

Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual
Chapter 15. Approval and Enrollment Procedures for Licensed Facilities

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REVISED 9/29/2023

1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the requirements and procedures for approval and enrollment of licensed facilities, G.S. 110-106 facilities, Department of Defense facilities, and Out-of-State facilities that are eligible to participate in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) Program. To enroll in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) Program, each individual program must have an electronically accepted (signed) Child Care Provider Agreement (DCDEE-0452). The Child Care Provider Agreement is required for initial enrollment in NC FAST and once per calendar year after that. The provider/facility retains a signed copy of the Provider Agreement. The Child Care Provider Agreement informs the provider of the requirements for participation in the SCCA Program and the payment policies. The Child Care Provider Agreement is also used to purchase SCCA services from all types of providers.

II. APPROVAL PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Licensed and Regulated Child Care Providers

Providers operating childcare programs such as preschools, before and after-school programs, summer day camps, and other childcare programs must be licensed to receive subsidy funds. Religious-sponsored programs do not have to be licensed but must have a Notice of Compliance to operate. A Notice of Compliance must be obtained before religious-sponsored programs can be issued an Approval Notice and receive payment for subsidy. Programs operating in public schools must also be licensed to receive subsidy funds.

An unregulated provider who desires to be licensed by DCDEE to participate in the SCCA Program should contact DCDEE at (919) 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829 and request the Basic Information for Potential Providers of a Licensed Center or Basic Information for Potential Providers of a Family Child Care Home. This information will explain how the provider should proceed with the licensing process. Summer day camp facilities/providers who desire to participate in the SCCA Program should refer to Section C of this chapter for information about their program.

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The enrollment process is electronic through the NC FAST Provider Portal and results in the issuance of an Approval Notice for each facility/provider. The Approval Notice serves as notification that the facility/provider is eligible to receive state and federal subsidy funds for childcare. In order to receive an Approval Notice, the program must meet the applicable licensing requirements for the age groups of children in care. The Approval Notice is generated in NC FAST for the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) and can be viewed in the NC FAST Provider Portal. The information on the Approval Notice includes the same information that is printed on the License or Notice of Compliance. In addition, the Approval Notice also displays the facility/provider's payment rates for services.

B. Facilities/Providers with a Temporary License

A facility/provider who is seeking approval to operate a facility may receive temporary approval from DCDEE to operate upon completion of the licensing requirements. When it is determined that the facility/provider is in compliance with the requirements, the Regulatory Services Section Licensing Consultant issues a handwritten license (home) or Temporary License (center) for six months to operate before the permanent license can be issued. This allows the provider to begin operating immediately without a waiting period.

Facilities/Providers who have received a handwritten or Temporary License are eligible for enrollment in the SCCA Program. The facility/provider must enroll in the Provider Portal in order to be approved. The License Number issued by the Regulatory Services Section is indicated on the handwritten license or Temporary License.

Enrollment in the SCCA Program cannot be completed **until the inspections, checklist, and forms have been completed, and a Temporary License has been issued, the facility/provider has enrolled in the NC FAST Provider Portal, enrolled in direct deposit, and an Approval Notice has been generated.** Once the facility/provider receives a Temporary License and enrolls in NC FAST, any changes that occur during the Temporary License period should be submitted by the Regulatory

Services Section Licensing Consultant to DCDEE, following the regular change procedures.

C. Summer Day Camp Providers

Summer day camps are considered seasonal recreation programs that operate less than four consecutive months out of the year. They are not required to obtain a license from DCDEE **unless the facility chooses to enroll children receiving SCCA**. Facilities/Providers who operate a year-round licensed program but choose to operate a summer day camp that is separate (i.e., located on a separate site, building, or classroom and not included in the license of the year-round program) must become licensed and have a separate Approval Notice to receive SCCA payments.

Summer day camp requirements are primarily the licensing requirements for school-age children. Summer day camps that enroll preschool children are not considered to be summer day camps and must meet the childcare center licensing requirements, which apply to the youngest child enrolled. Summer day camp facilities/providers who comply with the summer day camp licensing requirements will receive a Temporary License for the time the program operates. The summer day camp facility/provider is responsible for enrolling in the NC FAST Provider Portal.

The approval period for summer day camp programs will be the time when the program is licensed, but not to exceed four (4) months. Summer day camp facilities/providers must reenroll in the NC FAST Provider Portal each year to participate in the SCCA Program.

D. Department of Defense (DoD) Providers

1. Department of Defense Procedures for NC FAST

The LPA must notify the facility/provider to obtain a business NCID (North Carolina Identity Management). The DCDEE Provider Manager must be given the provider's NCID in order to link the facility/provider in the NC FAST Provider Portal. Once the facilities/provider's NCID has been linked in the portal, the facility/provider will be notified by the DCDEE Provider Manager and asked to complete enrollment in the NC FAST Provider Portal. Upon enrollment in the NC FAST Provider Portal, the facility/provider will

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receive information regarding completing the direct deposit process because a direct deposit setup is required to receive payment.

The LPA must give the provider a Checklist of Enrollment and the Out-of-State Provider (if the DoD provider/facility is out-of-state) Information template. The LPA is to inform the facility/provider to complete the first two columns of the Checklist on the Enrollment form. The checklist requires the following information:

- i. License status with copy of license attached;
- ii. Expiration date of the license;
- iii. Identify if the provider is a center or home;
- iv. Health & Safety Inspection Report (must be within the last 12 months) attach a copy of the report.
- v. Criminal Record Check or Qualification Letter of owner/director attach a copy.

Both the checklist and the Out-of-State Provider information (if applicable) template must be submitted to the DCDEE Provider Manager along with copies of all supporting documentation. If documents are faxed, please fax it to 919-715-0976. Address the fax to DCDEE Subsidy Submissions and state on the cover sheet: "This fax contains information for a Department of Defense facility/provider."

Once the DCDEE Provider Manager receives the checklist, the documentation will be forwarded to the Regulatory Section of DCDEE. The information will then be entered into the regulatory data system and transferred overnight to NC FAST. Once the transfer is complete, the DCDEE Provider Manager will link the facility/provider, and the facility/provider will become the owner in the NC FAST Provider Portal.

The DSS/LPA must notify the DCDEE Provider Manager when a child leaves a Department of Defense facility/provider for the facility status to change from "active" to "terminated."

III. ENROLLMENT PROCESS

The purpose of the enrollment process in the SCCA Program is to ensure the Facility/Provider meets the minimum requirements to receive SCCA Program payments. The NC FAST Provider Portal will allow assigned users of facilities/providers to review and electronically accept (sign) the childcare Provider Agreement, accept vouchers, update rates for services, and record attendance through the NC FAST Provider Portal. The NC FAST Provider Portal is available online and requires that the user maintain an NCID (North Carolina Identity Management).

To access the NC FAST Provider Portal, providers must do the following:

A. Create an NCID

A business NCID must be created and maintained for use in NC FAST. The facility/provider's Business NCID will be the secure username and password used to access information specific to their facility, such as vouchers and attendance tracking. To create a Business NCID, go to the North Carolina Identity Management (NCID) [website](#). Each person who makes a Business NCID must have a valid email address.

Facility owners/Providers may designate more than one individual to use the NC FAST Provider Portal on behalf of their facility. Determining who will be selected and given access to the NC FAST Provider Portal to perform daily child care business duties will be very important.

B. Linking the NCID

In order to finalize access, the facility/provider must contact their local county Department of Social Services (DSS)/Local Purchasing Agency (LPA) to verify the facility/provider's identity and have the Business NCID linked to the facility/provider's account, if multiple staff members from the facility will use the Provider Portal, each person must have their own unique Business NCID, and it is requested that NCIDs for each staff member be provided to the LPA at one time. This process is designed to ensure that all Business NCIDs are linked to the appropriate accounts in NC FAST and that a facility/provider Business NCID and account is linked correctly.

C. Enrollment into the Provider Portal

After creating a business NCID and having that business NCID linked, the provider must enroll in the NC FAST Provider Portal and set up their direct deposit. Providers will enroll in the NC FAST Provider Portal by entering the following information regarding their facility:

- i. Services (ages of children served);
- ii. Shifts offered (first, second, and third);
- iii. Days worked (holidays, inclement weather days, and teacher workdays);
- iv. Service rates;
- v. Review the display of approved subsidy rates and the Child Care Provider Agreement.

All facilities/providers who wish to participate in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) Program must use the NC FAST Provider Portal to:

1. Enroll in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program. To complete this, providers must:
 - i. Obtain a Business North Carolina Identity Management ID (NCID).
 - ii. Contact the DSS/LPA in the county where the facility is located and have their NCID linked to their facility.
 - iii. Enter service rates and review the display of approved subsidy rates.
 - iv. Review and electronically accept (sign) the Provider Agreement. The Provider Agreement must be reviewed and electronically Accepted (signed) once per calendar year.

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2. Electronically accept (sign) or reject vouchers.
3. Accurately record attendance.
4. Submit attendance rosters before the 5th of each month.
5. Maintain rates for services.

D. Enroll in Direct Deposit

The childcare business must have a bank account and must enroll the business in direct deposit with the state's payment vendor, FIS. The provider must call FIS at 1-800- 894-0050 to enroll in direct deposit. NC FAST will use direct deposit to make payments to Providers for Subsidized Child Care Assistance. All payments must be made through direct deposit once per month, while payments from County funds will remain under the county's discretion.

IV. PROCEDURES TO GENERATE AN INITIAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Once a facility/provider has enrolled in the NC FAST Provider Portal, an Approval Notice will automatically be generated through the NC FAST Provider Portal.

A. Hours of Operation

If the facility/provider is licensed for and offers care for more than one shift or offers weekend care for any of those shifts, this should be included as a part of the facility/provider's rate information. If the facility/provider is licensed for more than one shift, this will be indicated on the Approval Notice. The Approval Notice will not indicate weekend care, but unless restricted by licensing, most facilities/providers are licensed to care for children seven days a week. Any restrictions will be indicated on the facility's license or Notice of Compliance.

B. Effective Date of Enrollment

If children receiving subsidies have already been enrolled with a facility/provider and payment is needed, the child care worker must confirm

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the retroactive date for payment and submit a help desk ticket or instruct the facility/provider to submit a help desk ticket. The retroactive date **cannot** be prior to the following:

- i. The date the child was determined eligible for subsidized care.
- ii. The date the child was placed at the facility.
- iii. The effective date of the Temporary License or the date in DCDEE's letter of response to a Letter of Intent.

NOTE: Even though a religious-sponsored facility can choose to enroll children receiving subsidies when operating under the DCDEE's letter of response to the Letter of Intent to operate, payment cannot be made until the facility/provider has been issued a Notice of Compliance, which indicates that the facility/provider has met all qualifications to be in compliance. Payment cannot be paid to the facility/provider without the Notice of Compliance.

V. INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH PROVIDER DURING THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS

The key to preventing fraudulent misrepresentation and inadvertent errors is to use skillful interviewing during the initial application, re-enrollments, and when changes in the facility's status occur. The child care worker, therefore, should ask the provider specific questions, evaluate their reaction, and document the responses. The questions are to be phrased in an understandable way, and the provider must be given ample time to respond in their own words. At application and re-enrollment, the childcare social worker should:

1. Explain the obligation to provide timely, accurate, and complete information regarding childcare assistance.
2. Ask the provider to thoroughly read the Child Care Provider Agreement (DCDEE-0452) and electronically accept it as their signature.

3. Explain noncompliance issues and fraudulent misrepresentation and how sanctions can affect participation in the SCCA Program.
4. Ask if the facility/provider has been barred from participation in the SCCA Program.
5. Remind the provider to notify the LPA of changes in ownership, administrative staff, location, age ranges, or if incorrect payments are discovered.

VI. PROCEDURES TO GENERATE A REVISED APPROVAL NOTICE WHEN A CHANGE OCCURS

A. Change in Type of Child Care Operation

Whenever there is a change in the type of program, such as a transition from a home to a center or from a center to a home, a new license must be issued, and the facility/provider must enroll in the SCCA Program for that newly licensed child care program. Refer to Section III, Enrollment Process. Additionally, the provider must submit new Private Paying Rates and Other Fees into their account on the NC FAST Provider Portal.

After the DCDEE Regulatory Services Section Licensing Consultant enters and submits the new licensing information into the Regulatory Services System and the facility/provider has enrolled in the SCCA Program, the change will appear on a newly issued Approval Notice.

B. Change in Ownership or Location

1. When the LPA is notified by the provider of a change in ownership and/or location, the LPA must provide the new owner of the facility with the information regarding the enrollment process into the Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) Program. The new owner must enroll the facility in the NC FAST Provider Portal to be able to electronically accept (sign) the Child Care Provider Agreement (DCDEE-0452) and enter service rate information into the portal. During an emergency, providers will complete the paper form (DCDEE-0458) to list their

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- service rates. The Application for Enrollment is not sent to DCDEE but is maintained in the facility/provider's file.
2. A new voucher is required for each child receiving subsidized childcare assistance, whenever a new license number is issued to a facility. The new license number could be the result of a location change, ownership change, a change in the type of program, or any change in the facility's license to operate. Once a facility is issued a new license to operate, NC FAST will send the worker a task that new vouchers needs to be issued. New vouchers will display the facility name, address, license number, and the enrolled child's name.
 3. When a facility/provider is already enrolled in subsidy notifies the LPA that the facility/provider is moving to another location, the LPA should remind the provider that the Regulatory Services Section Licensing Consultant must be notified before relocating in order for the new location to be licensed and a new license number to be issued.

VII. ENROLLING AN OUT-OF-STATE FACILITY/PROVIDER

Sometimes it is necessary for a child to receive childcare services from a facility/provider in another state. Examples might include:

- i. A child is in custody of the county department of social services and lives with a relative in another state.
- ii. A parent commutes to an employment location which is in another state and requests childcare near the employment location.

If a recipient is eligible for SCCA and selects an arrangement outside of North Carolina, the following steps must be taken in order to approve the facility/provider for payment:

- i. The facility/provider is responsible for maintaining their information in the North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) Provider Portal.

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When a facility/provider requests to contract as an Out-of-State Provider, the LPA must verify all databases, such as monitoring compliance history and complaints. Copies of each verification/certificate must be on file with DCDEE. All inspections must be completed annually. Payments will be made after the submission of all required documents to DCDEE. Out-of-state facilities/providers will be paid at the three-star market rate.

A. Procedures for NC FAST

- i. The LPA must notify the facility/provider to obtain a business NCID (North Carolina Identity Management).
- ii. The DCDEE Provider Manager must be given the facility/provider's NCID in order to link the facility/provider in NC FAST.
- iii. Once the facility/provider's NCID has been linked, the facility/provider will be notified by the DCDEE Provider Manager and asked to complete enrollment via the NC FAST Provider Portal.
- iv. Upon completion of enrollment, the facility/provider will receive information regarding how to complete the direct deposit setup required to receive payment.

If the provider needs assistance with creating an NCID or setting up direct deposit, the provider should reference the Job Aids posted on the DCDEE website at http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/mb_NCFast.asp. The DSS/LPA must give the provider the Checklist of Enrollment and the Out-of-State Provider Information template. The DSS/LPA is to inform the provider to complete the first two columns of the Checklist of Enrollment form. The checklist requires the following information:

- i. License status with copy of license attached.
- ii. Expiration date of the license.
- iii. Identify if the provider is a center or family child care home.
- iv. Health & Safety Inspection Report (must be within the last 12-months) – attach copy of report.

- v. Criminal Record Check or Qualification Letter of owner/director/staff
– attach a copy.

The checklist and the Out-of-State Provider information template must be submitted to the DCDEE Provider Manager along with copies of all supporting documentation. These documents may be scanned and emailed to the DCDEE Data Manager at DCDEE.Subsidy.Submissions@dhhs.nc.gov. If documents are faxed, please fax it to 919-715-0976. Address the fax to DCDEE Data Manager and state on the cover sheet: “This fax contains information on Enrolling an Out-of-State provider.”

Once the DCDEE Provider Manager receives the checklist, it will be forwarded to the Regulatory Section of DCDEE. The information will then be entered into the regulatory data system. This information will be transferred overnight to NC FAST. Once complete, the DCDEE Provider Manager will link the facility/provider and become the owner in NC FAST.

The DSS/LPA must notify the DCDEE Provider Manager when a child leaves an out-of-state facility/provider. That out-of-state facility/provider status must be changed from “active” to “terminated.”

VIII. THE PROVIDER AGREEMENT

A. Requirements

The provider must read and review the terms of the Child Care Provider Agreement in the NC FAST Provider Portal. The Child Care Provider Agreement is then electronically accepted, which is considered their signature, signed by the owner or the person responsible for the facility's operation. The Child Care Provider Agreement must be electronically accepted (signed) before payment is issued and must be electronically accepted (signed) once per calendar year. After the Child Care Provider Agreement is signed, the original must be printed and maintained on file at the facility. The facility/provider must maintain current and past copies of the signed Child Care Provider Agreement **until the LPA provides authorization to destroy them.**

B. Limitations

The LPA cannot refuse to purchase care from a facility/provider based on the location of the facility or on the length of time the facility has been operating. The LPA cannot allot a specific number of childcare spaces to an eligible facility/provider or make additional program requirements for any center or home.

NOTE: The local Smart Start partnership may choose to restrict the use of Smart Start funds only to facilities with higher star ratings. In addition, the LPA cannot refuse to purchase care from a facility/provider who is under investigation for or has been substantiated for child abuse or neglect. The LPA is allowed and encouraged to share general information with parents regarding an investigation or substantiation of child abuse or neglect so that parents may make an informed decision about choosing or continuing to use a child care facility/provider. (See Chapter 9: Parental Choice and Voucher Procedures for further information). Refer to Chapter 16: Payment Policies for instances when payment cannot be made.

C. Effective Date

The Child Care Provider Agreement is effective from the date it is signed by the provider, and it remains in effect unless it is terminated by the LPA, or the facility/provider is no longer eligible to participate in the SCCA Program. The facility/provider may be eligible for retroactive payments for providing care if a family had been approved for SCCA services, a Child Care Voucher (DCDEE-0446) authorizing payment had been given to the parent, and the facility/provider met the requirements for participation in the SCCA Program. Even though the date of the child's eligibility may be earlier than the date the provider electronically accepted (signed) the Child Care Provider Agreement, a payment can be made as long as an accepted (signed) agreement is in place before the payment is issued.

D. Termination of the Child Care Provider Agreement

In the case of a childcare center, the Child Care Provider Agreement terminates when the center changes ownership. A new Child Care Provider

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Agreement must be signed if the new owner wishes to be enrolled in the SCCA Program.

In the case of a licensed family childcare home, the Child Care Provider Agreement terminates when the approved caregiver changes. A new Child Care Provider Agreement must be signed by the new caregiver.

Unless a new child care license is issued, the Child Care Provider Agreement does not terminate when a center or home changes location.

The LPA may terminate the Child Care Provider Agreement if the facility/provider receives a star rating of less than three stars and if the facility/provider fails to comply with the terms of the agreement. (See Chapter 16: Payment Policies for information regarding terminating the Child Care Provider Agreement (DCDEE-0452). NC FAST will create and send a task about the star level decrease, and the facility/provider is given a 45-day notice of termination except when the center or home has been closed by DCDEE.

There are certain types of Administrative Actions, which will allow the LPA to not approve a facility/provider for enrollment or to terminate the Child Care Provider Agreement. Included in these are the following:

- i. When the license has been summarily suspended and the facility/provider is closed by the DCDEE,
- ii. When the license has been revoked or denied,
- iii. When the facility/provider has received a Notice to Cease Operations,
- iv. If there are other situations where an LPA has concerns about repeated instances of noncompliance, a referral should be emailed to dcdee.subsidy.fraud@dhhs.nc.gov. Examples of noncompliance could be violations of record-keeping or payment policies.
- v. The termination of subsidy payment remains in effect even if the provider appeals any action or situation listed above.

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NOTE: A facility/provider could also be permanently disqualified from participating in the SCCA Program when there is a sanction imposed for the first instance of fraudulent misrepresentation. Also, a third instance of non-compliance within two years as well as other violations of the provider agreement.

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For additional information on policy discussed in this chapter please refer to:

SCCA Manual

Chapter 9: Recipient Choice and Voucher Procedures

Chapter 12: Licensing Requirements, Noncompliance, and Sanctions

Chapter 16: Payment Policies

Chapter 19: Fraudulent Misrepresentation, Improper Payments, Sanctions, and Appeals

NC FAST Job Aids

SCCA - DCDEE Provider Manager: Enrolling or Re-enrolling a CDDC Provider

SCCA - Fund Manager: Setting Up Funds

SCCA - LPA Provider Manager: Setting Up a Provider to Participate in the SCCA Programs

SCCA - Provider Manager: Enrolling or Re-enrolling a Provider

SCCA - Provider Manager: Managing Provider NCIDs

SCCA - Provider Manager: Un-enrolling a Provider

SCCA - Provider Manager: Unlinking Provider NCIDs

SCCA - Viewing a Provider's Star Rating

SCCA Program Rules

[10A NCAC 10.0601](#) Standards for facilities participating in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program.

[10A NCAC 10.0101](#) Participation in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program.