

FFY2025-2027 Child Care and Development Fund State Plan

Section 2: Child and Family Eligibility and Enrollment and Continuity of Care

Stable and reliable child care arrangements facilitate job stability for parents and healthy development of children. CCDF eligibility and enrollment policies can contribute to these goals. Policies and procedures that create barriers to families accessing CCDF, like inaccessible subsidy applications and onerous reporting requirements, interrupt a parent's ability to work and may deter eligible families from participating in CCDF.

To address these concerns, Lead Agencies must provide children with a minimum of 12 months between eligibility determinations, limit reporting requirements during the 12-month period, and ensure eligibility determination and redetermination processes do not interrupt a parent's work or school.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they define eligible children and families and how the Lead Agency's eligibility and enrollment policies support access for eligible children and families.

2.1 Reducing Barriers to Family Enrollment and Redetermination

Lead Agency enrollment and redetermination policies may not unduly disrupt parents' employment, education, or job training activities to comply with the Lead Agency's or designated local entity's requirements. Lead agencies have broad flexibility to design and implement eligibility practices that reduce barriers to enrollment and redetermination.

Examples include developing strategies to inform families and their providers of an upcoming redetermination and the information that will be required of the family, pre-populating subsidy renewal forms, having parents confirm that the information is accurate, and/or asking only for the information necessary to make an eligibility redetermination. In addition, Lead Agencies can offer a variety of family-friendly methods for submitting documentation for eligibility redetermination that considers the range of needs for families in accessing support (e.g., use of languages other than English, access to transportation, accommodation of parents working non-traditional hours.)

2.1.1 Eligibility practices to reduce barriers to enrollment

- a. Does the Lead Agency implement any of the following eligibility practices to reduce barriers at the time of initial eligibility determination? Check all that apply and describe those elements checked.
 - i) Establishing presumptive eligibility while eligibility is being determined. Describe the policy, including the populations benefiting from the policy, and identify how long the period of presumptive eligibility is: *Enter Text*
 - ii) Leveraging eligibility from other public assistance programs. Describe: *Enter Text*
 - iii) Coordinating determinations for children in the same household (while still ensuring each child receives 12 months of eligibility.) Describe: *At initial eligibility, the department considers all children in the household.*
 - iv) Self-assessment screening tools for families. Describe:
 - v) Extended office hours (evenings and/or weekends.)

- vi) Consultation available via phone
- vii) Other. Describe the Lead Agency policies to process applications efficiently and make timely eligibility determinations: *Eligibility information available in other eligibility program systems are used to assess and/or determine a family's eligibility. This can include documentation within the past six months and data interfaces for the purpose of verifying citizenship, identity, residence, and income (earned and unearned).*

viii) None.

b) Does the Lead Agency use an online subsidy application?

Yes

No. If no, describe why an online application is impracticable. [Enter Text](#)

c) Does the Lead Agency use different policies for families receiving TANF assistance?

Yes. If yes, describe the policies: [Enter Text](#)

No

2.1.2 Preventing disruption of eligibility activities

a. Identify, where applicable, the Lead Agency's procedures and policies to ensure that parents do not have their employment, education, or job training unduly disrupted to comply with the State's/Territory's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility. Check all that apply.

i. Advance notice to parents of pending redetermination.

ii. Advance notice to providers of pending redetermination.

iii. Pre-populated subsidy renewal form.

iv. Online documentation submission.

v. Cross-program redeterminations.

vi. Extended office hours (evenings and/or weekends).

vii. Consultation available via phone.

viii. Leveraging eligibility from other public assistance programs.

ix. Other. Describe: *A redetermination interview is conducted by phone to gather information from the family and to provide resources the family may need. Via email, families can choose the time for this phone call based on their schedule and availability through Microsoft Bookings.*

b. Does the Lead Agency use different policies for families receiving TANF assistance?

Yes. If yes, describe the policies: [Enter Text](#)

No.

2.2 Eligible Children and Families

At eligibility determination or redetermination, children must (1) be younger than age 13; (2) reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the State's median income (SMI) for a family of the same size and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000; and (3)(a) reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program (which can include job search) or (b) receive, or need to receive, protective services as defined by the Lead Agency.

2.2.1 Eligibility criteria: age of children served

Lead Agencies may provide child care assistance for children less than 13 years of age, including continuing to provide assistance to children if they turn 13 during the eligibility period. In addition, Lead Agencies can choose to serve children up to age 19 if those children are unable to care for themselves.

- a. Does your Lead Agency serve the full federally allowable age range of children through age 12?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the age range of children served and the reason why you made that decision to serve less than the full range of allowable children. *Enter Text*

Note: Do not include children incapable of self-care or under court supervision, who are reported below in 2.2.1b and 2.2.1c.

- b. Does the Lead Agency extend eligibility for CCDF-funded child care to children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care?

No.

Yes

- i) If yes, the upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19): *18*

- ii) If yes, provide the Lead agency definition of physical and/or mental incapacity: *A child that has a disability or developmental delay that impacts their learning, as measured and documented by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures by a licensed medical specialist. The disability or delay must be in one of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. Children with disabilities may include: a child who is eligible for early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.); a child who is eligible for services under part B, section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419); a child who is eligible for services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794); a child with a Medicaid waiver for persons with disabilities (i.e., Katie Beckett, NOW, or COMP); and a child receiving Supplemental Security Income for blindness or a disability.*

- c. Does the Lead Agency extend eligibility for CCDF-funded child care to children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are under court supervision?

No.

Yes. If yes, and the upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19): 18

- d. How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?
- i. “residing with”: *The Lead Agency defines residing with as all children included in the family unit. CAPS Policy Manual 5.3 defines a family unit as a parent with legal, biological, or day-to-day responsibility for children in the home and all those for whom the parent is responsible. This policy also notes that multiple family units may reside in the same house. CAPS Policy Manual 5.4 states that the following individuals living in the household shall be included in the family unit: Biological, adopted, or step-children under the age of 18; children under legal or physical guardianship of the parent; spouse/parent residing in the home; unmarried adults living together with a mutual biological or legal child residing in the same household; spouse of the parent temporarily absent from the household due to employment, military deployment, training, or education.*
 - ii. “in loco parentis”: *CAPS Policy Manual 2.1 defines in loco parentis as a person living with the child needing CAPS services who is one of the following: a non-custodial parent; another related person who acts as a caretaker (responsible for the care) of the child; a legal guardian; an unrelated adult who is at least age 21 and whose petition for legal guardianship of the child is pending; an unrelated adult with whom DFCS has placed a child subsequent to a court order identifying DFCS as responsible for the child’s care and supervision.*

2.2.2 Eligibility criteria: reason for care

Lead Agencies have broad flexibility on the work, training, and educational activities required to qualify for child care assistance. Lead Agencies do not have to set a minimum number of hours for families to qualify for work, training, or educational activities, and there is no requirement to limit authorized child care services strictly based on the work, training, or educational schedule/hours of the parent(s). For example, the Lead Agency can include travel or study time in calculating the amount of needed services.

How does the Lead Agency define the following terms for the purposes of determining CCDF eligibility?

- a. Identify which of the following activities are included in your definition of “working” by checking the boxes below:
- i. An activity for which a wage or salary is paid.
 - ii. Being self-employed
 - iii. During a time of emergency or disaster, partnering in essential services
 - iv. Participating in unpaid activities like student teaching, internships, or practicums
 - v. Time for unpaid meals or breaks
 - vi. Time for travel
 - vii. Seeking employment or job search
 - viii. Other. Describe: *Enter Text*
- b. Identify which of the following activities are included in your definition of “attending job training” by checking the boxes below:
- i. Vocational/technical job skills training
 - ii. Apprenticeship or internship program or other on-the-job training

- iii. English as a Second Language training
- iv. Adult Basic Education preparation
- v. Participation in employment service activities
- vi. Time for meals and breaks
- vii. Time for travel
- viii. Hours required for associated activities such as study groups, lab experiences
- ix. Time for outside class study or completion of homework
- x. Other. Describe: *Each credit hour (or hour of online or in-person coursework) equates to two hours of state-approved activity to account for study time.*

c. Identify which of the following diplomas, certificates, degrees, or activities are included in your definition of “attending an educational program” by checking the boxes below:

- i. Adult High School Diploma or GED
- ii. Certificate programs (12-18 credit hours)
- iii. One-year diploma (36 credit hours)
- iv. Two-year degree
- v. Four-year degree
- vi. Travel to and from classrooms, labs, or study groups
- vii. Study time
- viii. Hours required for associated activities such as study groups, lab experiences
- ix. Time for outside class study or completion of homework
- x. Applicable meal and break times
- xi. Other. Describe including hour requirements: *Each credit hour (or hour of online or in-person coursework) equates to two hours of state-approved activity to account for study time.*

d. Does the Lead Agency impose a Lead Agency-defined minimum number of hours of activity for eligibility?

- No.
- Yes

If yes, describe any Lead Agency-imposed minimum requirement for the following:

Work. Describe: *Most parents must be working for an average of at least 24 hours per week.*

Job Training. Describe: *Parents 21 years of age or older must participate in job training at least 24 hours per week. Each credit hour (or hour of online or in-person coursework) for vocational training equates to two hours of state-approved activity to account for study time. Parents 20 years of age or younger participating in vocational training have no additional activity requirement.*

Education. Describe: *Parents 21 years of age or older must participate in education activities at least 24 hours per week. Each credit hour (or hour of online or in-person coursework) for adult education (with confirmed course hours), vocational training, early childhood education credential or*

training courses, technical certificate of credit (TCC), technical college diploma (TCD), education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree programs, and bachelor's degree programs equates to two hours of state-approved activity to account for study time. Parents 20 years of age or younger participating in middle or high school, adult education, early childhood education credential or training courses, vocational training, TCC, TCD, education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree, or bachelor's degree program have no additional activity requirement.

Combination of allowable activities. Describe: *Parents aged 21 or older must participate in state approved activities for an average of at least 24 hours per week. The 24-hour per week requirement may be met by employment, education, or a combination of employment and education. Each credit hour (or hour of online or in-person coursework) for adult education (with confirmed course hours), vocational training, early childhood education credential or training courses, technical certificate of credit (TCC), technical college diploma (TCD), education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree programs, and bachelor's degree programs equates to two hours of state-approved activity to account for study time. Education is participation in middle or high school, adult education programs (High School Equivalency [HSE] courses which includes HiSET testing, General Equivalency Diploma [GED], and Career Plus HSE, Adult Basic Education [ABE], Adult Secondary Education [ASE], Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education [IELCE], and English as a Second Language [ESL]), vocational training programs, early childhood education programs, TCC, TCD, education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree programs, and bachelor's degree programs. Parents 21 years of age or older enrolled in a self-paced (i.e., no confirmed instructional or online course hours) adult education or high school diploma program will be granted six credit hours, which equates to 12 hours of state-approved activity hours. Parents 20 years of age or younger participating in middle or high school, adult education, early childhood education credential or training courses, vocational training, TCC, TCD, education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree programs, or bachelor's degree program have no additional activity requirement.*

Other. Describe:

- e. Does the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance based on education and training without additional work requirements?
- Yes.
- No. If no, describe the additional work requirements: *Enter Text*
- f. Does the Lead Agency extend eligibility to specific populations of children otherwise not eligible by including them in its definition of "children who receive or need to receive protective services?"

Note: A Lead Agency may elect to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care when foster care parents are *not* working or are *not* in education/training

activities, but this provision should be included in the Lead Agency's protective services definition.

No. If no, skip to question 2.2.3.

Yes. If yes, answer the questions below:

Provide the Lead Agency's definition of "protective services" by checking below the sub-populations of children that are included:

Children in foster care

Children in kinship care

Children who are in families under court supervision

Children who are in families receiving supports or otherwise engaged with a child welfare agency

Children participating in a Lead Agency's Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships program

Children whose family members are deemed essential workers under a governor-declared state of emergency

Children experiencing homelessness

Children whose family has been affected by a natural disaster

Other. Describe: *Protective services also includes families of children experiencing domestic violence and family violence, families participating in or transitioning from TANF, and families who qualify for the Need to Protect priority group with CAPS Management Approval. The Need to Protect priority group consists of children who need to receive protective services but are not formally involved with Child Protective Services (CPS). Situations include, but are not limited to: grandparents, relatives, and other caregivers (excluding biological or adoptive parents) who have taken over full-time care of a child (due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment) that is not in DFCS custody, families who had a substantiated CPS case that closed within the last 12 months, and families of children involved in the juvenile justice system.*

g. Does the Lead Agency waive the income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis?

No.

Yes.

h. Does the Lead Agency waive the eligible activity (e.g., work, job training, education, etc.) requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis?

No.

Yes.

i. Does the Lead Agency use CCDF funds to provide respite care to custodial parents of children in protective services?

No.

Yes.

2.2.3 Eligibility criteria: deciding entity on family income limits

How are income eligibility limits established?

There is a statewide limit with no local variation.

There is a statewide limit with local variation. Provide the number of income eligibility tables and describe who sets the limits: [Enter Text](#)

Eligibility limits are established locally only. Provide the number of income eligibility tables and describe who sets the limits: [Enter Text](#)

Other. Describe: [Enter Text](#)

2.2.4 Initial eligibility: income limits

a. Complete the appropriate table to describe family income limits.

i. Complete the table below to provide the statewide maximum income eligibility percent and dollar limit or threshold:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1	\$4,127	50% SMI	\$2,064
2	\$5,397	50% SMI	\$2,699
3	\$6,667	50% SMI	\$3,333
4	\$7,937	50% SMI	\$3,968
5	\$9,206	50% SMI	\$4,603

ii. Does the Lead Agency certify that they use other funds if the income eligibility limit percent exceeds 85% SMI?

Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not allow income eligibility limits above 85% SMI.

Yes, the Lead Agency certifies that they use other funds (non-CCDF funds) for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI.

No. The Lead Agency establishes income eligibility limits above SMI and includes CCDF funds to pay for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI. If checked, describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

b. Complete the table below if the Lead Agency has local variation in the maximum income eligibility limit. Complete the table for the region/locality with the highest eligibility limit,

region/locality with the lowest eligibility limit, and the region/locality that is most populous:

i. Region/locality with the highest eligibility limit:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
2	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
3	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
4	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
5	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

ii. Region/locality with the lowest eligibility limit:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
2	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
3	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
4	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
5	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

iii. Region/locality that is most populous:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
2	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
3	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
4	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
5	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

iv. Does the Lead Agency certify that they use other funds if the income eligibility limit percent exceeds 85% SMI?

- Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not allow income eligibility limits above 85% SMI.
- Yes, the Lead Agency certifies that they use other funds (not CCDF funds) for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI.
- No. The Lead Agency establishes income eligibility limits above 85% SMI and includes CCDF funds to pay for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI. If checked, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

c. How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility at the point of initial determination? Check all that apply:

- i. Gross wages or salary
- ii. Disability or unemployment compensation
- iii. Workers’ compensation
- iv. Spousal support, child support
- v. Survivor and retirement benefits
- vi. Rent for room within the family’s residence
- vii. Pensions or annuities
- viii. Inheritance
- ix. Public assistance
- x. Other. Describe: *Additional income sources as prescribed in Georgia CAPS Policy 8.4 are used to determine the annual gross income for the family unit.*

d. What is the effective date for these income eligibility limits reported in 2.2.3b? *10/01/2023*

- e. Income limits must be established and reported in terms of current SMI based on the most recent data published by the Bureau of the Census, even if the federal poverty level is used in implementing the program.

What federal data does the Lead Agency use when reporting the income eligibility limits?

- LIHEAP. If checked, provide the publication year of the LIHEAP guideline estimates used by the Lead Agency: *5/24/2023*
- Other. Describe: *Enter Text*

- f. Provide the direct URL/website link, if available, for the income eligibility limits. *LIHEAP IM 2023-02 State Median Income Estimates for Optional Use in FFY 2023 and Mandatory Use in FFY 2024 | The Administration for Children and Families (hhs.gov)*

2.2.5 Income eligibility: irregular fluctuations in earnings

Lead Agencies must take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings in initial eligibility determination and redetermination processes. The Lead Agency must ensure that temporary increases in income, including temporary increases that can result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of SMI from seasonal employment or other temporary work schedules, do not affect eligibility or family co-payments.

Check the processes that the Lead Agency uses to take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings.

- i. Average the family's earnings over a period of time (e.g., 12 months). Identify the period of time: *Georgia CAPS Policy 8.8.6 describes the difference between regular and irregular income as it relates to income eligibility calculations at initial application and redetermination. The policy notes, when the parent's income varies considerably, staff calculate the average of all pay stubs for the past six months.*
- ii. Request earning statements that are most representative of the family's monthly income.
- iii. Deduct temporary or irregular increases in wages from the family's standard income level.
- iv. Other. Describe the other ways the Lead Agency takes into account irregular fluctuations in earnings: *Families are required to report a change in their gross applicable income if it exceeds 85% of the SMI for a minimum of four consecutive weeks (CAPS policy 13.4.3).*

2.2.6 Family asset limit

- a. When calculating income eligibility, does the Lead Agency ensure each eligible family does not have assets that exceed \$1,000,000?

Yes.

No. If no, describe (optional): *Enter Text*

- b. Does the Lead Agency waive the asset limit on a case-by-case basis for families defined as receiving, or in need of, protective services?

No.

Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure: *CAPS Policy Manual 8.9.1 exempts children in Georgia Division of Family and Child Services (DFCS) custody (i.e., foster care) from certifying that family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000.*

2.2.7 Additional eligibility criteria

Aside from the eligibility conditions or rules which have been described in 2.2.1 – 2.2.6, is any additional eligibility criteria applied during?

a. Eligibility determination? If checked, describe: *CAPS Policy Manual 7.3 identifies 13 priority population categories that receive child care subsidies at times of funding restrictions. Families are required to be part of at least one of the priority population categories at initial eligibility. Families, except those of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program, do not need to demonstrate they continue to meet these conditions at redetermination. However, families may be required to submit verification documents to support eligibility at redetermination if there is a change in their circumstances. Families of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program at initial eligibility may have to identify with one of the CAPS priority populations at redetermination and re-verify applicable circumstances that were verified previously. Priority categories include: Child Protective Services and court-ordered supervision cases; families with children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K program; children in Georgia Division of Family and Children Services custody; children with disabilities; families with very low income as defined by CAPS; grandparents raising grandchildren; minor parents (aged 20 years of age or younger); families experiencing domestic violence; families who lack fixed, regular, and adequate housing; families who have experienced a natural disaster; families participating in or transitioning from TANF; need to protect; student parent.*

b. Eligibility redetermination? If checked, describe: *Redeterminations are processed in the same manner as a new application. While the CAPS program does ask families about priority group status at redetermination, families, except those of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program, do not need to demonstrate they continue to meet priority group conditions at redetermination. Families of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program at initial eligibility may have to identify with one of the CAPS priority populations at redetermination and re-verify applicable circumstances that were verified previously.*

2.2.8 Documentation of eligibility determination

Lead Agencies must document and verify that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination.

Check the information that the Lead Agency documents and verifies at initial determination and redetermination and describe what information is required and how often.

Required at Initial Determination	Required at Redetermination	Information and Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicant identity. Describe how you verify: <i>CAPS Policy 6.7 requires proof of the parent’s identity and provides the following list of acceptable verification documents: federal or state issued identification card; military issued identification card; current school identification card; U.S. Passport; Medicare/Medicaid recipient card; Social Security award letter; declaration of citizenship; naturalization certificate; voter registration card; work or school visa. CAPS Policy 14.3.1 notes that parents are not required to re-verify circumstances that have already been verified and are not questionable or subject to change at redetermination.</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicant’s relationship to the child. Describe: <i>The parent is responsible for disclosing the names and relationships of all individuals that reside together in the household to determine the composition of the family unit. For CAPS staff to determine the family unit, discussion needs to include who lives in the home, who is married, who are the parents of which children, and what the relationships are between adults and children in the home (CAPS Policy 5.3.4). CAPS Policy 14.3.1 notes that parents are not required to re-verify circumstances that have already been verified and are not questionable or subject to change at redetermination.</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Child’s information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, citizen/immigration status). Describe how you verify: <i>CAPS Policy 6.4.2 provides the following list of acceptable documents to verify the child’s age. (These also serve as verification of the child’s identity.): birth certificate; court records; U.S. passport; state-issued identification; hospital certificate of live birth; immigration card; social security records; immigration court order; Homeland security documents. CAPS Policy 6.5.6 provides the following list of acceptable documents to verify the child’s citizenship: birth certificate; certificate of citizenship; naturalization certificate; vital records; report of birth from abroad of a U.S. citizen; U.S. citizen I.D. card; U.S. passport; consoler’s report of birth; American Indian card (first issued by USCIS in 1983); court records of parentage, juvenile proceedings, or child support indicating place of birth; religious record of birth recorded in the U.S. or its territories within three months of birth (The document must show the date of birth or the individual’s age at the time the record was made); any document that establishes place of birth or U.S. citizenship, such as records from Social Security Administration, Veterans Administration, local government agencies, hospitals, or clinic’s record of birth or parentage; early school records showing the date of admission to the school, the child’s date and place of birth, and the names and place of birth of the parents; census record showing the name, U.S. citizenship, or a U.S. place of birth and date of birth or age of the individual; adoption finalization papers showing the child’s name and place of birth in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. Territory. CAPS Policy 14.3.1 notes that parents are not</i></p>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Work. Describe how you verify: <i>Acceptable forms of verification of hours of employment include pay stubs, a letter from the employer on business letterhead, CAPS Self-employment Report (Appendix CC) (for self-employed parents only), CAPS Employment Verification (Appendix F), or employer wage records.</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Job training or educational program. Describe how you verify: <i>CAPS staff will verify education enrollment and participation with one or more of the following: Written verification of enrollment from the educational institution and current class schedule or approved DECAL trainer (CDA training only). At a minimum, the written verification must include: The parent’s name and enrollment date, the name of the institution, contact person, and contact information (phone and email). If not included on the class schedule, the written statement must also include the number of credit hours or the number of in-class or online hours per week. Parent can also complete the “Completed Education Verification Form” (Appendix DD).</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Family income. Describe how you verify: <i>Earned Income Verification. CAPS staff will verify earned income (wages) with one or more of the following: pay stubs or receipts for the most recent four weeks of earnings, most recent 1099 form, most recent W-2 Forms, employer’s wage records, quarterly income tax payment receipts to the IRS (for cash paying jobs or self-employment only), annual income tax returns when presented in the January-March quarter (for cash paying jobs or self-employment only), letter/statement from employer (the letter/statement should be signed and dated on an employer letterhead and include contact information for the employer [phone number, title and relationship to employee], expected/current hire date, number of hours the employee is scheduled/works, and hourly rate of pay [and/or gross salary]), documentation from other state eligibility programs, if verification of income is within past six (6) months, employer completed “CAPS Employment Verification form (Appendix F)” or itemized statement completed by the employer, Military Leave Earning Statement (LES) – this is the only acceptable form of verification for a member of the military, family can complete “CAPS Self-employment Report form (Appendix CC)”, business ledgers, business receipts, previous year tax form if submitting before April 15, current tax form if submitting after April 15. Unearned Income Verification. CAPS staff will verify unearned income with one or more of the following: check stubs, award letters, social security records, worker’s compensation records, union records, unemployment insurance claim records, documentation from other state eligibility programs, child support system information, court documents. Note: The above list is not all-inclusive, and families have the right to submit other credible forms of verification/ documentation to determine income eligibility. Income can also be verified using other eligibility program system sources whenever possible.</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Household composition. Describe how you verify: <i>The parent is responsible for disclosing the names and relationships of all individuals who reside in the household to determine the composition of the family unit. For CAPS staff to determine the family unit, discussion needs to include who lives in the home, who is married, who are the parents of which children, and what the relationships are between adults and children in the home.</i></p>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicant residence. Describe how you verify: <i>All CAPS parents must be a resident of the State of Georgia. Proof of residency may include one of the following: current (unexpired) Georgia government issued driver's license/identification (I.D.) card, current (unexpired) lease or mortgage statement, notarized statement from landlord or person with whom the applicant resides, children's school records within current school year, voter registration card, motor vehicle registration card with residence address, wage stubs with residence address, work or school I.D. with residence address, current utility bill/statement, current property tax statement.</i></p>
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Other. Describe how you verify: <i>Families are required to be part of at least one of the priority population categories at initial eligibility. Families, except those of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program, do not need to demonstrate they continue to meet these conditions at redetermination. However, families may need to provide supporting documentation to meet program eligibility at redetermination as prescribed in CAPS policy 7.3.1. Families of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program at initial eligibility may have to identify with one of the CAPS priority populations at redetermination and re-verify applicable circumstances that were verified previously. Child Protective Services (CPS) and court-ordered supervision cases require a referral from Georgia CPS. Children in Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) custody must have a referral from DFCS stating need for child care services and verification that the child is in DFCS custody. Families experiencing domestic violence must provide verification from the Georgia Department of Human Services, report to TANF, police report, court documents, proof of shelter residence, or other third-party documentation verifying the family has experienced domestic violence. Families of children with disabilities acceptable verification may include any of the following: written diagnosis and statement of how the child's learning is impacted from a licensed medical specialist, an Individualized Family Service Plan (Part C of IDEA), an Individualized Education Program (Part B, section 619, of IDEA), an Individual Accommodation Plan (Section 504) that indicates how the child's learning is impacted, a Medicaid waiver for persons with disabilities (Katie Beckett, NOW, or COMP), proof of Supplemental Security Income for a child who is blind or disabled. Families of children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program must complete the CAPS Georgia's Pre-K Program Referral Form (Appendix S) if the child's Pre-K status cannot be verified through the state's Pre-K database. Families participating in or transitioning from TANF need a referral from TANF (Appendix FF) and a work plan. Families who have experienced a natural disaster must verify residency in the designated area during the time of the declared natural disaster. Designated areas for federal and state declared natural disasters can be verified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency at www.FEMA.gov/disasters. Families who lack fixed, regular, and adequate housing must meet Georgia residency requirement. Residency can be verified with a letter from the homeowner or lease holder (does not need to be notarized), an emergency shelter, or an agency that provides homeless assistance programs in Georgia. This will also be used to verify homeless status. A written or verbal attestation from the parent that they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence may be accepted if no other documentation is available. Families with very low income as defined by CAPS must submit earned and unearned income verification for the last four weeks. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) must verify participation in the DFCS GRG program. Minor parents: At least one parent must be 20 years of age or younger and provide verification of age. Need to protect: The following situations that may qualify for a need to protect include, but are not limited to: grandparents, relatives, and other caregivers (excluding biological or adoptive parents) who have taken over full-time care of a child (due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment) who is not in DFCS custody, families who had a substantiated CPS case that closed within the last 12 months, families of children involved in the juvenile justice system. Acceptable verification includes: A completed Statement of Guardianship (Appendix EE) is required for grandparents, relatives, and other caregivers raising children who are not in DFCS custody. Referral from a community service program, copy of a case plan or verification from DFCS for families who had a substantiated CPS</i></p>
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2.2.9 Exception to TANF work requirements

Lead Agencies must ensure that families with young children, participating in TANF will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned under the TANF work requirement if the custodial parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain child care for a child under age six, in accordance with Section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act.

- a. Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions: *Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) at the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS)*.
- b. Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency:
 - i. “Appropriate child care”: *A TANF participant has chosen a child care provider who is licensed, exempt, or meets the CAPS criteria to become an informal caregiver.*
 - ii. “Reasonable distance”: *The distance that will enable the TANF participant to arrive at their work activity timely without incurring any additional expenses.*
 - iii. “Unsuitability of informal child care”: *An informal caregiver who failed to meet the health and safety requirements or background check or who has not properly enrolled with CAPS.*
 - iv. “Affordable child care arrangements”: *Securing a child care choice where fees can be managed on the TANF participant's budget and does not cause a financial hardship.*
- c. How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?
 - i. In writing
 - ii. Verbally
 - iii. Other. Describe: *Enter Text*

2.3 Prioritizing Services for Vulnerable Children and Families

Lead Agencies must give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, families with very low incomes (considering family size), and children experiencing homelessness. A Lead Agency has the flexibility to prioritize other populations of children.

Note: Statute defines children with disabilities, and CCDF rule gives flexibility to Lead Agencies to include vulnerable populations in their definition of children with special needs.

CCDF defines “child experiencing homelessness” as a child who is homeless, as defined in Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a).

2.3.1 Lead Agency definition of priority groups

Describe how the Lead Agency defines:

- a. “Children with special needs”: *A child that has a disability or developmental delay that impacts their learning as measured and documented by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures by a licensed medical specialist. The disability or delay must be in one of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. Children with disabilities may include: a child who is eligible for early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities*

Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.); a child who is eligible for services under part B, section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419); a child who is eligible for services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794); a child with a Medicaid waiver for persons with disabilities (i.e., Katie Beckett, NOW, or COMP); and a child receiving Supplemental Security Income for blindness or a disability.

b. “Families with very low incomes”: *Families whose income falls at or below 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.*

2.3.2 Prioritization of child care services

Identify how the Lead Agency will prioritize child care services for the following children and families.

a. Complete the table below to indicate how the identified populations are prioritized.

Population Prioritized	Prioritize for enrollment in child care services	Serve without placing on waiting list	Waive co-payments as described in 3.3.1	Pay higher rate for access to higher quality care	Use grants or contracts to reserve spots	Other
Children with special needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe: <i>Click or tap here to</i>

Population Prioritized	Prioritize for enrollment in child care services	Serve without placing on waiting list	Waive co-payments as described in 3.3.1	Pay higher rate for access to higher quality care	Use grants or contracts to reserve spots	Other
						<i>enter text.</i>
Families with very low incomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe: <i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Children experiencing homelessness, as defined by CCDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe: <i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
(Optional) Families receiving TANF, those attempting to transition off TANF, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe: <i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

b. Does the Lead Agency define any other priority groups?

No.

Yes. If yes, identify the populations prioritized and describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes services: *To support families with the greatest needs, CAPS established the additional priority groups: Child Protective Services (CPS) and court ordered supervision cases - a child who is receiving protective services; Children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program; Children in Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Custody; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) - Parents participating in GRG with DFCS; Minor Parents - Parents 20 years old and younger; Families experiencing domestic violence. For the purpose of this policy, domestic violence includes any violent crime that is alleged by the applicant against any past or present spouses, persons who are parents of the same child, parents and children, stepparents and stepchildren, foster parents and foster children, or other persons living or formerly living in the same household. This shall also include emotional, psychological, physical, or sexual abuse as attested to by the applicant or formally documented by a referral agency, law enforcement, or a court of competent jurisdiction; Families who have experienced a natural disaster in the family's county of residence that has been identified by government officials as an area included in the state or federal disaster area; Families participating or transitioning from TANF; Need to protect - A child who needs*

to receive protective services but is not formally involved with Child Protective Services; Student Parent - A parent with dependent children enrolled in high school, adult education, vocational training, early childhood education credential or training courses, technical certificate of credit (TCC), technical college diploma (TCD), education or training through WorkSource Georgia, associate degree program, or bachelor's degree program. Families in these priority groups meet first-level eligibility criteria for CAPS. In addition, the CAPS program pays the full rate for child care for families of children with special needs and children in foster care. Finally, CAPS does not assess a co-payment for minor parents below the age of 18 and children in DFCS custody. The Lead Agency also partners with representatives from shelters that support families experiencing homelessness or domestic violence to prioritize applications for child care to support the safety of the children. Representatives can notify CAPS via the CAPS website that a family has applied so the application can be expedited.

2.3.3 Enrollment and grace period for children experiencing homelessness

Lead Agencies must allow (after an initial eligibility determination) children experiencing homelessness to receive CCDF services while required eligibility documentation is obtained.

Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with State, Territory, or local immunization and other health and safety requirements. The length of such a grace period must be established in consultation with the State, Territorial, or Tribal public health agency.

Note: Any payment for such a child during the grace period may not be considered an error or improper payment.

- a. Describe the strategies to allow CCDF enrollment of children experiencing homelessness while required eligibility documentation is obtained: *Verification of priority group status is required before an initial eligibility determination. If additional documentation is not immediately available, families are allowed an additional 45 days to submit verification of the child's citizenship or qualified alien status, child's immunization (if applicable), activity, and income without postponing their eligibility determination.*
- b. Describe the grace period for each population below and how it allows them to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements:
 - i. Provide the policy for a grace period for:

Children experiencing homelessness: CAPS Policy Manual 6.6 specifies that families experiencing homelessness have at least 45 days to verify immunization requirements. CAPS Procedure Manual 3.5.5 notes the additional 45 days does not affect approval of eligibility unless verification cannot be granted after the 45-day period. For extenuating circumstances beyond 45 days, an additional waiver allowing more time must be approved by the CAPS program. In consultation with Georgia Department of Public Health, the agency in Georgia responsible for monitoring that children in child care have current immunization certificates or an approved waiver, a 45-day time frame was

established as sufficient to obtain a copy of an immunization certificate or for a child to receive appropriate immunizations.

Children who are in foster care: CAPS Policy Manual 6.6 specifies that families of children in foster care have at least 45 days to verify immunization requirements. CAPS Procedure Manual 3.5.5 notes the additional 45 days does not affect approval of eligibility unless verification cannot be granted after the 45-day period. For extenuating circumstances beyond 45 days, an additional waiver allowing more time must be approved by the CAPS program. In consultation with Georgia Department of Public Health, the agency in Georgia responsible for monitoring that children in child care have current immunization certificates or an approved waiver, a 45-day time frame was established as sufficient to obtain a copy of an immunization certificate, or for a child to receive appropriate immunizations.

ii. Does the Lead Agency certify that the length of the grace period was established in consultation with the State, Territorial or Tribal health agency?

Yes.

No. If no, describe (optional): *Enter Text*

c. Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates with licensing agencies and other relevant State, Territorial, Tribal, and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families with children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements: *The Lead Agency refers families to the county health department and other providers participating in the federal Vaccines for Children Program, which supplies vaccines free of charge to participating providers, which are made available to children up to 19 years of age who are Medicaid enrolled, uninsured, underinsured (and seen in a federally qualified health center or rural health center), or American Indian or Alaska Native.*

2.4 Lead Agency Outreach to Families Experiencing Homelessness, Families with Limited English Proficiency, and Persons with Disabilities

The Lead Agency must conduct outreach and provide services to families with limited English proficiency, families experiencing homelessness, and persons with disabilities.

2.4.1 Families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities: outreach and services

- a. Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to conduct outreach and provide services to eligible families with limited English proficiency. Check all that apply.
- i. Application in languages other than English (application and related documents, brochures, provider notices)
 - ii. Informational materials in languages other than English
 - iii. Website in languages other than English
 - iv. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations
 - v. Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
 - vi. Bilingual outreach workers
 - vii. Partnerships with community-based organizations

- viii. Collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, or Migrant and Seasonal Head Start
- ix. Home visiting programs
- x. Other. Describe: *The Lead Agency has a Rising Pre-K Summer Transition Program, funded in part by CCDF, that targets children who are age eligible for Pre-K the next school year and whose home language is Spanish. The program includes bilingual teachers and a strong family engagement component. Services and resources are provided to families in English and Spanish. In addition, Pre-K is launching a new family portal in January 2025 that will include the ability for families to choose their language to view and access the portal. The Lead Agency continues to recruit bilingual parents for the Family Peer Ambassador program. The Lead Agency also provides financial supports for bilingual individuals to obtain a degree or credential in early childhood education. The Lead Agency is also developing a plan to comprehensively review websites, resources, and forms to determine if these supports should be translated into other languages to make information more accessible for families and providers. As part of its child care access, consumer education, and family outreach activities, the Lead Agency funds the toll-free 877ALLGAKIDS Call Center and participation in community events around the state to distribute information about accessing early education supports and provide referrals to high-quality child care. Several of the team members delivering these services are bilingual speakers who are able to assist families whose home language is Spanish.*

b. Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to provide outreach and services to eligible families with a person(s) with a disability. Check all that apply.

- i. Applications and public informational materials available in braille and other communication formats for access by individuals with disabilities
- ii. Websites that are accessible (e.g., Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act)
- iii. Caseworkers with specialized training/experience in working with individuals with disabilities
- iv. Ensuring accessibility of environments and activities for all children
- v. Partnerships with State and local programs and associations focused on disability-related topics and issues
- vi. Partnerships with parent associations, support groups, and parent-to-parent support groups, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers
- vii. Partnerships with State and local IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C providers and agencies

- viii. Availability and/or access to specialized services (e.g., mental health, behavioral specialists, therapists) to address the needs of all children
- ix. Other. Describe: The Lead Agency added a button to the DECAL and CAPS websites to the Resource and Referral Portal (FindHelp GA), which contains many resources for families with a person(s) with a disability, including but not limited to Mental Health and Behavioral Supports, Disability Supports, Child Development, Early Intervention, Children with Special Needs, and Caregiver Supports. The Lead Agency provides a Helpline staffed by trained Inclusion and Behavior Support Coordinator. Families and child care providers can call (1-833-354-4357) or email inclusion@dec.al.ga.gov) to provide resources and referrals to families of children with disabilities and assistance in identifying inclusive child care. A team of statewide Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialists assists child care providers by providing coaching and training on inclusive classroom practices and social emotional development.

2.4.2 Families experiencing homelessness: Outreach and technical assistance efforts

a. Check, where applicable, the procedures used to conduct outreach for children experiencing homelessness and their families.

- i. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations
- ii. Partnerships with community-based organizations
- iii. Partnering with homeless service providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and others who work with families experiencing homelessness to provide referrals to child care
- iv. Other. Describe: *The Lead Agency and the Head Start State Collaboration Office are providing a series of trainings and ongoing technical assistance to community partners who support families and children experiencing homelessness to improve their knowledge of the early care and education programs, priorities, and the referral systems. The Lead Agency has also partnered with Our House, a nonprofit agency providing shelter and innovative services to the Atlanta homeless population, to develop and implement training for staff to enhance outreach efforts. The Lead Agency added a feature to the Contact Us form on the CAPS website to enable community programs supporting families who are homeless to communicate and expedite their subsidy applications. The Lead Agency understands that communication may be a challenge for families with limited access to technology, so this feature allows staff to work with the system on their behalf. The Lead Agency added a button to the DECAL and CAPS websites to the Resource and Referral Portal (FindHelp GA) that contains many resources for families experiencing homelessness including, but not limited to, emergency shelter, temporary housing, help find housing, help pay for housing. Families experiencing homelessness remains a priority group for the*

CAPS subsidy program, targeting specific challenges faced by families as defined by McKinney-Vento. In addition, the Lead Agency developed a series of visual aids specific to community partners in the Continuum of Care who serve families experiencing homelessness to explain the process for child care and subsidy assistance.

- b. The Lead Agency must provide training and technical assistance (TA) to providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children and families experiencing homelessness.
 - i. Describe the Lead Agency's training and TA efforts for providers in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness. *DECAL CAPS created a new functional area, CAPS Provider Relations that includes four teams, one of which is the Education and Outreach team responsible for developing and delivering training to child care providers. This team will build on the work undertaken in previous years and collaborate with experts in serving homelessness to refine training and resource materials. This team will deliver specialized training in this area to early learning and development providers who work with families experiencing homelessness, so they are equipped to meet the needs of these families. Training is typically offered through virtual meeting platforms during hours that providers are most able to attend, i.e., during lunch/nap hours and after the work day.*
 - ii. Describe the Lead Agency's training and TA efforts for Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness. *The state currently coordinates services among many programs serving homeless and low-income populations. First, Local Education Authorities that receive Georgia's Pre-K and Summer Transition Program funding must comply with McKinney-Vento's mandates by providing children who are experiencing homelessness equal access. Second, Georgia provides child care subsidies and Georgia's Pre-K funding, and Summer Transition program funding to high-quality early learning programs that serve families experiencing homelessness and coordinates the two funding sources to ensure that families experiencing homelessness have access to full-day, full-year care. Children experiencing homelessness are also a priority group for the Lead Agency's CAPS program. Additionally, an internal Homelessness Committee meets regularly to coordinate efforts among the divisions in the Lead Agency to connect with and serve Georgia's homeless populations.*

2.5 Promoting Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies must consider children’s development and promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services and must establish a minimum 12-month period for each child, both at the initial eligibility determination and redetermination.

2.5.1 Children’s development

Describe how the Lead Agency’s eligibility, enrollment, reporting, and redetermination policies promote continuity of care in order to support children’s development.

The Lead Agency coordinates with Head Start, Georgia’s Pre-K Program, other early learning programs, and school-age programs to accommodate parents’ work schedules. The Lead Agency determines whether the child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) prior to enrollment in child care subsidies. Cross-enrollment or referrals to other public benefits through the Lead Agency’s resource and referral portal (FindHelp GA) are completed to ensure families have access to appropriate services. The Lead Agency will continue to collaborate with IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C staff to explore how services included in a child’s IEP or IFSP can be supported and/or provided onsite and in collaboration with child care services. Using established coaching protocols, the Lead Agency will provide more intensive case management for families with children with multiple risk factors. The Lead Agency continues to implement policies and procedures that promote universal design to ensure that activities and environments are accessible to all children, including children with sensory, physical, or other disabilities.

2.5.2 Minimum 12-month eligibility

Lead Agencies must establish a minimum 12-month eligibility period for each child, both at the initial eligibility determination and at redetermination to support continuity in child care assistance and reduce barriers to families retaining eligibility. This requirement is:

- Regardless of changes in income. Lead Agencies may not terminate CCDF assistance during the minimum 12-month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the Lead Agency’s income eligibility threshold but not the federal threshold of 85 percent of SMI; and
 - Regardless of temporary changes in participation in work, training, or educational activities.
- a. Does the Lead Agency certify that their policies or procedures provide a minimum 12-month eligibility period for each child at initial eligibility determination?
- Yes.
- No. If no, describe (optional): *Enter Text*
- b. Does the Lead Agency certify that its definition of “temporary change” includes each of the minimum required elements?
1. Any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness
 2. Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working

3. Any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program
4. Any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program
5. Any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program lasts a minimum of 3 months. Lead Agencies may establish a period longer than 3 months.
6. A child turning 13 years old during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.
7. Any changes in residency within the State or Territory

Yes.

No. If no, describe (optional): *Enter Text*

- c. Are the policies different for redetermination?

No.

Yes. If yes, provide the additional/varying policies for redetermination:
Enter Text

2.5.3 Job search and continued assistance

- a. Does the Lead Agency consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination and at the minimum 12-month eligibility redetermination? (Note: If yes, Lead Agencies must provide a minimum of 3 months of job search.) Check all that apply:

- i. Yes. The Lead Agency does consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at redetermination. If yes, briefly describe: *Enter Text*
- ii. Yes. The Lead Agency does consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at redetermination. If yes, describe: *Enter Text*
- iii. No. The Lead Agency does not consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination and/or at redetermination.

- b. Does the Lead Agency continue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period when a parent has a non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity?

Yes. The Lead Agency continues assistance.

No, the Lead Agency discontinues assistance. If no:

- i. If no, describe the Lead Agency's policies for discontinuing assistance due to a parent's non-temporary change: *Parents who permanently lose their employment or stop attending*

education/training programs 13 weeks or more prior to the end of their current eligibility period will be allowed job search as an approved activity for 13 weeks from the date the activity ended. If the parent resumes participation in a state-approved activity at any level during the 13-week job search period, child care will continue for the duration of the existing eligibility period. If the parent does not resume participation in a state-approved activity at any level and have 13 or more weeks left in their current eligibility period, the case will close at the end of the 13-week job search period. If the parent permanently loses their employment or stops attending education/training program with 12 weeks or less remaining in their current eligibility period, child care will continue through the end of their current eligibility period. At redetermination, the parent must meet applicable state-approved activity requirements. (CAPS Policy 13.8)

- ii. If no, describe what specific actions/changes trigger the job-search period after each such loss or cessation: *The parent loses their employment or permanently stops attending their training or education program. The parent reports this change in activity to their assigned Family Support Consultant and the 13-week job search is triggered for the case.*
 - iii. If no, how long is the job-search period where a family can continue assistance (must be at least 3 months)? *13 weeks*
- c. The Lead Agency may discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination in the limited circumstances listed below. Check and provide the policy for all circumstances in which the Lead Agency chooses to discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination:
- i. Not applicable.
 - ii. Excessive unexplained absences despite multiple attempts by the Lead Agency or designated entity to contact the family and provider, including the prior notification of a possible discontinuation of assistance.

Provide the Lead Agency's policy defining the number of unexplained absences identified as excessive: *CAPS Policy Manual 13.10.2 allows for CAPS cases to be closed when there are excessive unexplained absences, and the parent cannot be reached using the most recently provided contact information. Excessive unexplained absence occurs when it is confirmed that CAPS subsidies have not been used by the parent for authorized children, with no contact or previous notification of absence, for at least 30 calendar days. CAPS will attempt to contact parents through each communication channel available (phone, mail, and email) at least two times before closing their case for excessive unexplained absences.*

- iii. A change in residency outside of the State or Territory: *CAPS Policy Manual 13.4.3 requires the parent to report within 10 calendar days when the family moves out of the state. CAPS Policy 13.10.2 allows for CAPS cases to be closed when the family has moved out of the state.*
- iv. Substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility.

Provide the Lead Agency's definition of fraud/intentional program violations that lead to discontinued assistance: *CAPS Policy Manual 13.10.2 allows for CAPS cases to be closed if there has been a program violation. Violations that lead to discontinued assistance are addressed in CAPS Policy Manual 16.4.4 and include the following: Parent provided inaccurate, outdated, or incomplete information or did not report a change that would have impacted eligibility; parent did not cooperate with an investigation; parent did not respond to or honor the child care claim or repayment statement; parent provided false information or documents related to their eligibility determination. CAPS Policy Manual 16.4.4.2 defines program violation as an intentional submission of incomplete, incorrect, or falsified documents or information in order to qualify for assistance or receive payments that an individual or child care provider is not authorized to receive.*

2.5.4 Reporting changes during the minimum 12-month eligibility period

Lead Agencies may only require families to report changes that impact a family's eligibility, including only if the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the SMI, taking into account irregular fluctuations in income, or there is a non-temporary change in the parent's work, training, or education status, during the 12-month eligibility period. Lead Agencies may also require families to report that enable the lead agency to contact the family or pay providers, such as a new telephone number or address.

Note: The response below should exclude reporting requirements for a graduated phase-out, which are described in question 2.5.5.

Does the Lead Agency limit what families must report during the 12-month eligibility period to the changes described above

Yes.

No. If no, describe (optional): *CAPS Policy Manual 13.4.3 requires parents to report: when the family moves out-of-state; changes in contact information such as phone number, email address, and mailing address; changes in child care provider, changes in child care arrangements; and if CAPS services are no longer needed.*

2.5.5 Policies and procedures for graduated phase-out of assistance at redetermination

Lead Agencies that establish initial family income eligibility below 85 percent of SMI must provide a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased above the Lead Agency's initial income threshold at the time of redetermination but remains below the federal threshold of 85 percent of SMI.

Lead Agencies that provide a graduated phase-out must implement a two-tiered eligibility threshold, with the second tier of eligibility (used at the time of eligibility redetermination) to be set at:

- (i) 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size; or,
- (ii) An amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold that:
 - (A) Takes into account the typical household budget of a family with a low income
 - (B) Provides justification that the second eligibility threshold is:
 - (1) Sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for workers with low incomes and that promote and support family economic stability
 - (2) Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption

At redetermination, a child must be considered eligible if their parents are participating in an eligible activity even if their income exceeds the Lead Agency's initial eligibility income limit as long as their income does not exceed the second tier of eligibility. Note that once determined eligible, the child must be considered eligible for a full minimum 12-month eligibility period, even if the parents' income exceeds the second tier of eligibility during the eligibility period, as long as it does not exceed 85 percent of SMI.

A child eligible for services via the graduated phase-out of assistance is considered eligible under the same conditions as other eligible children with the exception of the co-payment restrictions, which do not apply to a graduated phase-out. To help families transition from child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-payment amounts in proportion to a family's income growth for families whose children are determined eligible under a graduated phase-out. Lead Agencies may require additional reporting on changes in family income but must still ensure that any additional reporting requirements do not constitute an undue burden on families.

Check and describe the option that best identifies the Lead Agency's policies and procedures regarding the graduated phase-out of assistance.

- a. Not applicable. The Lead Agency sets its initial eligibility threshold at 85 percent of SMI and therefore is not required to provide a graduated phase-out period. (If checked, skip to question 3.1.1)
- b. The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at 85 percent of SMI. If checked, describe the policies and procedures: *CAPS Policy 14.3.9: When a family is initially approved for child care assistance, the gross applicable income of the family unit must be equal to or less than 50 percent of the current SMI at the time of application. During the eligibility period, if the family's gross applicable income increases but remains at or below the maximum allowable federal limit of 85 percent of SMI, the family will remain in the program with no impact to eligibility or family fee until redetermination. Families are only required to report a change in family income during the eligibility period when a family's gross applicable income is above 85 percent of SMI for a minimum of four consecutive weeks. At redetermination, families' income will be reassessed. If a family's gross applicable income increases but remains at or below the maximum allowable federal limit of 85 percent of SMI, the family will continue to be eligible for the program. The*

family fee will be calculated at redetermination based on the family's current gross applicable income.

- Lead Agency adjusts the family's co-pay during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts co-payment for families under a graduated phase-out period in proportion to a family's income growth. Include information on the percentage or amount of change made in the co-payment during graduated phase-out: *Enter Text*
 - Lead Agency requires additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe: *Enter Text*
- c. The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at an amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold. If checked, provide the following information:
 - i. Provide the income level (\$/month) and the percent of SMI for the second tier of eligibility for a family of three: *Enter Text*
 - ii. Describe how the second eligibility threshold takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family: *Enter Text*
 - iii. Describe how the second eligibility threshold is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability: *Enter Text*
 - iv. Describe how the second eligibility threshold reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption: *Enter Text*
 - v. Lead Agency adjusts the family's co-pay during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts co-payment for families under a graduated phase-out period in proportion to a family's income growth. Include information on the percentage or amount of change made in the co-payment during graduated phase-out: *Enter Text*
 - vi. Lead Agency require additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe: *Enter Text*