

Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual
Chapter 5. Establishing Need, Level, and A Plan of Care

Chapter 5 Establishing Need, Level, and A Plan of Care

I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter covers the Plan of Care and will highlight the reasons that families may receive child care assistance. This includes the requirements related to each reason for care, steps to follow when evaluating each family's circumstance, and how to determine the level of care. The chapter will cover how workers verify and document information in the case narrative. Additionally, some families may need an alternate plan of care which is also covered in this chapter.

II. MANDATORY CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

Child care is a critical supportive service for many children and families. The provision of subsidized child care funding plays an important role in helping families maintain economic self-sufficiency and ensuring that children receive high quality child care. Therefore, a reasonable approach should be taken in establishing a plan of care. The child care worker and the recipient should work together to develop a plan that best meets the needs of the family. Child care workers must:

- Consider factors such as hours care is needed
- Allow travel time
- Indicate hours/days that care is authorized
- Provide information on choosing child care that can accommodate family's needs.

If funds and resources are available, Department of Social Services (DSS) and Local Purchasing Agencies (LPAs) **must** provide child care assistance for children whose parents, foster parents, or other responsible adults who are responsible for the care of the child. Child care can be provided for one of the following reasons:

Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual
Chapter 5. Establishing Need, Level, and A Plan of Care

- To support employment, seeking employment and job training for employment;
- To support education;
- To support developmental needs of children whose emotional, cognitive, social, or physical development is delayed or at risk of delay;
- To support Child Protective Services (CPS) in order for the child to remain in their own home;
- To support Child Welfare Services (CWS) to prevent or remedy problems that may result in the neglect or abuse of children, prevent foster care placement, support family reunification, and to provide support in times of crisis.

NOTE: Special needs is not one of the five (5) need categories listed above, and therefore is not a reason for child care assistance. A child may be evaluated for developmental needs if the family does not meet any other need category.

III. AUTHORIZING CARE ACCORDING TO THE NEED FOR CARE

When the family identifies the specific reason that child care assistance is needed, the child care worker must determine if the family qualifies. In situations where an applicant/recipient or family meets both the education and employment categories, the need category is assigned based on the activity in which the individual spends most of the number of hours.

If a recipient is working and attending school, and the two need types have the same priority, select the need type with more hours.

Example:

Recipient attends school 20 hours a week and works 16 hours a week, the need type would be education.

If a recipient has the two need types of education and employment that have the same priority, select employment as the need type. In cases with both

Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual
Chapter 5. Establishing Need, Level, and A Plan of Care

priorities need type of education and employment, **workers must manually track education, outside of NC FAST.**

Example:

A recipient attends school 20 hours a week and works 20 hours a week, the need type would be employment.

When education is used as the need for care, all months are counted regardless of the number of classes the recipient takes.

There are occasions when an applicant/recipient is eligible for child care but, there is no need for child care because the other parent is available to provide care, or another adult who resides in the household is willing and able to provide child care for the child. When there are two (2) parents/responsible adults in a household, both parents/responsible adults must meet the need criteria. However, the DSS/LPA may not deny child care assistance outside the home if an adult other than the parent resides in the household but is unwilling or unable to care for the child.

NOTE: The non-income unit adult household member cannot be approved as a non-licensed home provider. Refer to Chapter 7 for income unit guidance.

In order for an individual to be determined eligible to receive subsidized child care assistance to support employment it must be established that they are eligible based on income.

A. Need Eligibility

The need for child care assistance must be verified in order to provide care to support employment of the parents, foster parents, or other responsible adults. When both recipients/responsible adults are in the same household, child care to support employment may be provided only if both recipients/responsible adults are working; or if one (1) recipient/responsible adult is employed, the recipient/responsible adult remaining in the home must be incapable of providing care for the child(ren) because of a physical or mental disability, advanced age or extreme youth, a history of child maltreatment, or must otherwise be incapable of providing appropriate care to the child/children. The basis on which this determination is made must be clearly documented in the case narrative.

