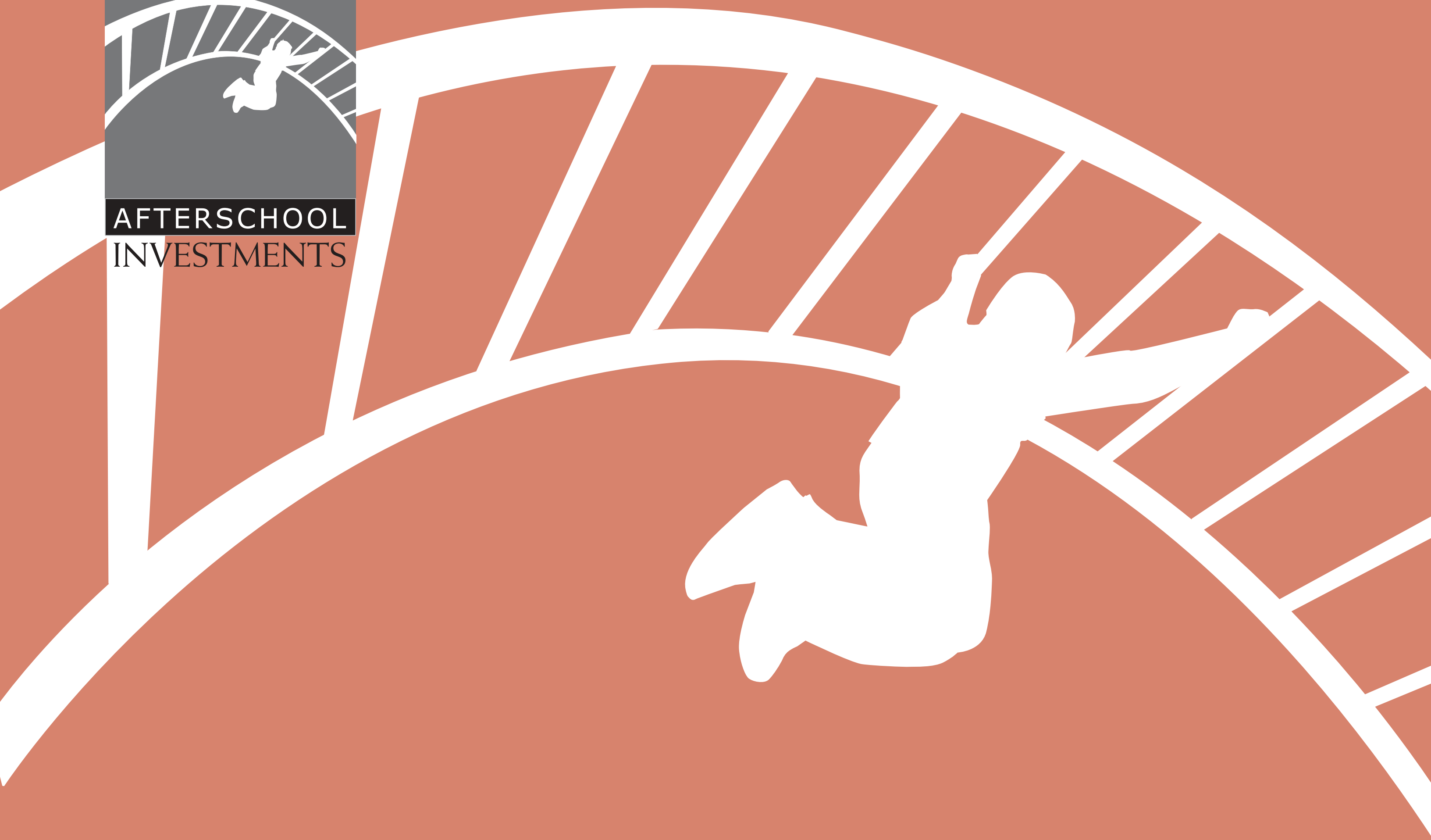
AFTERSCHOOL
INVESTMENTS



State Child Care Subsidy Administration Policies for School-Age Care

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

STATE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY ADMINISTRATION POLICIES
FOR SCHOOL-AGE CARE

September 2007

AFTERSCHOOL INVESTMENTS

The Afterschool Investments Project

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provides federal resources for child care that support both direct services and quality enhancements. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care Bureau awards CCDF grants to states, territories, and tribes. With nearly half of the children receiving services being of school or kindergarten age, CCDF provides significant funding for afterschool care in a variety of settings. The majority of CCDF dollars are used to provide subsidies to eligible low-income children under age 13. A portion of CCDF funding is also used for quality improvement initiatives, such as professional development and technical assistance, with the goal of building the capacity of states to deliver quality services including programs before and after-school, during summers, and on school holidays.

To support state efforts to provide quality afterschool opportunities, the Child Care Bureau awarded a technical assistance contract on out-of-school time to The Finance Project and its partner, The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. The Afterschool Investments project provides technical assistance to Child Care and Development Fund grantees and other state and local leaders who support afterschool efforts. The goals of the project include:

- Identifying ways that states and communities are using Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy and quality dollars to support out-of-school time programs, and sharing these practices and approaches with other states;
- Identifying administrative and implementation issues related to CCDF investments in out-of-school time programs, and providing information and context (about barriers, problems, opportunities) as well as practical tools that will help CCDF administrators make decisions; and
- Identifying other major programs and sectors that are potential partners for CCDF in supporting out-of-school time programs, and providing models, strategies, and tools for coordination with other programs and sectors.

To meet these goals, the Afterschool Investments project is:

- Regularly updating and maintaining State profiles of afterschool resources, policies and issues;
- Creating tools and materials to support the development and sustainability of afterschool efforts; and
- Providing targeted technical assistance to state child care administrators and other state leaders around building partnerships and developing state policies that promote investments in high-quality afterschool programs.

For more information about the project or to submit a request for technical assistance or information, contact The Finance Project at (202) 587-1000 or by email at afterschool@financeproject.org. All project tools and resources can be found online on the Afterschool Investments Project website: http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

Introduction

The Child Care and Development Fund, financed at $5 billion in 2007, represents the largest single source of federal funding for afterschool programs and is an important avenue through which low-income families can access care for school-age children.[1] With funding from this program, states administer subsidies to families with children under the age of 13 that are in need of child care services. In many states, school-age children (ages 5-13) represent approximately half of the population served with these funds.[2]

States have significant flexibility in shaping their child care programs, and each decision—from establishing provider reimbursement rates to calculating family co-payments—affects families' ability to access care. These decisions also can impact states' ability to administer the program effectively, to ensure CCDF resources are appropriately provided to eligible families. To address both the demand for school-age care and the scheduling challenges that come with providing these services, many states have developed innovative strategies to better meet the needs of families, providers, and administrators.

This brief examines policies and practices used by states to administer child care subsidies for school-age children. Specifically, it explores how states establish provider reimbursement rates for school-age care and determine co-payments for families with children in school. The brief also discusses strategies to help families, providers, and administrators make the transition between part-time care during the school year and full-time care during school and summer breaks.

[1] *The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* (P.L. 104-93) consolidated several federal child care funding streams into the Child Care and Development Fund, which includes discretionary funding authorized by the *Child Care and Development Block Grant Act* and mandatory funding authorized by P.L. 104-93. States also can transfer Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars to CCDF, or use TANF directly for child care. Along with the Social Services Block Grant, CCDF and TANF provide over $11 billion annually in state and federal funding for chlid care.

[2] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Child Care & Development Fund FFY 2005 Data Tables.* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

The Child Care and Development Fund

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is administered at the federal level by the Child Care Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families, which allocates funding to states, territories, and tribes by formula. Most CCDF dollars are used by states to provide eligible low-income families with child care subsidies in the form of vouchers or certificates that promote parental choice. Some states also use CCDF funds to provide contracts or grants to eligible providers to make available a certain number of child care slots. These slots often help meet a specific need in the state, such as for special-needs care or care in a particular geographic area.

Eligible families can use child care vouchers or certificates to obtain child care for children in a variety of settings, including centers, group homes, family homes, or their own home. To access CCDF assistance, parents must complete their state's subsidy application process and be approved for aid. The details of this process are established by each individual state. Nationally, 36 percent of children who receive CCDF subsidies are school-age children (ages 6-12). An additional 10 percent are age 5 (thus, potentially in kindergarten).[3]

Under federal law, CCDF subsidies can be provided to parents who are working or participating in education or training programs and who have incomes not exceeding 85 percent of the state's median income or a lower income threshold set by the state. Subsidies also can be provided for children who receive or need to receive protective services. States can prioritize services for some families, such as those transitioning from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance.

Providers receive reimbursement from the state according to payment rates established by the state. To be eligible to serve subsidized children, federal law requires child care providers receiving CCDF dollars to meet health and safety requirements in three core areas: prevention and control of infectious diseases, including immunizations; building and physical premises safety; and health and safety training of providers. To implement this federal requirement, many states require certain child care providers, particularly center-based programs receiving CCDF subsidies, to be licensed. In some states, school-based programs are exempt from some or all licensing regulations because they have oversight from their state education agency.

Federal law also requires states to spend a minimum of 4 percent of CCDF funds, as well as additional targeted funds, on activities designed to increase the quality and availability of care. These initiatives can include comprehensive consumer education, enhancement of parental choice, resource and referral counseling, grants and loans to providers, monitoring and enforcement of requirements, training and technical assistance, and improved compensation of child care staff. Many states dedicate a portion of their quality dollars to out-of-school time activities.

[3] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Child Care & Development Fund FFY 2005 Data Tables*. (Washington, D.C., 2005).

Administering Child Care Subsidies for School-Age Children

Many states are adapting CCDF policies and strategies to ensure child care subsidies better meet the needs of families with school-age children. Because of the ages of the children being served, school-age care varies in a number of ways from care for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

- Many school-age children require only part-time care during non-school hours.
- Child-to-staff ratios tend to be higher for school-age care.
- Because school-age care tends to be part-time and less intensive, the price of care is often lower than infant, toddler and preschool care.
- School-age children tend to alternate between part-time care during the school year and full-time care during holidays, teacher workdays, and summer breaks.

These child care patterns have the potential to create a number of challenges for families, providers, and administrators:

- **For Families:**
  - The transition between full-time and part-time care may necessitate the recertification of care arrangements to maintain subsidy eligibility, the selection of a new or secondary care provider, or the potential loss of a child care subsidy.
  - Some school-age children need paid care during the school year, but have other non-paid arrangements during the summer months (or vice versa), again putting families at risk of forfeiting their child care subsidy, which they may need when they return to paid care.
- **For Providers:**
  - Providers must account for fluctuations in attendance, and therefore income, during school breaks and summer months.
  - Providers also must manage potentially frequent logistical adjustments (e.g., rate changes) when administering subsidies for school-age children.
- **For Subsidy Administrators:**
  - Subsidy administrators are challenged to implement child care systems that address the needs of both providers and families with school-age children.

- States must track and manage the various changes in subsidy rates and types of care for school-age children throughout the year.

To address the various challenges that may arise from the management of these services, some states have made adjustments to subsidy rates and co-payments to aid in the administration of child care to school-age children.

Establishing Subsidy Rates

Under federal CCDF rules, each state must certify that its rates are sufficient to provide equal access to the full range of child care settings available to non-subsidized families. At least every two years, each state is required to conduct a Market Rate Survey to help the state determine how its child care subsidy rates relate to current market conditions.

Most states address school-age care in some way in their Market Rate Surveys. A nationwide study of Market Rate Surveys found that almost all states reported collecting data separately for each child care age group, including infant, toddler, preschool, and school-age.[4] The study also found that 60 percent of states also differentiate between school-year and summer pricing in their surveys.[5] When setting rates, most states employed the same categories used in their Market Rate Survey.[6]

Additional Factors Used to Determine Subsidy Rates

States report considering a number of factors in addition to Market Rate Surveys when establishing subsidy rates. According to a study by the Oregon State University Family Policy Program and the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, these factors may include:

- levels of state funding,
- levels of federal CCDF funding,
- overall budget,
- desire to maximize the number of families with access to subsidies,
- desire to invest in quality of child care initiatives,
- demand for subsidies,
- TANF policies, and
- provider concerns.[7]

[4] Weber, R., Grobe, D., Davis, E., Kreader, J., *Pratt, C. Practices and Policies: Market Rate Surveys in States, Territories, and Tribes.* (Corvallis, OR. Oregon State University Family Policy Program, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership. 2007).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

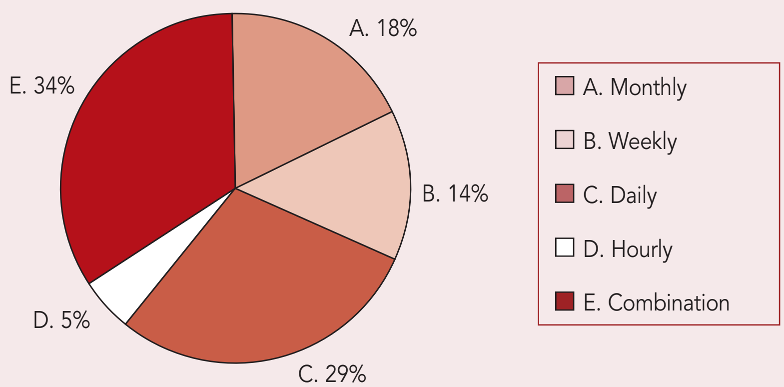
[7] Ibid.

Pricing Modes

Providers typically charge fees in one or more of four pricing modes (or units of service), including hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly. Regardless of the modes providers use in their pricing, the state sets its subsidy rates in a single or limited number of modes (see Chart 1).

Chart 1

Units of Service States and Territories Use to Pay Providers [8]



Unit of Service	*States and Territories*
Monthly	DE, HI, ID, MD, NC, NM, UT, CN, MI, PR, VI
Weekly	AL, AS, CT, FL, MS, RI, SC, TN
Daily	AR, AZ, CO, DC, IA, IL, KY, LA, MA, MO, NV, OK, PA, TX, VT, WA
Hourly	KS, MI, SD
Combination	AK, CA, GA, GU, IN, ME, MN, MT, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OR, VA, WI, WV, WY

[8] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Child Care Development Fund: Report of State and Territory Plans FY 2006-2007*. (Washington, D.C., 2006).

Type of Setting

States also differentiate rates according to the type of child care setting in which the child receives care, though they vary in the settings they consider. These categories often include:

- center-based care;
- family care;
- group home care;
- in-home care;
- family, friends and neighbor care;
- protective services care;
- school-age center-based care;
- school-age enrichment activities;
- special needs care; and
- summer camps.

The differentiation of rates by setting also is influenced by information received from the Market Rate Surveys. According to the surveys, center care, for instance, is usually more expensive than group home care or family care, although there are some exceptions to that trend. In addition to type of setting, many states also vary rates by local geographic areas, such as counties or regions.

Accounting for School-Age Care

States have implemented a wide range of systems for establishing and categorizing reimbursement rates for school-age care. Some states draw no distinction between rates for early and school-age care, while others have developed rates that reflect the variations in care required by school-age children.

Separate Rates for School-Age Care

A number of states include school-age care as a separate category when determining subsidy rates. As of 2006, 40 states and territories report setting separate school-age rates for center-based care in the largest urban areas within the state.[9] These rates reflect states' Market Rate Surveys, which indicate that most providers distinguish between care for infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and school-age children in their pricing structures. Because school-age children usually require less care and supervision than infants and toddlers, they can be in larger groups with fewer adults. Most school-age children also need primarily part-time

[9] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Child Care Development Fund: Report of State and Territory Plans FY 2006-2007*. (Washington, D.C., 2006).

care during the school year. Given these differences, the price of school-age care is usually lower than the price of care for younger children, and several states have adjusted their subsidy rates accordingly.

Most states also differentiate their rates by type of child care setting. For example,

- Twenty states report establishing separate rates that specifically apply to centers that serve school-age children exclusively.[10]
- Two states report establishing separate rates for school-age enrichment activities.[11]
- Two state interviewees also report separate rates for summer camps.[12]

Forty-six states report setting separate rates for family child care homes, and thirty-three states reported setting rates for family, friend, and neighbor care, however, no distinction is made within these settings specifically for school-age children.[13]

Separate Rates for Full-Time or Part-Time Care

In addition to setting separate rates by age group and care setting, a number of states have chosen to differentiate their subsidy rates by whether the child receives full or part-time care. School-age children primarily need part-time care during the school year, but they also need full-time care at various times throughout the year. Many states address this situation by offering separate rates for part-time care. As of 2006, nearly two-thirds of states and territories make a distinction between full-time and part-time care. Sixteen states made no such distinction.[14]

The parameters of what constitutes part-time care vary by state. In some states, part-time care is defined by hours of service provided to a child each day. Other states measure care on a weekly basis. **Alabama**, for example, provides part-time rates for care needed less than 25 hours per week. Care provided for 25 hours or more per week is reimbursed at a full-time rate. **Texas** pays part-time subsidies for the provision of care for less than six hours per day, while full-time subsidies are paid for more than six hours of care per day.

Because the price of care varies widely across the U.S., the rate reimbursed for part-time care differs considerably by state. According to State Child Care Administrators interviewed for this paper, these rates are largely determined by the results of their Market Rate Survey. The random sampling of states in the table below illustrates the diversity of state definitions for full-time and part-time care used to establish child care reimbursement rates.[15]

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[10] Weber, R., Grobe, D., Davis, E., Kreader, J., Pratt, C. *Practices and Policies: Market Rate Surveys in States, Territories, and Tribes.* (Corvallis, OR. Oregon State University Family Policy Program, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership. 2007).

[11] Ibid.

[12] Data collected from phone interviews and email correspondences with State Child Care Administrators.

[13] Weber, R., Grobe, D., Davis, E., Kreader, J., Pratt, C. *Practices and Policies: Market Rate Surveys in States, Territories, and Tribes.* (Corvallis, OR. Oregon State University Family Policy Program, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership. 2007).

[14] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Child Care Development Fund: Report of State and Territory Plans FY 2006-2007*. (Washington, D.C., 2006).

[15] National Child Care Information Center. *State Child Care Assistance Policies: Definitions of Full- and Part-Time Child Care* (2007). Child Care Bureau (Fairfax, VA, 2007).

Sample Definitions of Full-Time and Part-Time Care

State	Definition
Indiana	■ Full-time care: More than 15 hours per week ■ Part-time care: Less than 15 hours per week ■ During summer months, full-time care is classified as 25 hours of care per week or more
Missouri	■ Full-time care (full day): 5 to 10 hours per day ■ Part-time care (part day): 30 minutes to 3 hours per day ■ Part-time care (half day): 3 to 5 hours per day
Montana	■ Full-time care: 6 to 10 hours per day ■ Part-time care: Less than 6 hours per day
New Mexico	■ Full-time care: 30 hours or more per week ■ Part-time care (1): 20-29 hours per week ■ Part-time care (2): 6-19 hours per week ■ Part-time care (3): 5 hours or less per week
Wyoming	■ Full-time care: 5 hours or more per day ■ Part-time care: Less than 5 hours

The Option of Hourly Rates

The need to differentiate between full-time and part-time care is alleviated in some states by their choice of pricing mode. States that set their subsidies using an hourly rate have less need to make special provisions for school-age children who transition between full-time and part-time care. Chart 1, however, denotes that only three states actually utilize this strategy. Some states have indicated that hourly pricing can potentially lead to payment confusion when hours of care fluctuate drastically, and can provide less stability in subsidy payment schedules for both administrators and providers.[16]

[16] Data collected from phone interviews and email correspondences with 17 State Child Care Administrators.

Providers in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania Can Opt for a Blended Rate

States have pursued a number of strategies to ease the transition – for families and providers – between full-time and part-time care. **Massachusetts** and **Pennsylvania**, for example, both offer blended rates to providers who offer both full-time and part-time care to school-age children. In **Pennsylvania**, the blended rate combines subsidies for part-time and full-time care during the school year. During the summer, the rate changes to a full-time subsidy for care until school begins again in the fall.

Providers in both states can choose to alternate between full-time and part-time subsidy rates depending on the care needed for each child, or they can choose to receive the blended rate, which averages the full-time and part-time care rates, over the course of the year, using a special formula. An advantage of the blended option for providers is that they do not have to contend with rate fluctuations throughout the year. This approach maintains a consistent rate schedule for the child so the provider can anticipate the amount of the monthly payment.

Most states that differentiate rates for school-age children recognize the potential challenges that can occur for providers and parents with the provision of both full-time and part-time care during the school year. To help alleviate confusion, many states encourage families to make arrangements for the entire term of subsidy eligibility when they first complete the initial subsidy application and certification process. By making provisions for the school year, holidays, and breaks in advance, administrators can then plan to provide appropriate subsidy rates, and both families and providers can be prepared to handle the necessary transitions between full-time and part-time care with few complications.

Determining Family Co-payments

Families that receive subsidies for child care are required to contribute a portion of the cost of care, or co-payment. Under the provisions of CCDF, states must create a sliding fee scale that determines a family's co-payment based on income and family size. The state may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level.

Variations in Co-payments for School-Age Care

Although care for school-age children usually costs less than care for younger children, because of reduced staffing needs and fewer hours of service during the school year, few states consider the differences between early care and school-age care when establishing the family's contribution. Many states reason that because co-payments are based on the family's income and size, no adjustment is necessary. **Alabama**, **Massachusetts**, **Pennsylvania**, and **Wisconsin**, however, are examples of states that make allowances for the reduced cost of care for school-age children.

- In **Alabama** and **Pennsylvania**, co-payments for part-time school-age care are cut in half for families that have only one child who is enrolled in school and who receives a total of fewer than five hours before-and after-school care each day.
- **Massachusetts** charges a reduced co-payment if the family has multiple children in child care. If the eldest child is of school-age, families must pay only 60 percent of the regular co-payment. Co-payment for the second child is half of the regular fee, and for the third child, families pay only a quarter of the regular contribution.
- In **Wisconsin**, the child care agency waives any family co-payment during short-term or unplanned school closings for spring break, teacher work days, snow days, etc. If the school-age child receives less than 20 hours of care per week, a part-time co-payment is calculated.

Facilitating Transitions between Full-Time and Part-Time Care for School-Age Children

Navigating the transition between full-time and part-time care for school-age children can be challenging for families, providers, and state administrators, due to periodic rate adjustments, changes in providers, and the need to facilitate communication between all parties. To aid in this process, states are implementing innovative strategies aimed at increasing communication between all parties or providing families with flexible options for school-age care.

Increasing Communication by Managing and Organizing Information

These strategies help to facilitate communication between administrators, providers, and families and streamline information to ease the application and certification process for all involved. The state practices noted below help administrators to account for school breaks and holidays in the initial application process, thus eliminating any confusion or miscommunication between parties as the year progresses.

Comprehensive Child Care Certificate Systems. A number of states have implemented comprehensive certificate systems that help to increase communication and eliminate confusion for providers and families as children transition between full-time and part-time care. For example, **Georgia's** automated system issues certificates that authorize reimbursement to providers for families. Certificates list the type of care, the reimbursement rate, and the required co-payment. A certificate is needed for each type of care and each provider. Variable Schedule Certificates are available for school-age children who will use the same provider for multiple types of care (i.e., during the school year and during school breaks). The Variable Schedule Certificate lists each type of care that the provider will supply, eliminating the need for multiple certificates. The different rates for the different types of care are all factored into the certificate. Both the provider and the family receive a copy of the certificate, so both parties are aware of the cost of care, the state reimbursement, and the family's financial responsibility. If the family chooses a different provider for summer or school breaks, then it will receive an additional certificate for the secondary provider.

Vermont also has implemented a certificate system that provides special vouchers for school-age summer care. Once the eligibility of the family has been determined and the need for full-time summer care has been established during the initial application process, the child care subsidy specialist in the community agency creates a certificate for the summer months that is valid from June through August for the provision of full-time care. With this certificate already in hand, families and providers then experience a more seamless transition between the school year and the summer months.

Child Care Management Systems. Developing a Child Care Information System that collects and organizes school scheduling information can streamline the transition process for families and providers. **Alabama**, for example, has developed a system that imports school calendars, including the dates of scheduled school breaks and holidays, for all schools and districts in the state. During the initial or recertification interview, families simply provide the child's school district information, and the calendar specific to that district is accessed by the system for that child. Children authorized for part-time care during the school year and full-time care during school breaks and holidays will then have the updates to their child care arrangements performed by the system without additional documentation or interview requirements for parents. The child care certificate (voucher) received by the parent and all communications sent to the provider notify both of the authorization for full-time rates during breaks. For summer breaks, an additional notice is sent to the parent and provider to ensure that they are aware of any resulting change to the co-payment and/or subsidy rate.

Contracts. Some states find it useful to award contracts to out-of-school time providers to serve a certain number of eligible children (or fill a predetermined number of "slots") for a specified time period. A contract can provide a stable, predictable source of income for providers. Stability for providers can translate into stability for families and children, and help to ensure that access to care is not disrupted. Contracts can be especially beneficial for school-age care providers, because the arrangement can alleviate uncertainty about attendance and income that arises from the fluctuations in care schedules that occur because of school breaks and children's participation in other activities. Having the contracts helps to ensure that providers will have children to fill their agreed upon slots. At least seven states—**Hawaii**, **Illinois**, **Massachusetts**, **Nevada**, **New Jersey**, **South Carolina**, and **Vermont**—contract with programs providing child care before and after school.[17]

[17] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Making Smart Investments in Afterschool: A Policy Primer for State and Local Leaders*. Washington DC, 2006. Available at http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/policyprimer.pdf.

Targeted Communication. Some states take measures to ensure that there is clear communication between the child care administrator, provider, and parent about expected child care needs. State administrators in **Massachusetts** and **Washington** send a notice to parents both in the spring and fall of each year, reminding them to contact their local child care worker about any changes needed in their care as students transition between full-time and part-time care during fall and summer months.

Providing Flexible Options for Families

Increased flexibility and choice enable families to select the providers that best suit their needs and give providers the opportunity to plan accordingly for any adjustments in care. As with the state options aimed at increased communication, each of these arrangements are made during the family's initial application and certification process so that all parties are informed and able to prepare for the rest of the year.

School Bank Hours. Providing access to flexible child care hours can accommodate families' varying needs for school-age care throughout the year. **Wisconsin** offers a separate category of care reimbursement for its school-age children in the form of School Bank Hours. Each child is provided with 300 hours per year for care during teacher workdays, holidays, and other school closings. These hours are available to families who utilize part-time afterschool care during the school year as well as to those who do not.

Flexible Authorization. Some states give families considerable flexibility in selecting child care providers to meet their needs during the school year and summer months. **Louisiana** and **Minnesota**, for example, do not require additional authorization when care changes from part-time to full-time, as long as the care the child receives remains within the pre-arranged parameters of parental need (i.e., work or school schedule). Also, to account for families who do not need child care during the summer, **Pennsylvania** allows families receiving subsidies to suspend care and subsidy receipt for up to 90 days during the summer, if needed, and still have a subsidy slot reserved during the school year for part-time care without any breaks in service. This strategy also leaves subsidy resources available for families that only need care during the summer months.[18]

Back-up Providers. Some states also give families the option of selecting secondary providers when their primary care arrangements fail to meet their changing needs. Families in **Iowa** and **Nevada** can specify back-up providers in their subsidy application process for child care during school breaks or holidays. Allowing families to designate more than one provider encourages parents to plan for contingencies and ensures that the chosen providers are aware of their status and have completed all necessary requirements to receive payment.[19]

[18] Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Making Smart Investments in Afterschool: A Policy Primer for State and Local Leaders.* Washington DC, 2006. Available at http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/policyprimer.pdf.

[19] Ibid.

Issues to Consider

- The administration of child care for school-age children can pose unique challenges because of the frequent shifts between full-time and part-time care.
- In many states, reduced subsidy rates for part-time school-age care reflect the reduced hours and intensity of care that school-age children receive in comparison with care provided to infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers.
- Adjusting family co-payments for part-time care can increase access to care for families who would otherwise be unable to take advantage of subsidies.
- Using hourly subsidy rates eliminates many of the administrative issues associated with frequent transitions between full-time and part-time care, but states and providers must still deal with fluctuations in authorized hours.
- Making arrangements for both the school year and summer during the initial application process enables families, providers and state child care administrators to plan accordingly.
- Establishing clear and organized systems of communication and information management can help to ease transitions between full-time and part-time care for families, providers, and subsidy administrators.
- Policies and practices that provide increased choice and flexibility speak to the needs of families with school-age children.

Conclusion

The provision of child care for school-age children is an important priority for state child care administrators, child care providers, and families. With the large number of school-age children currently being served by child care subsidies, it is important for state administrators to examine ways to address the need for both full-time and part-time school-age care throughout the year. The practices highlighted in this brief can help to inform policy choices that support increased access to and streamlined provision of child care services for school-age children.

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Key Resources

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