

I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Waiting lists provide an equitable and efficient method of allocating services when Local Purchasing Agencies (LPA) are faced with limited resources. Waiting lists must be developed when child care funding is not available, child care providers are not available, or the LPA lacks sufficient staff to process all requests for child care services.

Waiting lists maintained by the LPA provide valuable information about child care needs. This information helps justify the need for additional child care funds; therefore, it is important that the list provide valid information regarding the number of *eligible children* who are waiting to receive services. Waiting lists must be maintained in an accurate and consistent manner. Waiting lists also give potential providers useful information when deciding where to locate and what ages of children to serve.

II. REQUIREMENTS

Each LPA must establish policies approved by its governing board for establishing and maintaining a waiting list. These policies must be made available by distribution to parents or by posting in the LPA. The Division of Child Development (DCD) monitors the LPA's waiting list policies for compliance with state policy. Waiting list policies must be submitted to the Subsidy Services Consultant of DCD on an annual basis and more frequently, if the policy has been amended. (See [Chapter 19: The Child Care Provider Agreement](#) and [Chapter 22: Local Policy Options](#) for information regarding local policies.)

A. Conducting Informal Eligibility Screening

Before adding a family to the waiting list, the LPA must conduct an informal eligibility screening by collecting the following information from the family:

1. Name;
2. Address;
3. Phone number;
4. Child's name and date of birth;
5. Date of inquiry;
6. Reason care is needed; and
7. Family size and amount of family income (if applicable).

The family must appear to be eligible based on the informal eligibility screening. It is not necessary for families to fill out the Application for Child Care Services ([DCD-0456](#)) in order to be put on the LPA's waiting list.

If a family is not eligible at the time of the informal eligibility screening, but can reasonably be expected to become eligible within 30 days, the LPA may place them on the waiting list the date of the request. For example, a parent has job offer and will begin work within 30 days.

B. Options for Establishing Waiting Lists

The LPA has several options for establishing a waiting list. These options include, but are not limited to:

1. Establishing one single waiting list of eligible children maintained in chronological order by parent inquiry;
2. Establishing separate lists of eligible children waiting for child care services and a separate list for transportation services, both in chronological order by parent inquiry and within or across the different need criteria; or
3. Establishing a waiting list of eligible children based on **need** criteria. The LPA has the option to prioritize the order in which families needing child care will receive services. However, the LPA **cannot** prioritize according to income.

C. Separate Waiting Lists

1. Special Needs

Counties must establish a separate waiting list for children with special needs. Payment for these services is made with the LPA required special needs set-aside. Refer to [Chapter 2: Funding for Subsidized Child Care Services](#) for additional information on these funds.

Once the minimum set-aside amount is encumbered, children with special needs who are currently being served should be served with funds in the LPA's regular subsidy allocation. LPAs may continue to serve new children with special needs who apply, as long as the LPA does not overspend their regular subsidy allocation. Refer to [Chapter 6: Serving Children with Special Needs](#), for additional information.

2. Expectant Mothers (Optional)

Sometimes expectant mothers may request child care for a time in the future. The LPA has an option to establish a separate waiting list.

This list is not counted/reported in the Subsidized Child Care Reimbursement System.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Prioritizing Families

The LPA must establish waiting list policies for serving families. Care may be provided for different reasons and priorities established within the different need criteria.

The waiting list is a tool for providing services to the family as a unit. For example, a parent/responsible adult who is already receiving services and later comes back to apply for another child (including newborns, preschoolers or school-agers) is eligible to receive immediate services for that child if funding is available. LPA staff should determine if funding is available by reviewing monthly expenditures for the state fiscal year and a review of the budget. When a family is removed from the waiting list, all the children in that family needing care **should** be included.

The following are examples (not inclusive) of how different reasons care is needed may be prioritized:

1. Children who need child care to support protective services may be prioritized over families who need child care for other reason categories;
2. Families needing child care to support Work First employment or training may be given priority over other families needing child care to support employment or training;
3. Families with foster children in DSS custody who need child care to support employment may be given priority over other families needing child care to support employment;
4. Families who need child care to support full-time employment may be given priority over families who need child care to support part-time employment; or
5. Teen parents who need child care to remain in high school may be given priority over other families needing child care to support education.