

The program is limited to public and private nonprofit organizations providing licensed, or approved nonresidential child care services. Private for profit centers and homes may participate if they meet certain criteria for serving low-income children. Refer to Chapter 20: Payment Policies for more information.

X. ROLE OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES PROGRAM

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) is a federal food assistance program administered through the county departments of social services that helps low-income families to buy the food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet. All households must meet an income test, currently at or below 200% of federal poverty level, to receive benefits.

Families who receive benefits through the Food and Nutrition Services Program automatically are deemed income eligible for subsidized child care services. Child care staff in local departments of social services and other local purchasing agencies access family demographics and income information from the Food Stamp Information System (FSIS).

XI. ROLE OF LOCAL CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES

There are fourteen regional child care resource and referral agencies across the state that serves all 100 counties. The primary goal of resource and referral agencies is to help parents find child care services. Child care resource and referral agencies may:

- A. Broaden community awareness about the child care needs and services in their area.
- B. Offer training for parents and providers.
- C. Work with corporations to help their employees find child care services.
- D. Subcontract with the county DSS to administer the SCC Program and/or the local Smart Start partnership.

NOTE: The contact information for CCR&R agencies in each county is on DCDEE's website at www.ncchildcare.net.

XII. ROLE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN

Smart Start is a public/private initiative that provides state funding for preschool age children in all of the state's 100 counties. Smart Start funds are administered at the local level through local nonprofit organizations called local partnerships. The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) is the statewide nonprofit organization that provides oversight and technical assistance for local