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**FROM:** MFIP/DWP Employment Services Division Manager

**SUBJECT:** Child Care Protocol

**CC:** Human Services Manager

**PURPOSE:** This memo describes the protocol and expectations for serving Ramsey County MFIP participants participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (“CCAP”).

## PROTOCOL FOR SERVING MFIP ES/CHILDCARE PARTICIPANT CASES

In order for childcare applications to be processed in a timely manner, the following should be completed:

- a. Complete a [childcare application form](#) (online or print out)
- b. Provide proof of all required documents indicated in the childcare application
- c. Employment counselor must complete a [childcare authorization transmittal form](#) when necessary
- d. Secure a childcare provider(s)

The following guidelines are to be followed when working with MFIP participants interested in using CCAP services. The child care regulations below follow the [DHS Child Care CCAP Policy Manual](#), Section 16.1. ES Providers should also reference the CCAP Manual Section 9.1.5 (“Job Counselor’s Role”), for additional information as needed.

1. MFIP participants should have a current Employment Plan (“EP”). All signed EPs are considered “approved.” The only exception is for employed participants. If the ES counselor is unable to get a signed EP from an employed participant who is working 20+ hours per week, the counselor should document efforts to update the EP, have supported documents on file, share documentation with the Child Care worker (“CCW”), and request approval of child care for work. All DWP participants will need a current EP, even if they are working.
2. The amount of CCAP authorized must be based on:
  - a. Participant’s schedule of activity including travel time to and from the activity
  - b. Participation and activity hours identified in the EP
  - c. Children’s school schedule
  - d. Childcare provider availability
  - e. Schedule of the second parent
  - f. Other factors that may affect the amount of care children need
3. Cluster EP activities to create blocks of time that fit within both the child care provider’s schedule and practice as well as MFIP and CCAP rules.

4. ES counselors are required to provide the CCW with documentation of Employment and School Activity hours. The ES counselor needs to ensure that CCW has verification of employment and indicate on the [Child Care Authorization Transmittal](#) (“Transmittal”) that ES has supported documents for the School Activity. If Employment or School Activity hours vary, then the CCW needs two weeks of sample activity hours such a copy of a work/school schedule printed on the letterhead of the employer or school. ES counselors must assist the participant in obtaining the required documentation. If none of the other above-listed documentation is attainable, a written statement of verification of participant’s involvement in the activity may be provided by the employer, instructor, or the participant him/herself.
5. Only put end dates on Transmittals if the actual activity end dates are known. If an activity ends and the CCW has not been provided with a new updated Transmittal, then the case will close and the participant will have to reapply. School Activity hour end dates are often known in advance, so the ES counselor must be sure to submit a new Transmittal at least two weeks in advance of the activity end date.
6. EP “review dates” are not end dates, and an EP does not necessarily end on review dates. Until a plan has ended or is revised, the existing plan should be considered valid. CCAP does not automatically end when the EP review date has passed and a new EP has not been completed. It is the ES counselor’s responsibility to review the EP every three months and to immediately notify the CCW when an activity change impacts the childcare needs. If an ES counselor is struggling to meet with a participant and update an EP in a timely manner, but the ES counselor knows that the participant is still active in the activity, then the CCAP can remain in place.
7. EP activities can have earlier dates than the “Plan Start Date” in Workforce One. CCAP can be authorized back to the earlier activity date if the family was MFIP eligible and met all CCAP requirements.
8. EP changes that affect activity hours or types should immediately be reported to the CCW via the Transmittal; the CCW will then notify the participant of any CCAP eligibility adjustments.
9. If an ES counselor has sent a Transmittal and after 10 days, the participant reports that they do not yet have CCAP authorization which prohibits them from participating in the activities outlined in their EP, then:
  - a. Check notes in MEC2 to gather more information. Often, delays occur because of incomplete paperwork- please ensure all paperwork and supporting documentation is complete and accurate
  - b. Follow up with the CCW via e-mail to find out the CCAP status
  - c. After three days, the ES counselor does not receive a response, or there are concerns with a response given and there is no indication on MEC2 as to why the CCAP hasn’t been authorized, then forward your e-mail and explain your concerns to the CCAP lead worker Ginny Hayes at [ginny.hayes@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:ginny.hayes@co.ramsey.mn.us) and CC the Supervisor Cory Engelhardt at [cory.engelhardt@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:cory.engelhardt@co.ramsey.mn.us)

- e. If the request is related to the participant starting employment consider the following points:
    - i. CCAP unit is processing all requests within 10 days or less, so there is no need to classify a case as priority—the Ramsey County “employment priority case” rule implemented in the event that CCAP is backed-up and cases are taking longer than usual to process
    - ii. If the participant is already engaged in another activity (i.e. Job Search Activity) and has active child care, then the case is not a priority, just send a new transmittal indicating new activity and hours
    - iii. In the event that a new working case requires an employment priority case status, that case will be placed ahead of all other activity cases, but behind other Employment Activity cases already in the CCAP request queue
  - f. If you have questions regarding child care providers, please contact the CCAP Provider lead Debbie Dekarske at [Debbie.Dekarske@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:Debbie.Dekarske@co.ramsey.mn.us)
10. If a participant receives a sanction and the participant is working toward curing the sanction, CCAP should remain in place. If the participant is not working toward curing the sanction a transmittal should be sent to the CCW to end CCAP for participants that are scheduled reporters; a 15-day closing notice will then be sent to the participant and child care provider and the CCAP case will close. 12-month reporters will be eligible for Extended Eligibility.
  11. Extended Eligibility; When a family that is a 12-month reporter has a permanent end to their only authorized activity (employment, education or training), they continue to be eligible for up to three months or until their next redetermination, whichever occurs first. They do not lose eligibility or have their eligibility suspended. For more information on extended eligibility, please see CCAP CM 9.15.6
  12. An ES counselor’s failure to notify the CCW of changes in a timely manner could result in an overpayment for the participant which could negatively impact the participant’s ability to receive future CCAP assistance and cost the participant a substantial undue financial hardship.
  13. Every 12 months participants must renew CCAP eligibility, which involves completion of the [12- page Childcare Redetermination Form](#). The participant will receive the redetermination notice 45 days in advance and then the participant has at least 30 days to return the redetermination and all necessary verifications. Failure of the participant to update in time will result in a case closure.
  14. All policy interpretation type questions should be sent by the ES Supervisor to the assigned WFS planner and the planner will then direct the questions upwards to the CCAP supervisor, MFIP/DWP Employment Services Division Manager and the Human Services Manager.
  15. ES providers and assigned CCAP/FAS liaisons shall meet quarterly or as necessary depending on the needs of both parties.

**Contact:** Your Agency Planner