



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

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Delaware Health and Social Services

The Division of Social Services

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Child Care and Development Fund State Plan

Delaware Health and Social Services' Response to Public Comments

On January 21 The Division of Social Services held a public hearing to give the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this plan. The public was invited to submit written comments until the close of business on February 22, 2016. The Division received many comments from various provider groups, advisory councils and private citizens. The state plan was edited where applicable to address the following recurring themes.

1. Establishment of standards and monitoring process to ensure the health and safety of children in exempt facilities who serve children receiving CCDF assistance.

The Division of Social Services has identified a group of license exempt providers of early child care who serve children receiving Purchase of Care assistance. These providers will be required to become licensed under the Office of Child Care Licensing. The Division, in collaboration with the Office of Child Care Licensing has established a process through which these providers will become licensed and have agreed to support them throughout the licensing process.

2. Establishment of a cross sector advisory committee to work with the Child Care and Development Fund State Administrator to ensure a coherent vision, continue the work of Delaware's state plan and be proactive in preparing for the 2018 state plan.

It is a federal requirement that collaboration regarding the CCDF plan is a part of its development. The Division organized and facilitated monthly meetings that included the Department of Education, University of Delaware, the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, and Child Care Aware to ensure a collaborative effort in the development of the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan. The state agrees that partnering with a cross sector of stakeholders is the most effective way of developing and following through with the state's child care priorities and looks forward to this

continued collaboration. The Department of Health and Social Services, has already reached out to agency leadership and our first Early Learning Leadership meeting took place in May.

3. Review of current policies and procedures regarding the federally mandated 12 month eligibility period.

Although it is now a federal requirement, The Division of Social Services has been using a 12 month eligibility/redetermination period since 2010. If services are terminated prior to that only a case by case review can determine the reason; however the Division is currently implementing several initiatives to address systemic concerns that have been brought to our attention.

1. DSS now requires every office in the State of Delaware to maintain a log to identify and track all applications being submitted to the Division at each local office. This includes walk-in clients completing an application, paper applications, ASSIST (Online) applications, etc. This log allows upper management to regularly review and monitor due dates to ensure that client needs are met in a timely manner and that the Division is in compliance with Federal guidelines and Division policy.
2. DSS has begun the process of developing and implementing a triage pilot to assist in moving clients through their experience and interaction with DSS in a more efficient and effective manner when visiting a local office.
3. DSS is now tracking calls coming in to monitor the call volume, the wait times, and the number of calls connected and dropped to ensure that we are assisting all clients in any manner that they choose.
4. The online application process (via ASSIST) did experience barriers with processing. This issue was identified and resolved and should not be an issue moving forward.

Some other measures taken include a Division wide redistribution of policy 11004.11 Review and Redetermination which outlines the 12 month authorization period. The Policy Unit also plans to attend team meetings to review and discuss all DSS policies on a quarterly basis. And finally, the Division is currently developing a process that workers will use to “de-link” child care services from other programs which may sanction a client and close child care for failure to return the periodic report.

The Division would like to thank everyone who took the time to recognize the importance of Delaware’s Early Care and Education agenda by attending the Public Hearing. We also thank you for your support and look forward to continued collaboration as we move forward with implementation of the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan.