



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Blue Earth County Plan

Administration of the Child Care Assistance Program

2006-2007

444 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
(651) 297-3843

ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is designated under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 119B as the lead state agency for supervision of county administration of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.08, subd.3 requires counties to submit a biennial Child Care Fund Plan to the commissioner. The Department of Human Services will complete review and approval of County Child Care Fund Plans. Counties will receive approval letters for their Child Care Fund Plans from the commissioner of DHS.

Child Care Assistance Program administration is subject to all requirements of rule and law including: Public Law 100-485; United State Code, title 42, sections 9858-9858q; Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, parts 98-99; Minnesota Statutes, section 256.045, chapter 13, chapter 119B; and Minnesota Rules, parts 3400.0010 to 3400.0235. Minnesota Statutes chapter 119B and Minnesota Rule chapter 3400 may be located at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.asp>

The Child Care Assistance Program rules and laws allow counties limited discretion to establish some local policies and procedures. These local policies and procedures, when included in this plan and approved by the Commissioner, are considered county policy and are used to support county agency decisions during appeals. **The Department of Human Services encourages counties to develop county optional policies for the child care assistance program in coordination with local child care stakeholders.** This may include regional child care resource and referral agencies, parent participants, employers, family and center based child care providers, community Head Start programs, schools, public health, community collaboratives, employment counselors, and county social services, income maintenance, child support, fraud prevention and other interested governmental and private sector parties.

ALL OPTIONAL COUNTY CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES MUST BE IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN. ALL NEW AND/OR AMENDED COUNTY FORMS AND WRITTEN NOTIFICATIONS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN STANDARDIZED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEC² AND THAT ARE USED IN YOUR COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OF THIS PROGRAM MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS PLAN WHEN SUBMITTED. IF A FORM WAS APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONER DURING REVIEW OF THE COUNTY'S 2004-2005 CHILD CARE FUND PLAN AND THE FORM HAS NOT CHANGED, YOU DO NOT NEED TO SUBMIT THE FORM WITH THE 2006-2007 PLAN.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO ANY POLICIES OR WRITTEN MATERIAL SUBMITTED WITH THIS PLAN REQUIRE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES THROUGH THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS.

A county may amend its child care fund plan at any time but the amendment must be approved by the commissioner before it becomes effective. If approved by the commissioner, the amendment is effective on the date requested by the county unless a different effective date is set by the commissioner. Plan amendments must be approved or disapproved by the commissioner within 60 days after receipt of the amendment request. MN Rules 3400.0150, subp.3.

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0150.html>

Amendment includes changes in county optional policies, new or revised forms and notices. This can be sent in letter form to the address below in care of your county's CCAP technical assistance liaison.

The effective date of the 2006 - 2007 Child Care Fund Plan is January 1, 2006

Return completed plans by September 15, 2005 to:

Return to:
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Linda Bowker
444 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155-3834

I. CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CONTACT POINTS

These individuals will receive all communications relating to CCAP for the duration of this plan. If agency staff changes occur, please notify Linda Bowker at (651) 297-3843 or linda.bowker@state.mn.us

A. AGENCY CONTACT PEOPLE

Identify the name, department, address, phone number, fax number and Internet e-mail address for the following contacts. If more than one person is identified for each agency contact, attach additional pages.

1. County CCAP Administrative Contact

Name: Trish Reedstrom Position/Title: Social Services Supervisor

Department: Blue Earth County Human Services

Mailing Address: PO Box 3526

City, State, Zip: Mankato, MN 56002-3526 Phone: (507) 304-4459

FAX: (507) 304-4387 Internet E-mail: Trish.Reedstrom@Co.Blue-Earth.mn.us

2. County Client Access Contact

If separate contact people have been designated for CCAP subprograms, complete all identified information for each subprogram and identify the subprogram each person is responsible for.

Name: Bonnie Frisk Position/Title: Child Care Fund Specialist

Department: Blue Earth County Human Services

Mailing Address: PO Box 3526

City, State, Zip: Mankato, MN 56002-3526 Phone: (507) 304-4347

FAX: (507) 304-4387 Internet E-mail: Bonnie.Frisk@Co.Blue-Earth.mn.us

Name: Cindy Kenne Position/Title: Child Care Fund Specialist

Department: Blue Earth County Human Services

Mailing Address: PO Box 3526

City, State, Zip: Mankato, MN 56002-3526 Phone: (507) 304-4162

FAX: (507) 304-4387 Internet E-mail: Cindy.Kenne@Co.Blue-Earth.mn.us

3. Intake Phone Number

Please identify a public phone number that can be issued for CCAP client intake. This contact number is posted on the DHS web site.

Name: Blue Earth County Human Services Phone: (507) 304-4335

B. SUBCONTRACTED SERVICES

If your county subcontracts any components of the child care assistance program, indicate the program components that are subcontracted to other agencies and attach a copy of the current contract or agreement. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.7.

1. Subcontracted Program Components

Please identify the CCAP components which have been subcontracted. Not Applicable

2. County worker responsible for administration of the subcontract/agreement between the county agency and the subcontracted agency.

Name _____ Position/Title: _____

Department: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____

FAX: (____) _____ Internet E-mail _____

3. Administrative Contact in Subcontracted Agency

Name _____ Position/Title: _____

Department: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____

FAX: (____) _____ Internet E-mail _____

4. Client Access Contact in Subcontracted Agency

Name _____ Position/Title: _____

Department: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____

FAX: (____) _____ Internet E-mail _____

5. Intake Phone Number

Please identify a public phone number that can be issued for CCAP intake at subcontracted agency. This contact number is posted on the DHS web site.

Name _____ Phone: (____) _____

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Priorities for Service

Has your county established priorities for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance beyond those required in Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.03, subdivision 4? <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/03.html>

Yes No

If yes, please identify the additional priorities and county rationale for determining those additional priorities. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.10. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0140.html>

B. Education Plans under the Basic Sliding Fee Program (BSF)

1. Describe your county process for approving an acceptable course of study that will reasonably lead to full-time employment for a student applicant under the Basic Sliding Fee program.

Minnesota Rules 3400.0040, subp. 12. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0040.html>

A student applicant under the Basic Sliding Fee Program is required to obtain a letter from his/her school advisor indicating that the educational plan in place appears appropriate for the student and is likely to lead to self-supporting employment. The advisor would also be asked to respond if there were any additional questions regarding the educational plan or for any changes to the plan.

Identify the criteria for approval and county's rationale for the criteria.

Plan is approved per recommendations by advisor on the appropriateness of the plan for the student. This person is the one most likely to be able to speak to a "worthy" educational plan.

2. Is your county policy for approving and extending child care assistance for participants whose education programs change the same as the initial approval process stated in B1? Yes No

Minnesota Rules 3400.0040, subp.15. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0040.html>

If not, describe your county process for approval of a CHANGE in a course of study for a student in the Basic Sliding Fee child care program.

Identify the criteria for approval of a change in a course of study for a student in the BSF child care program and county rationale for the criteria.

B. Temporarily Ineligible Families on the Basic Sliding Fee Waiting List

MN Rules 3400.0060 subp. 6 requires that when a family advances to the top of the county's waiting list and is temporarily ineligible for child care assistance, the county shall leave the family at the top of the waiting list according to priority group and serve the applicant who is next on the waiting list **OR** per MN Rules 3400.0040 subp. 17, does your county open the case in reserve status for up to 90 days and encumber future funds for the family? Yes No

Refer to Minnesota Rules 3400.0040, subpart 17 and 3400.0060, subpart 6.

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0040.html>

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0060.html>

If yes, please identify the criteria used to make the decision whether to open the case and reserve the position if a family reaches the top of the waiting list but is temporarily ineligible.

When a family advances to the top of the waiting list but is temporarily ineligible, the option to have their case opened and put into reserve status for up to 90 days is offered to the family. If the family indicates a desire for this option, the case is opened. If they decline they remain on the top of the waiting list according to priority group. There is no additional criteria used in the process.

C. Child Care for Job Search Activities

Has your county established policies for the authorization of child care assistance during job search beyond those required in Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.10, subdivision 1(a) and Minnesota Rules, part 3400.0040, subpart 15a.? <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0040.html> Yes No

If yes, please identify the criteria used for authorizing child care for job search. _____

D. Expedited Application Process for Adolescent and DWP Parents

Describe your county process to expedite and streamline the child care assistance application process for minor parents participating in school-based adolescent parenting child care programs and DWP participants that need child care.

CFL Bulletin #00-004, June 20, 2000 and DHS Bulletin #04-69-05. Blue Earth County has a teenage parenting program located within Independent School District #77 in Mankato. Child care assistance information and application forms are located at the school. Prepaid postage envelopes are also available with the applications to mail in and phone numbers for the program are also available. Upon receipt of the application, priority is given to the application to process as quickly as possible

III. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- A. Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.125, establishes the requirements necessary for the authorization of providers. Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.125, subdivision 2, lists specific conditions which prevent a person from being

authorized as a legal, nonlicensed family child care provider, including convictions for the offenses listed in the statute. Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.125, subdivision 4, then allows counties to deny authorization to a provider, or to rescind an authorization, when the county knows that the provider or the care arrangement is unsafe.

List the conditions under which a provider or care arrangement will be determined to be unsafe. These conditions cannot conflict with Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.125, subdivision 2, by providing that a conviction for a crime or offense not listed in subdivision 2, is an automatic bar to authorization as a legal, non-licensed family child care provider. Instead, a conviction for a crime or offense not listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.125, subdivision 2, may constitute unsafe care, and therefore bar authorization, only when the conviction reflects on the provider's ability to provide care.

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/125.html>

In addition to the conditions outlined in MN Statute 119.125, Subd. 2, the following conditions may also determine a provider or care arrangement to be unsafe. A legal non-licensed provider must provide the County with assurances that he/she is in compliance with state and local health ordinances and building and fire codes as applicable to the premises where child care is provided. If the provider is found to be out of compliance, the arrangement may be determined to be unsafe. Unsafe care may be substantiated where a legal non-licensed provider does not comply with training requirements (six hours of child care training) within specified time-lines (within three months). Blue Earth County may require at any time during the period of registration as a legal non-licensed provider that a physical, mental illness, or chemical dependency/abuse evaluation of the provider be completed if there is any reasonable cause to believe that there is any criteria for unsafe care present or that the provider is not physically able to care for the child(ren). "Reasonable cause" would occur as the result of complaints against the provider, reports of neglect or maltreatment, or observation by a social worker or other qualified professional (i.e., therapist, doctor) that the provider may not be able to safely care for the child(ren). Unsafe care is substantiated if there is any reasonable cause to believe the provider may abuse prescription drugs or uses controlled substances as specified in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 152, or alcohol to the extent that the use/abuse has or may have a negative impact on the ability of the provider to give care or is apparent during the hours the children are in care. Criteria for unsafe care is met if the legal non-licensed provider has a child that has been placed in foster care within the past 12 months and the agency had determined the reasons for placement reflect on the ability of the provider to provide care. Unsafe care criteria would also be met if a child had been placed in residential treatment within the past 12 months for emotional disturbance or antisocial behavior and the agency determined the reasons for the replacement reflect on the ability of the provider to give care.

B. Describe your county's process for maintaining a record of substantiated parental complaints concerning the health and safety of children in the care of legal nonlicensed providers and how this information is made available to the public upon request. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.5; 45 C.F.R. § 98.32; Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0140.html>

Any parental complaints regarding a legal unlicensed provider that comes to the attention of the Child Care Assistance Program would be referred as appropriate to: (1) child protection for alleged child maltreatment; (2) public health or environmental services for potential public health dangers; (3) law enforcement for alleged criminal activity; and/or (4) other investigative agencies as appropriate to complaint. Child protection situations and data privacy issues are governed by MN Statutes 626.556. Law enforcement and other investigative agencies also have their own data privacy standards that must be followed. Any other complaints that were substantiated as a result of investigation would be kept with other Child Care Assistance Program records in a separate file. Blue Earth County data privacy policy guidelines are in place and followed for all requests for public information, including a request for substantiated complaints against a legal non-licensed provider.

IV. SPECIAL NEEDS RATES

If charged by the provider, counties shall reimburse all providers for the care of children with disabilities or special needs at a rate that exceeds the county maximum rate subject to the approval of the commissioner Minnesota Statutes 119B.13, subd.3 <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/13.html> ; Minnesota Rules 3400.0130, subp.3 <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0130.html>

Please identify the provider type, rate paid and the approved rate begin date for each rate paid above the county maximum rate for children in an at-risk population.

PROVIDER TYPE	RATE	APPROVED RATE BEGIN DATE	DESCRIPTION OF AT-RISK POPULATION
Licensed, LNL, Center	\$/hour/day/weekly		
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Does your county have a process for approving rates paid for the care of children in an at-risk population that has been approved by the commissioner? Yes No

If so, please attach information for each provider type, the number of children in care by age category, the rate paid, and the approved rate begin date.

Special needs rates may be requested at any time by submitting the required documentation to the commissioner for approval. (See edocs 4194,4195,4196,4197,2243A, 3985) <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/index.htm> when submitting requests for special needs rate. Send requests to your county's CCAP technical liaison:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
 Child Care Assistance Program
 444 Lafayette Road North
 St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3834
 FAX: (651) 297-5840

V. PAYMENT POLICIES

A. Payment to Two Providers When A Child Is Sick

Does your county make payments for child care services provided for children who, as a result of illness, are unable to attend the family's regular provider and, if so, does your county pay both the regular provider and the second provider who is caring for the sick child? Yes No

Minnesota Rules 3400.0110, subp.8 <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0110.html>

NOTE: If rates for care of sick children exceed county maximum rates, the county rates for care of sick children must be included in the special needs rates section of this plan.

B. Absent Day

Minnesota Rule 3400.0110, subpart 9 requires that counties pay for child absent days according to the statewide absent day policy. (See CFL Bulletin 01-003.) Counties may choose to adopt child absence payment limits that exceed the statewide child absence payment policy. County-specific policies that exceed the basic statewide payment policy and limits described in this Bulletin must: 1) include locally-based justification; 2) be included in the county's child care fund plan; and 3) receive approval by DHS. Counties are prohibited from adopting policies more restrictive than the statewide policy.

Does your county have a child absent day policy that exceeds the statewide policy? Yes No

If yes, submit your county specific policy along with county rationale that was used to determine this policy.

N/A, per 7-27-2005 memo regarding amendment to 2006-2007 CCAP plan.

C. Overpayment to the Providers

MN Statutes 119B.11, subd. 2a (c) When an overpayment must be recouped from a provider, how does your county determine what percentage or amount of the overpayment to recoup from each payment to the provider?

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/11.html>

The agency contacts the provider and agrees upon a percentage or amount considered fair to both parties. Generally, for amounts of \$50.00 or less, recoupment is made in full over the next one to two payments. For amounts greater than \$50.00, a specified percentage is recouped from each payment.

E. Background Checks for Legal Non Licensed Providers

1. Does your county charge a fee to unlicensed providers for the costs involved when completing the required criminal background check? Yes No

If yes, how much does your county charge for the required background check?

2. Does your county request background information from other counties when a provider is registered in another county? Yes No

3. How often does your county charge for the required background check for a provider to be reauthorized? Yearly _____ Every Two Years X Other _____

4. Does your county charge an additional amount when another person over the age of 13 joins the household, a current household member turns 13, or there is reason to believe that a household member has a factor that prevents authorization? Yes No

5. If yes, what is the additional amount that is charged when another person joins the household, a current household member turns 13, or there is reason to believe that a household member has a factor that prevents authorization?

F. Provisional Payment of Registered Providers

Does your county issue provisional authorization and payment to legal non-licensed providers during the time necessary to receive and review the results of the statutorily required criminal investigation and determine whether to give final approval to the provider?

Minnesota Rules 3400.0120, subpart 2; 3400.0110, subpart 2a; and 3400.0140, subpart 5a Yes No
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0120.html>
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0110.html>
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0140.html>

G. Submission of Invoices

1. Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.13, subdivision 6 states that all provider bills must be submitted to the county within 60 days of the last date of service on the bill. A county may pay a bill submitted after this 60-day limit if the provider shows good cause for the delay. Counties must define good cause in their child care fund plans and this definition must include county error. A county cannot pay a bill submitted more than a year after the last date of service. If a provider submits a bill within 10 days of the end of the service period, the county must issue payment within 30 days of receipt of the bill.
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/13.html>

What is your county's definition of good cause for delay in bill submission? County error must be included in this definition. Good cause for delay of bill submission occurs when the delay is due to agency action, including retroactive authorization of child care eligibility, requests for further verification, system technology problems, or other agency error.

2a. Does your county require the parent signature on the voucher? Yes No

2b. Does your county require the provider signature on the voucher? Yes No

2c. Please identify any criteria whereby a signature is not needed by either the parent or the provider.
A provider signature is always required on vouchers. A parent signature is not needed in cases where a parent has left care, left the area, and efforts to contact the parent are unsuccessful

VI. OTHER COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Describe your county methods for providing information on the availability of child care assistance to individuals, child care providers, social service agencies, local news, etc. to ensure families are aware of the availability of the assistance. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.2. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0140.html>
Information on child care assistance is available in an informational packet that goes to anyone applying for public assistance. The day-care licenser is aware of the Child Care Assistance Program and provides information

on the program to day-care providers as part of their training. Information is shared on a more informal basis throughout the rest of the units within the Human Services Agency. If the agency had exhausted its waiting list and had excess funds, information about the Child Care Assistance Program would be available through radio ads, local newspapers, posters and flyers posted throughout the County's communities.

- B. Identify the two or more methods of application your county uses for the Child Care Assistance Program. Minnesota Statute § 119B.03, subd.10. To meet the requirement of this subdivision, a county may provide alternative methods of applying for assistance including, but not limited to, a mail-in application or application sites that are located outside of government offices. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/03.html>

Blue Earth County allows the applications to be mailed in and also for on-site applications to be taken within the Government Center offices.

- C. Identify any other county policies that apply to the child care assistance program which are not specifically required by state or federal rule or law. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.1 and 3400.0150, subp.2.

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0140.html>

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/0150.html>

There are no other county policies that apply to the Child Care Assistance Program which limit access to the program.

- D. Describe strategies used to coordinate and maximize public and private community resources, to coordinate child care assistance with existing community-based programs and service providers to foster collaboration that provides family-focused services to families with young children and to facilitate transition into kindergarten. Minnesota Statutes 119B.08, subd. 3(1). <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/08.html>

The Agency works on an ongoing basis with a variety of community partners including, but not limited to, schools, preschools, day-care centers, IEIC committee, CCR & R, employment services, and Head Start. Information regarding programs is shared with all CCAP applicants in written format. Information regarding the CCAP is shared and application process is shared with the aforementioned agencies.

- E. Minnesota Statute 119B.08, Subdivision 3(2) states that the county and designated administering agency shall submit a biennial child care fund plan which includes a description of procedures and methods used to make copies of the proposed plan reasonably available to the public and allow sufficient time for public review and comment Describe procedures and methods used by your county to make copies of this plan reasonably available to the public and the time that was allowed for public review and comment

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/08.html>

The proposed plan is presented to the Agency's Social Services Task Force, and copies are made available to the Region 9 CCR & R and Blue Earth-Nicollet County IEIC. The plan is also available to the general public on the County's website.

- F. Please attach all new and/or amended county forms, handbooks, agreements or other written documents and materials that have not been standardized with the implementation of MEC² that are used in your county for the administration of child care assistance program. **Do not submit documents that have been submitted with prior plans that have not changed.**

VII. COUNTY ASSURANCES

By checking the designated boxes below in items A and B, the county assures compliance with applicable consumer and provider education requirements. It is not necessary for the county to attach copies of this material to this plan.

- A. The county is informing parents about the following as required under Minnesota Rules 3400.0035, subp 1.
- federal and state child and dependent care tax credits
 - earned income credits
 - other services for families with young children
 - child care resource and referral services
 - child care assistance program eligibility requirements
 - the documentation necessary to confirm eligibility
 - waiting list information

- procedures for making application for CCAP
- family copayment fees and how computed
- information about how to choose a provider
- families rights and responsibilities when choosing a provider
- availability of special needs rates
- the family's responsibility for paying provider charges that exceed county maximum payments in addition to the family copayment fee; and
- the importance of prompt reporting of a move to another county to avoid overpayments and to increase the likelihood of continuing benefits.

County Assures Compliance

B. The county is distributing the following required information to registered providers: Distribution requirements may be accomplished by giving the materials directly to the provider, or to the parent and establishing a method to ensure that the provider receives the material.

45 C.F.R. § 98.41, Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp. 5 and CFL Bulletin 00-008.

- child immunization requirements
- child nutrition
- child protection reporting responsibilities
- health and safety information
- child development information
- referral to child care resource and referral agency

County Assures Compliance

Child Care Assistance Program statutes, rule, the Child Care Policy Manual references and MEC² notices

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/119B/>

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3400/>

http://mec2home.dhs.state.mn.us/CCAP_Manual/index.html

<http://mec2home.dhs.state.mn.us/noticetemplates.html>