

I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Federal regulations of child care funds require that parents be allowed to choose a child care arrangement from a variety of providers. This chapter describes factors that parents should consider when choosing a provider, along with the local purchasing agency's (LPA) responsibilities to honor parental choice whenever possible.

Federal regulations also require that states using Child Care Funds have a certificate or voucher payment option in place. North Carolina has chosen to use the voucher system. This chapter describes how the voucher is issued, completed and distributed.

II. PARENTAL CHOICE

A. Factors to Consider In Choosing Child Care

Many parents are requesting child care services for the first time and may need help with the selection process. During the initial interview, the child care worker helps the family to plan for child care, to understand what to look for when choosing an arrangement, and to deal with the emotional effects of separating from the child.

1. Helpful information for parents includes:
 - a. Explanation of the difference between regulated and unregulated child care arrangements;
 - b. Explanation of the requirements for participation in the Subsidized Child Care (SCC) Program;
 - c. The Division of Child Development and Early Education's web site address (<http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/>) or provide access to the site in the office, for information about regulated providers;
 - d. Facts about group size, staff/child ratio, staff qualifications and program activities;
 - e. The availability of space in centers and homes in the community; and
 - f. The 1-5 star rated license of the provider and what the license indicates.