling regarding the selection of child care providers. The new law increases the minimum amount that States are required to spend for quality activities, and includes new funding for improving the quality of care for infants and toddlers. To improve the health and safety of available child care, CCDF lead agencies provide training, grants and loans to providers; improved monitoring; compensation projects; and other innovative programs. Many lead agencies are making systemic investments, such as developing quality rating and improvement systems and professional development systems. Tribes may use a portion of their funds to construct child care facilities provided there is no reduction in the current level of child care services.

Coordination of Resources: The CCDF allows states to serve families through a single, integrated child care subsidy program under the rules of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act. States coordinate CCDF with Head Start, pre-k, and other early childhood programs. States can also transfer a portion of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families dollars to CCDF, or spend TANF directly for child care.

State and Tribal Child Care Plans: All states, territories and tribes must submit comprehensive plans every three years and conduct public hearings to invite public comment.

Research: Fiscal year 2015 funding includes approximately \$10 million for child care research, demonstration and evaluation activities. These funds are increasing the capacity for child care research at the national, state and local levels while addressing critical questions with implications for children and families. Funds have been awarded to support individual project areas, including policy research, research partnerships, research scholars and a web-based archive called Child Care and Early Education Research Connections.

Technical Assistance: A small portion of the CCDF is used by the Office of Child Care to provide technical assistance to grantees. Its technical assistance network is designed to address the needs of states, territories and tribes administering CCDF.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

CCDF is authorized under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (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. CCDF made \$5.3 billion available to states, territories, and tribes in fiscal year 2014.

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