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Child Care Policy, Procedures and Billing Manual



To All Onondaga County Child Care Providers:

This manual has been compiled to summarize all of the information you may need as a provider of child care in one document. If changes occur to policies, procedures or billing processes, we will update this online manual as soon as possible.

If you have questions about information contained in this manual, the following is a list of current unit supervisors and contacts with their phone numbers. If you have specific case-related questions, please contact the child care worker assigned to the case before contacting the supervisor of that area.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ⇒ Financial Operations -Billing
4 th Floor, Civic Center
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, NY 13202 | <i>Theresa Dimovski</i>
435-2947
Fax 435-3590 |
| ⇒ Day Care Services Unit (DCS)
5 th Floor, Civic Center
421 Montgomery St
Syracuse, NY 13202 | <i>Ann Ricciardiello</i>
435-5683
Fax 435-5682 |
| ⇒ <u>JOBSplus!</u>
677 South Salina Street
Syracuse, NY 13202 | <i>Julius Hefti</i>
442-3242
Fax 442-3254 |
| ⇒ Protective/Preventive Cases
5 th Floor, Civic Center
421 Montgomery St
Syracuse, NY 13202 | <i>Bill Glaski</i>
435-2163
Fax 435-2465 |

If you are unable to resolve your concerns by talking to the child care workers or their supervisors, please contact Cecelia Ciocca –Income Maintenance Supervisor II- at 435-2700 ext. 7513 or Ava Kerznowski -Assistant Commissioner at 435-2700 ext. 7550 (authorization issues or general child care issues) or Theresa Dimovski- Administrative Supervisor – Financial Operations at 435-2947 (billing/payment issues). We are hopeful that this document will clarify our policies and procedures, and make the authorization and payment process smoother for you as child care providers.

As a vendor for Onondaga County, you are responsible for knowing and complying with the rules, policies and procedures in this Manual. The County reserves the right to inspect, audit and monitor provider operations for compliance.

We appreciate the quality care you provide to our clients. Your efforts, collectively and individually, have made it possible for parents to realize their dreams in financially supporting their children and helping children remain with their families.

Sincerely,

Sarah G. Merrick
Commissioner

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ONONDAGA COUNTY CHILD CARE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND BILLING MANUAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION



- This document constitutes the operating policies and procedures for all child care providers who provide child care and receive payment for child care services through the Onondaga County Department of Social Services-Economic Security (OCDSS-ES).
- OCDSS-ES will have the most current *Child Care Policies, Procedures and Billing Manual* available on OCDSS-ES website at <http://www.ongov.net/dss/dayCare.html>

2.0 TYPES OF PROVIDERS WHO PROVIDE CHILD CARE



The following are the types of child care providers covered by this manual and a list of child care resources.

Note: for information or guidance on licensing or registration issues, contact:

NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Syracuse Regional Office
The Atrium
100 S. Salina Street, Suite 350
Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 423-1202

2.1 FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS/REGISTERED PROVIDERS

Family Day Care Providers care for up to six children at a time in a residence. They may add one to two school-age children with approval of their Registrar (maximum allowable number includes the provider's own children who have not yet entered kindergarten). There must be at least one provider present for every two children under two years of age. Capacity must be approved by the provider's Registrar. Registered providers may provide overnight care as long as they are in compliance with New York State Regulations 417.3(c), 417.7(a), and 417.8(a). The local Registrar, Child Care Solutions, works under the auspices of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

2.2 GROUP FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS

Group Family Day Care Providers care for up to twelve children at a time in a residence and may add up to four school-age children with approval of their Licensor (maximum allowable number includes the provider's own children who have not yet entered kindergarten). A provider must use an assistant when more than eight children are present and there must be at least one provider present for every two children under two years of age. Capacity must be approved by the provider's Licensor. Licensed providers may provide overnight care as long as they are in compliance with New York State Regulations 416.3(c), 416.7(a), and 416.8(a). They are licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

2.3 DAY CARE CENTERS

Day Care Centers are licensed facilities that provide care for more than six children. They are licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

2.4 SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

School-age child care programs are in registered facilities and provide care for more than six children. They, generally, serve school-age children from kindergarten through age 12 and care for children during non-school hours. They also may provide care during school vacation periods and holidays. The local Registrar, Child Care Solutions, works under the auspices of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

Note: OCDSS-ES does not pay for universal pre-kindergarten or Head Start programs.

2.5 LEGALLY EXEMPT (INFORMAL) CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

A. Legally Exempt Family Child Care

These providers are legally exempt from day care licensing or registration requirements but must meet minimum state and county health and safety standards. Legally exempt providers care for one or two unrelated children outside of the child's home or for up to 8 related children. They must be at least 18 years of age, or if less than 18 meet the requirement for the employment of minors. They may provide care for more than two children if it is three hours a day or less. They may be a relative of the child in care, except when they are legally responsible or a caretaker relative of the child(ren). Please note that while other individuals may have been listed in your application as being present at your child care location, you are the person authorized to care for the subsidized child(ren). You, as the authorized provider, must be present and supervising at all times. Employees, volunteers and household members CANNOT substitute for you in caring for the child(ren) and cannot be left alone with the child(ren). Any bill submitted for time during which the authorized provider is not present will be subject to administrative and health/safety review.

To receive subsidy payments these providers must be enrolled AND AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE DAY CARE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS. Child Care Solutions is the enrolling agency for providers in Onondaga County. They are located at 6724 Thompson Road, Syracuse, NY 13211. They can be reached at: telephone 446-1220, FAX 446-2010 or e-mail [CCS@ childcaresolutionscny.org](mailto:CCS@childcaresolutionscny.org).

B. Legally Exempt Group Child Care

Legally-exempt group child care refers to care provided by those center-based programs, that are not required to be licensed by or registered with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services but which meet all applicable State or local requirements for such child care programs.

Caregivers of legally-exempt group child care include, but are not limited to:

1. Pre-kindergarten and nursery school programs for children three years of age or older, and programs for school-age children conducted during non-school hours, operated by public school districts or by private schools or academies which provide elementary or secondary education or both in accordance with the compulsory education requirements of the NYS Education Law, provided that such pre-kindergarten, nursery school or school-age programs are located on the premises or campus where the elementary or secondary education is provided;
2. nursery schools and programs for pre-school age children operated by non-profit agencies or organizations or private proprietary agencies which provide services for three or less hours per day;
3. summer day camps operated by non-profit agencies or organizations or private proprietary agencies in accordance with Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code;
4. day care centers, family day care homes and other child care programs located on federal property which are operated in compliance with the applicable federal laws and regulations for such child care programs;
5. day care centers, family day care homes and other child care programs located on tribal property which are operated in compliance with the applicable tribal laws and regulations for such child care programs; and,
6. School-age programs caring for six or fewer children.

To receive subsidy payments these providers must be enrolled AND AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE DAY CARE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS. Child Care Solutions is the enrolling agency for providers in Onondaga County. They are located at 6724 Thompson Road, Syracuse, NY 13211. They can be reached at: telephone 446-1220, FAX 446-2010 or e-mail CCS@childcaresolutionscny.org.

3.0 CHILD CARE UNITS



There are four units through which a family might be eligible for child care assistance from Onondaga County:

3.1 DAY CARE SERVICES UNIT (DCS)

The Day Care Services Unit includes: (1) Transitional Child Care (TCC) - for families whose Family Assistance case has closed within the last year due to excess income, received Family Assistance three out of the last six months prior to case closing, and whose household income is under 200% of the State poverty level; (2) Low Income Day Care - for families earning under 200% of the State poverty level and not eligible under TCC; (3) Teenage Parent - for

parents under the age of 19 and in high school; and (4) Temporary Incapacity - for families where there is medical verification that child care is needed and whose household income is under 200% of the federal poverty level. Furthermore the parent/guardian must have been employed and is expected to return to employment within 30 days.

3.2 JOBSPLUS!

JOBSplus! is Onondaga County's Temporary Assistance's employment program which is a partnership between Onondaga Community College and the Onondaga County Department of Social Services-Economic Security. Anyone who is receiving Temporary Assistance and who is deemed employable is mandated to participate with the JOBSplus! program.

Most jobseekers begin working with JOBSplus! immediately when they apply for Temporary Assistance. As applicants, if employment is in place or is found, JOBSplus! will work with clients to meet their day care needs within the parameters allowed by regulation. From the time of application for Temporary Assistance, JOBSplus! will provide child care for any activities required by JOBSplus! until full-time employment is obtained. At that point, child care responsibility is usually transitioned to the Day Care Services Unit.

Main Office:

- Rosamond Gifford Learn to Work Center,
677 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202
Hours: M – F, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Phone: 442-3242 Fax: 442-3254

Other JOBSplus! Offices:

- Civic Center: TA/FS Intake/Application Unit, 2nd Floor, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202
Phone: 435-2700 Fax: 435-3599

Who to Call:

Any problem related to child care issues may be addressed to the individual participant's Child Care Assistance Technical Assistant. If you cannot resolve your issue with their help contact the Supportive Services Team Leader, Julius Hefti (located at the main office at 442-3242 ext. 1117).

3.3 PROTECTIVE/PREVENTIVE (P/P)

These cases involve families serviced by the Department of Children and Family Services - Child Protective or Preventive programs, whose children are not in foster care and where the child care is part of their "approved child welfare plan." **DAY CARE SERVICES ARE AUTHORIZED BY THIS DEPARTMENT.** This Department will ask that Child Care Form-Title XX Preventive/Protective Cases Only be completed. For these cases, Parent Fees are not applicable.

3.4 FOSTER CARE DAY CARE

Child care for children who have been placed in foster homes will be paid up to the market rate currently in effect. The provider will be paid, in most cases, by the County. Authorization must come from Children's Division.

4.0 AUTHORIZATION PROCESS



4.1 AUTHORIZATION NOTICE (“ACCEPTANCE LETTER”)

- A. **Providers who take children prior to receiving written authorization (except for emergency Protective or Preventive cases as outlined in D below) are not guaranteed payment by the County. The provider must consider a child a private pay client until they receive an authorization from the County.**
- B. An authorization is an agreement that the County will pay the client's child care costs up to the appropriate allowance (less parent fees/family share, if applicable) to a specific provider within the specified periods of authorization. The agreement is between the County and the client only. The County will only pay the specific provider for the days the child(ren) is(are) actually in attendance. The County will not pay two different providers for the same time period.
- C. If a parent uses a child care program above and beyond the authorized days and times, the parent is responsible for payment. The County will pay only for hours the client was working or in assigned activities and will not pay more than the authorized hours that will include travel time. If a provider is aware that the care is being given for reasons not stated, such as shopping, other appointments, etc., the case manager should be contacted.
- D. Providers will be notified in writing when a client is authorized to receive child care assistance. No representative for either the County or the provider should at any time issue or accept an authorization that is not in writing, except in the case of an emergency regarding a Protective, Preventive or Foster Care client. In this case, the Preventive/Protective Day Care Unit and Foster Care Day Care Unit only can verbally authorize care and written authorization will follow as soon as possible.
- E. If timelines are pressing because of a parent's work or school schedule, the provider can ask the Day Care Unit or JOBSplus! worker to fax the authorization.
- F. Dates on the authorization form include the first and last days of service that is authorized.
- G. A copy of any corrections that are made to the original authorization (reduction in hours, or increase in parent fee, for example) will be sent to the provider prior to the date that the change is to take effect.

H. Authorizations may be written as follows:

- A total number of hours for which care is needed for specific days of the week.
- If days of care are regular it will be noted on the authorization (e.g., M-F or M, W, F).
- If a client works a rotating shift it will be noted on the authorization.
- School-aged children needing care on school holidays will be authorized for a designated number of hours per day for school holidays.
- If child care is to be authorized to a provider for a 6th day in a week, it will be separately notated on the authorization letter to ensure correct payment.

4.2 EXTENDING CHILD CARE AUTHORIZATIONS

If the County chooses to extend child care services beyond the date indicated on the initial authorization letter, an additional authorization letter indicating a new start and end date will be sent. If a new authorization letter extending care is not received by the provider prior to the end of the original authorization letter, the provider should assume the parent is no longer eligible for child care services.

5.0 DISCONTINUANCE/DENIAL NOTICES

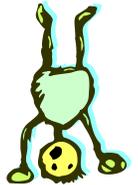


NOTE: This section does not apply to transfers to another child care provider - see Section 19 for information on “Transfers between Providers.”

- A. Discontinuance notices will be sent to providers as a mechanism to keep providers informed of child care eligibility status, and, while not required by regulation, are important to advise day care providers of changes in eligibility for which they may bill.
- B. Providers will be mailed a notice of discontinuance prior to any change in child care eligibility status that affects the day care payment. Generally this will be ten days before the discontinuance, however **there is no guarantee**. Notices to providers will be mailed at the same time they are mailed to clients. **By regulation a client is normally entitled to ten days notice, unless she or he waives his or her right. However only she or he may insist on it; a provider does not have that option.**
- C. A discontinuance notice is only necessary if authorized day care is reduced from the time period reflected in the most recent authorization letter.
 - When a client receives a letter of discontinuance, the provider will receive notification that the client is being discontinued. **No letters of discontinuance will be backdated.** They will reflect changes to authorization on or after the date of the letter unless there has been specific agreement between the provider and the County that the effective date of the change is prior to the date the letter is sent. In this case the date the agreement was made and the names of the people who agreed will be noted on the letter.

- Day Care Services, Protective/Preventive, or Foster Care will send a “disregard discontinuance” notice if the client corrects the problem that caused them to receive discontinuance notice. *JOBSplus!* And Foster Care Child Care will send a new authorization notice if care is to be continued.
- D. Providers will not be paid beyond the date noted on the discontinuance notice.
- E. Participants may be discontinued from child care assistance if it is determined that funding limitations exist. Priority for continuing assistance will be outlined in the County’s Consolidated Services Plan. Available on the County website at <http://www.ongov.net/dss/dayCare.html>
- F. Ten days’ notice cannot be guaranteed when a child is placed in foster care. Also, no payment can be made from the time the child is placed in foster care.
- G. Providers will be mailed a notice of denial when an application for Day Care Services has not been approved.

6.0 BILLING



6.1 BILLING/PAYMENT PROCESS

- A. All child care providers are expected to submit their billings for services after the last business day of the month.
- B. The County is committed to sending out provider payments for services in a timely manner. In most instances, payments will be made by the 15th business day of the month providing bills are received from the provider.
- C. The Financial Operations Department will not accept any calls regarding current payments until after the 10th business day of a month. After the 10th business day, a provider with questions may call the Financial Operations Department between 11:00 am - 12:00 pm and 2:00 - 4:00 pm at 435-2947.
- D. **Important: Providers may only bill for days a client worked or was in an assigned activity. If you believe a client is not utilizing child care for the purpose authorized (e.g., not working, not participating in employment activities or service activities) contact the assigned worker.**

6.2 OBTAINING BILLING FORMS

Billing forms may be obtained at:

1. **Financial Operations Division** 4th floor Civic Center 421 Montgomery St Syracuse, NY 13202
2. **Day Care Services Unit** 5th floor Civic Center 421 Montgomery St. Syracuse, NY 13202
3. ***JOBSplus!*** 677 S Salina St Syracuse, NY 13202

4. **Child Care Solutions** 6724 Thompson Rd Syracuse, NY 13211

6.3 COMPLETING THE BILLING FORMS

- A. **DO NOT** submit a billing form if you do not have an authorization for a child.
- B. To be paid you must submit a *Request for Payment Form*. No later than the end of the next calendar quarter from the last date of service reflected on the bill.
- C. All day care billing forms should be sent to:

Financial Operations-Accounting
4th Floor, Civic Center
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, New York 13202

or deposited in the drop box located near the Civic Center Madison St. entrance.

- D. Keep a record of your billing forms and a record of the expected amount owed to you by the Onondaga County Department of Social Services-Economic Security.
- E. *Request for Payment Forms* should be completed as follows:
 - 1. Print your name, address, and phone number.
 - 2. Print vendor number (found in the upper right hand corner of the remittance statement).
 - 3. Print month and year of service billed (submit only one set of billings per month).
 - 4. Case information: use only one line per child, print case number (if known), case name, child's name and age. All children being provided day care can be listed on one form. Individual forms for each child/family are not necessary. Foster Care children will be billed on the same form as all other children.
 - 5. Licensed/registered providers fill in the actual number of hours of service provided by listing the actual times the child arrived and left care each day. Legally exempt/informals must enter start and end times.
 - 6. If a child is authorized for care before and after school plus school holidays and is in attendance for a full day that is not a school holiday the provider must include an explanation as to why the child is in care and not in school (e.g., sick).
 - 7. Compute billing charges. (OCDSS-ES Financial Operations will complete the OCDSS-ES only section; however, you may complete the provider section for your own benefit.)
 - Using appropriate weekly, daily, part-day, or hourly rates, calculate the total charge.

Note: When a month ends in mid-week, the daily rate is used for each day in the beginning of the week that falls in the month being paid (if the hours total 30 or more the weekly rate would be used). The next month if in the remainder of the week the child ends up reaching 30 hours for the week then the weekly rate is applied. From the weekly amount, the amount already paid the previous month is subtracted out. A week is defined as starting on Monday and ending on Sunday.

If the hours that fall in the first month are 30 or greater, the weekly amount is paid. Any remaining days in the next month will be ignored since the provider has already received payment for that week.

- Deduct the parent fee.
 - Deduct any contribution from a non-custodial parent.
 - Final total is the Social Service Charge. (The expected amount from OCDSS-ES.)
8. (a) For licensed/registered providers: sign and date bill (unsigned bills will be returned for signature, thus delaying payment).
- (b) For legally exempt/informal providers the bill must be signed by the parent along with being signed and dated by the provider

Note: Do not submit your bill until all service for the month has been completed.

Note: Incomplete, unsigned, unreadable bills and bills that are submitted before all service for the month has been provided will be returned. Example: a bill submitted on 5/27 with an entry for 5/28 would be returned.

6.4 PARENT FEES/FAMILY SHARE

- A. It is the provider's responsibility to collect the parent fee/family share, and to notify the client if the parent fee/family share is late. The parent fee/family share is paid directly to the provider.
- B. The provider is responsible for maintaining a ledger of parent fees and family shares collected, showing date received and amount received for each child, as well as the method by which paid(i.e., cash or check with check number)
- C. Providers should send notice to the County if the parent fee/family share is late, and the County will either work with the client to adjust his or her budget and parent fee/family share if an error has been made, or send the client a discontinuance notice.
- D. The provider is responsible for notifying the County of any late parent fee/family share. In the event that the provider fails to notify the County of late parent fees/family shares, and the client wishes to transfer to another provider, the maximum the client will be required to pay prior to transferring to another provider will be the parent fee/family share owed, or \$250, whichever is less. Any remaining balance would be a private matter between the provider and the client.
- E. The parent fee/family share is deducted on a weekly basis (Monday – Sunday). The parent fee/family share is subtracted from the amount paid each week. If the parent fee/family share exceeds the payment for one child the remainder is applied to any siblings in care. No excess parent fee/family share is carried over to the next week. In split week situations any remaining parent fee/family share will be applied to any additional payments that fall in the next month.

6.5 NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT CONTRIBUTION

Family Court, or any court which has jurisdiction on child support issues, may order the non-custodial parent to pay toward the cost of child care. The child care provider will be informed of the non-custodial parent's contribution on the authorization letter.

6.6 PARTIAL PAYMENTS

The County will pay for all cases that are authorized on bills submitted by providers. If a bill contains a case(s) that initially does not have an authorization, Accounting will attempt to process further payment as quickly as possible once there is an authorization on the system for that case(s). It is anticipated that payments for cases whose authorizations have been corrected should be before the end of the month.

6.7 BILLING ERRORS AND OMISSIONS/RE-BILLING

Providers are responsible for carefully reviewing bills for accuracy before submitting them. However if a billing error is discovered, a provider may re-bill within 6 months of the original billing. However, if a billing error is discovered, a provider may request permission to submit an amended bill within 90 days of the date the original bill was submitted. The County reserves the right to deny the request to submit an amended bill and place the billing issue into administrative review as provided in 18NYCRR 415.4.

6.8 OVERPAYMENTS

In the event of an overpayment OCDSS-ES reserves the right to seek restitution from a provider regardless of whose error caused the overpayment.

6.9 BILLING DISPUTES/APPEAL PROCESS

In the event of nonpayment for services for a client of the provider, the following procedure shall be followed until the variance is settled.

1. The provider must first review his or her work in an effort to find any error that may have caused the nonpayment.
2. The provider must notify the client's caseworker for authorization issues.
3. The provider may appeal to the supervisor of the worker.
4. The provider may appeal in writing to the Division Director of the unit that is authorizing the child care or to Theresa Dimovski-Financial Operations if it is a payment calculation/accounting issue not an authorization issue. Contact information is listed in the cover letter to this manual.

As a final avenue of appeal, the provider may petition in writing to the Commissioner of Social Services, John H. Mulroy Civic Center, 12th Floor, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

6.10 REGISTRATION FEES/ACTIVITY FEES/OTHER FEES

- Registration fees will be paid only to Day Care Centers. The County may pay a registration fee if it is charged as a *one-time only* fee and then only once per center per child. Registration fees may only be charged to the County if they are also charged to private pay parents/caretakers.

- The County will not pay activities fees.



7.0 PROVIDER RECORDKEEPING

Licensed\Registered providers are required to maintain an attendance sheet. The attendance sheet must indicate the actual drop-off and pick-up times for each child and be signed by the person escorting to the site. Unless requested by the Financial Operations department, do not send these sheets with your billing forms. You are required to maintain these records for least 7 years from the date of service and have them available for review by OCDSS-ES. The provider is responsible for maintaining a ledger of parent fees and family shares collected, showing date received and amount received for each child, as well as the method by which paid(i.e., cash or check with check number).



8.0 FRAUD

8.1 FRAUD ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING PROVIDERS

- A. Cases will be referred to the OCDSS-ES Investigations/Fraud Division anytime there is a question regarding any suspected misuse of the program, misrepresentation of eligibility documentation, suspected fraudulent bills submitted by a child care provider, or a provider receiving benefits or payments he or she was not entitled to receive.
- B. Allegations of provider fraud will be investigated by the OCDSS-ES Investigations/Fraud Division. Failure to fully cooperate with the investigation may result in discontinuance from the child care program.
- C. Payments will continue to the provider until the OCDSS-ES Investigations/Fraud Division informs the Financial Operations Division to defer payments. The provider and/or the client will be notified that an administrative review is ongoing, subject to the provisions of 18 NYCRR 415.4.
- D. Upon preliminary review of possible child care provider fraud, the provider will be interviewed by a fraud investigator and program or accounting staff as necessary.
- E. Upon a finding of fraud or improper billing, the provider will be required to make full restitution to the County by means of a repayment agreement developed by either the Investigations/Fraud Division or the Financial Operations Division. If a provider is found to have committed a pattern of improper billing and/or fraudulent acts in billing after being afforded an administrative review, the provider may be disqualified from participating as a provider in the subsidized child care program for a period of 5 years, under 18 NYCRR 415.4. Failure to enter into the repayment agreement will result in discontinuance from the child care program until such time as a repayment agreement is established. Failure to make timely and complete payment as required by the Repayment

Agreement or restitution order before the end of (5) years following the date of the disqualification, will result in permanent disqualification from providing subsidized child care under this program.

8.2 FRAUD ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING CLIENTS

- A. Cases will be referred to the OCDSS-ES Investigations/Fraud Division anytime there is a question regarding any suspected misuse of the program, misrepresentation of documentation of eligibility, suspected fraudulent bills submitted by a client receiving benefits or payments she or he was not entitled to receive.
- B. If the Investigations/Fraud Division determines that a fraudulent act has occurred, the client’s case will be closed and the provider will receive a discontinuance notice. In some cases a client will enter into repayment agreements and his or her case will remain open. In other instances, the case may be referred to the District Attorney’s office.



9.0 RATES

- A. OCDSS-ES will not pay more than providers charge private pay clients. OCDSS-ES *cannot* pay more than the market rates established by New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). A provider may not charge OCDSS-ES more than she or he charges private pay clients. If a provider wishes to change the rate charged during the year she or he may contact the Financial Operations Division to request an updated “private pay” letter. OCDSS-ES reserves the right to make only one rate adjustment per year. Providers must have a private pay letter on file before they will receive a child care payment from OCDSS-ES.
- B. OCDSS-ES will pay providers by the type of provider and the age of the child.
- C. Change in age category - if a birthday occurs which will result in a change in rate for a child, the new rate will become effective the first day of the following billing period. When a child turns 13 years old, all child care will be terminated effective on his or her birthday, unless the child is receiving Preventive Day Care. Then on a case-by-case basis care may be continued until the end of the school year. Also child care may continue beyond a child’s 13th birthday if there is existing medical documentation that the child needs continuing care.
- D. The following rate definitions apply per NYS regulations:

Weekly	These rates are applied when child care services are provided for 30 or more hours over the course of five or fewer days in a single week.
Daily	This rate is applied when the child care services are provided for at least six but fewer than 12 hours per day.
Part Day	This rate is applied when the child care services are provided for at least three but fewer than six hours per day.
Hourly	This rate is applied when the child care services are provided for fewer than three hours per day.

- F. If a provider changes from one provider type to another (e.g., from Family Day Care to Group Family Day Care) it is the responsibility of the provider to notify Theresa Dimovski, Financial Operations Division (435-2947) of the change in provider type. The appropriate pay rate changes will then be made. The provider must submit a new private pay letter and copy of the new license. Any increase in rates will be effective for the billings of the month in which the all required documents are received and accepted by OCDSS-ES, e.g., if all documents are returned and accepted in January, January's billings received in February will be the first paid under the new rate.



10.0 ROTATING SHIFT



- A. Authorization letters for clients with rotating shift schedules will contain the maximum hours of care the client may need.
- B. Verification that child care is provided only during hours the client is working will be accomplished through the recertification process, random checking, and fraud investigations.

11.0 SEPARATE PROVIDER/CLIENT AGREEMENTS

Providers can enter into separate agreements with OCDSS-ES clients concerning issues such as notification of withdrawal, pick up times, lateness.

12.0 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS



Any provider who establishes and operates a scholarship program for private pay clients must do all of the following:

- Collect donations or conduct fundraisers for the scholarship program that have been specifically earmarked for the scholarship program;
- Designate a fund or account separate from his or her operating account for scholarship funds;
- Develop an application process for the funds that does not discriminate against OCDSS-ES clients;
- Establish clear eligibility requirements; and

- Provide OCDSS-ES with above information.

13.0 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- A. OCDSS-ES is authorized to pay a higher rate for children with special needs. The provider must complete a special needs application.
- B. The additional funding is available:
- For a child who meets the criteria for special needs (refer to application for special needs funding) and meets all other eligibility criteria for child care funding;
 - When a completed application with all appropriate verification is submitted and approved;
 - Only for the period of approval; and
 - Only for incurred additional costs as the result of caring for such children.
- C. A new application re-verifying all eligibility criteria must then be submitted prior to the end of the approval period if ongoing funding is being sought.
- D. Applications are available online at [Special Needs Application](#) or by calling –Ann Ricciardiello 435-5683 ext.4184. Requests should be submitted to the Day Care Division, 5th Floor, Civic Center, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202.
- E. Further information about apply for Special Needs funding, including current maximum rates is available in the [Special Needs Cover Letter](#)



14.0 SECURITY DEPOSITS

OCDSS-ES does not pay security deposits.

15.0 TAX REPORTING



All child care payments made to providers over \$600 annually must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). An IRS Form 1099 will be submitted to the IRS reporting all County child care payments. You are required to report this non-employee compensation on your tax return and you are allowed to take business expenses against the income. For more information contact the IRS or your tax advisor.

A provider cannot be paid until an IRS W-9 form is completed and returned to OCDSS-ES.



16.0 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for child care will only be provided and paid where permitted by applicable state regulations. OCDSS-ES will pay for Day Care Center operated/contracted transportation services based on client need as long as the total charge for the client is less than the state-approved market rate for the center if being paid with child care funds. Payments for Day Care Center operated/contracted transportation services may exceed market rate if paid through *JOBSplus!*.

Day Care Centers offering transportation must have filed documents stating that the transportation services are operated or contracted for by the center and the rates charged must be filed annually with OCDSS-ES Financial Operations.

No other transportation costs related to child care can be paid.

17.0 TRANSFERS BETWEEN PROVIDERS



Note: Procedures regarding transfers are different than those for discontinuances of care (see Section 7.0)

- A. OCDSS-ES policy is that a client has the right to choose his or her child care provider, and therefore may transfer to a new provider. **OCDSS-ES will issue a notice to the provider as required**; however, OCDSS-ES does require that a new authorization be in effect before the client may begin to use a new provider.
- B. Existing authorizations are only valid for the provider indicated on the authorization letter. Switching children from one site to another, even within the same day care organization, must be prior approved. **The earliest effective date of such a transfer will be the date OCDSS-ES is notified and approves of the change in provider. The start dates of these authorizations will not be backdated**, unless a verbal agreement between the child care worker and the provider has been reached and this must be written on the letter.
- C. Providers who choose to accept children prior to receiving written authorization or prior to the start date, or after the end date, as indicated on the authorization letter are doing so **AT THEIR OWN RISK**.
- D. Before a client who is receiving child care assistance through the Day Care Services Unit is permitted to transfer to a new child care provider, she or he must notify the child care worker. The Day Care Services Unit worker will contact the former provider and check on the payment of outstanding parent fees/family share. If parent fees/family share are paid, the worker will authorize child care with the new provider. The provider is responsible for notifying OCDSS-ES of any late parent fee/family share. In the event that the provider fails to

notify OCDSS-ES of unpaid parent fees/family share, and the client wishes to transfer to another provider, the maximum the client will be required to pay prior to transferring to another provider will be the parent fee owed, or \$250 whichever is less. Any remaining balance would be a private matter between the provider and the client.

- E. Providers may choose to enter into an agreement with the client requiring the client to provide a certain number of days notice before the child is moved. This would be a contract between the client and the provider, one to which OCDSS-ES is not a party. Should the client violate this agreement the resolution is between the two parties involved.
- F. **Under no circumstances will OCDSS-ES pay two providers for the same time period.**



18.0 WAITING LISTS

If it is determined by OCDSS-ES that child care spending is at a maximum level based on funding, a waiting list will be established. Interested parents can complete a waiting list application. Completed applications will be prioritized based on criteria in OCDSS-ES's Consolidated Services Plan. ([CSP for Day Care](#))

19.0 RESOURCES, INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS AND TRAININGS



19.1 CHILD CARE RESOURCE CONTACTS

Child Care Solutions is a resource for providers throughout Onondaga County. It is the primary child care referral source in OCDSS-ES. Child Care Solutions also administers the USDA Food Program, provides mini-grants to help providers, and holds training and meetings to benefit child care providers. For more information, contact 446-1220, CCS@childcaresolutionscny.org or visit their website at www.childcaresolutionscny.org.

19.2 INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

A. Day Care Centers

Upon request OCDSS-ES will send representatives to the Day Care Center providers' meetings held at monthly at Child Care Solutions.

B. Family and Group Family

Semi-annual informational meetings will be held at OCDSS-ES for Family and Group Family providers in the spring and fall. Providers will be notified of the dates of these meetings through inserts with their payments and the dates will be listed on the website when scheduled. Pre-registration is required to attend these meetings.

Note: These informational meetings are NOT trainings.

19.3 TRAININGS

OCDSS-ES may conduct trainings for providers when major changes in policy or procedures occur. If training is scheduled providers will be notified through inserts with their payments and there will be information regarding the training posted on the website.