



Significant Changes to the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program limit Access for Children and Harm Families

On July 1, 2015, Governor Rauner made harmful changes to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) that will hurt thousands of families and young children! **These changes are not connected to the state budget** and are in effect until further notice.

What are these changes?

The biggest change to the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is that **approximately 90% of new applicants who otherwise meet the required income threshold and work requirement will be denied child care services through CCAP**. Only families that fall within one of four priority populations may receive Child Care Assistance: families on TANF, children with special needs, families earning below 50% of the federal poverty level, or teen parents.

Parents and Providers will be devastated under these new rules and the **service delivery system we have invested in to provide care to help families work and attend school while also helping children learn will begin to unravel**; and it is *already* starting to happen:

- A mother in the Quad Cities with two young children earns \$8.25 an hour is **denied**.
- A mother from East St. Louis, excited about a new job, needing child care for her 3 year old – **denied**.
- A mother in Joliet working and attending school part time – **denied**.
- A family in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago; a mother and father both working part time and finishing school who need child care for their 2 children– **denied**.
- A newly constructed child care program serving high need children near Midway airport will never be able to fill their classrooms.

Impact on Children and Families:

Since July 1st, an estimated 2,000 cases have already been denied and that number will continue to grow. On average the state receives 5,000 new applications for child care each month, and an average of 3,000 children leave the child care assistance system.

Child Care is often the only way working families can access the state's Preschool for All and Head Start programs: PFA provides 2.5 hours per day of high quality school-readiness but often doesn't meet the needs of working families. While the state's education budget has been signed, many families will be unable to participate in preschool because of the changes to child care.



Head Start also relies on Child Care to provide a full-day, full-year program for low-income, high risk children. If families cannot access child care, they cannot participate in this high quality federally funded early learning program.

Approximately 25% of children in child care will leave in August in order to begin kindergarten. Those vacancies cannot be filled with new families because of the shutdown in CCAP, and early childhood programs will face a high risk of closing if vacancies persist.

The other changes to the CCAP will also negatively impact families' ability to access care:

- **An increase in parent co-payments:** all families participating in the CCAP pay a portion of the cost of care. This change will increase their share anywhere from \$1-\$50.
- **Criminal background check for relative caregivers:** relative caregivers often provide care for related children when the parents work odd-hours/overnight shifts and other child care arrangements do not operate to meet these 'non-traditional' schedules.
- **Mandatory compliance between CCAP and Child Support:** in other states, this policy change resulted in survivors of domestic abuse to lose CCAP because of their unwillingness to put themselves and their children in danger by filing a child support claim. New York State rescinded this policy in 2009 based on the negative impact on children in care.

Current Status of Implementation

These changes do not require legislative action and an Emergency Rule was filed by the IDHS on June 30th for a July 1st implementation.

Illinois Action for Children will continue to track the impact of these changes and work to reverse them.

Too many providers and parents either don't know about or are confused by the programmatic changes and the connection to the budget impasse. Please share this information with your constituents and let us know how, and if, we can be helpful to you or to the families that live and work in your districts.

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