

I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Families who are income eligible for child care services are required to pay a portion of the cost of child care through parental fees. This chapter describes who must pay a parental fee, how parental fees are assessed and special circumstances that may affect parental fees.

II. WHEN PARENTAL FEES ARE NOT ASSESSED

[Parental fees](#) are not assessed for child care services when one of the following apply:

- A. Child care services are provided in conjunction with a child protective services plan to enable the child to remain in his/her own home;**
- B. Services are needed to support child welfare services as described in [Chapter 5: Establishing Need and a Plan of Care](#);**
- C. Children who are receiving foster care services and need child care services. The foster children must be in the custody of the county department of social services and**
 - 1. Residing in a licensed foster care home, or
 - 2. Placed with an adult other than their parents.

NOTE: If a child returns home and is no longer in the custody of the department of social services, the parent's income must be considered to determine eligibility for services.

- D. Children with no income who reside in the home of an adult other than their parents, stepparents, or their nonparent relative caretaker.** A child who resides in the home of someone other than their biological or adoptive parent or nonparent relative caretaker would be considered a family unit of one and there is no parental fee required for child care services if there is no countable income available to the child.

III. WHEN PARENTAL FEES ARE ASSESSED

- A. When a family is deemed income eligible through Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), the parent fee is calculated from the verified gross monthly countable income.**
- B. All families who are eligible for child care services based on their countable income will be charged a parental fee for a portion of the cost of child care services.**

- C. A parental fee is assessed if countable income is received for a child, including, but not limited to child support payments, social security disability payments, or social security survivor benefits.**

NOTE: The administrative cost of collecting and accounting for parental fees makes it unreasonable to process very small amounts charged to families; therefore, a parental fee, when the total amount due is less than \$5.00 per month, is disregarded.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING PARENTAL FEES

A. Responsibilities of the Local Purchasing Agency (LPA)

The LPA is responsible for determining the amount of the parental fee to be paid to the provider for child care services.

1. When subsidized child care is approved, the LPA must notify the provider and parent/responsible adult in writing, as to the amount of the parental fee to be collected from the parent/responsible adult using the Child Care Voucher ([DCD-0446](#)) or Child Care Action Notice ([DCD-0450](#)).
2. The LPA must give the parent/responsible adult a clear explanation of the parental fee policy, the specific charges imposed, and the parent/responsible adult's responsibility for payment.
3. Any change in the amount of the parental fee must be made known to the provider and parent/responsible adult using the Child Care Action Notice (DCD-0450). See [Section C., 4](#) below regarding termination of child care arrangements when parental fees are not paid.
4. The LPA may develop local policy to specify the time frame for providers in allowing parental fees to go unpaid prior to requesting termination of services. Refer to [Chapter 22: Local Policy Options](#) for additional information about establishing local policy.

Child care expenses affect the Work First, FNS and Medicaid benefits a family is eligible to receive; therefore, the child care worker should notify the Work First, FNS and Medicaid unit(s) of any parental fee assessed, the effective date and any changes in the parental fee. A copy of the Child Care Voucher ([DCD-0446](#)) or Child Care Action Notice ([DCD-0450](#)) can serve as the means of notification.

B. Responsibilities of the Family

1. The parent/responsible adult is responsible for paying the parental fee for child care services directly to the child care provider.

2. The parent/responsible adult is also responsible for reporting changes in family income or family size that may affect the parental fee for child care services. **These changes must be reported to the *child care worker* in the LPA within five (5) workdays.**
3. The child care worker may encourage the parent/responsible adult to negotiate with the provider a parental fee payment plan that best suits the parent/responsible adult's needs. The parent/responsible adult and the provider may agree upon an individual plan for collecting parental fee payments at less than monthly intervals.
4. Should a parent/responsible adult choose a provider who charges more than the rate the LPA is allowed to pay, the parent/responsible adult may pay the difference between the provider's charge and the rate paid by the LPA. The parent/responsible adult may not be required to pay the difference; however, if the parent/responsible adult is unable or unwilling to pay the difference in this situation, another provider must be selected by the parent/responsible adult. This is discussed further in [Chapter 9: Parental Choice and Voucher Procedures](#).
5. There may be cases where providers charge parents/responsible adults additional fees for activities not included in the normal program of child care. These additional charges may include:
 - a. Enrollment or registration fees, when not reimbursed by the LPA;
 - b. Fees for arriving late to pick up the child or for late payment of the fee; or
 - c. Special fees for activities such as swimming or dance lessons.

NOTE: The LPA is not responsible for these separate fees charged to parents.

C. Responsibilities of the Provider

1. Collect the parental fee from the parent/responsible adult on a regular basis and apply the same policy for non-payment of parental fees to private paying parents and parents/responsible adults receiving subsidies.
2. Give the parent/responsible adult a clear written explanation of the arrangement for paying the required parental fee and discuss the consequences of non-payment.
3. Give the parent/responsible adult a dated receipt for payment of the parental fee, as payment is received. Receipts should include the