PURPOSE
Ensure consistent practice statewide in the child care eligibility determination process.

POLICY
The family is responsible to report changes that may affect their file (change in address, family composition, job status, education/training status, etc.) during their 12-month eligibility period within 10 business days.

If the reported change increases the family share paid by the family or decreases the authorized child care hours for the family, no eligibility change is necessary and the eligibility specialist will enter a case comment regarding the reported change that does not affect eligibility. The family share amount and hours remain the same as previously determined during the 12 month eligibility period. Please note: A family's income must fall on our income guidelines for their household size to be eligible for Child Care Financial Assistance. If during the 12 month eligibility period, the family reports a change in income and they exceed the income guidelines, the certificate(s) will be terminated at the end of one full service period from the date of notice.

If during their 12 month eligibility period the family provides information or documentation that would result in a decrease in the family share or an increase in authorized child care hours, the application must be redetermined so these changes can occur. A reported change that decreases Family Share is effective at the beginning of the service period in which verification is received. The only documentation required is the documentation needed to verify the change they are reporting.

<u>Temporary Change</u>
Temporary change is defined as a change in eligible activities including a change or reduction in participation in work or a training or educational activity, a time-limited absence from work, interruption of work for seasonal workers, and student semester/holiday breaks. A temporary change can also be defined as any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or education program that does not exceed three months. A family is not required to report a temporary change to the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. In addition, the family share and certificate hours remain the same during a temporary change unless documentation is provided that shows a change in income or hours which benefits the family.

PROCEDURES

<u>Employment</u>
If client reports they are no longer employed, inform them that they may utilize the service need of Seeking Employment for a period of 3 months. Process as follows:

- Send Seeking Employment Plan, allowing 10 days for return. Inform client that the form is required to remove the job income, change service need and set up certificates for 3 months. Once the form is returned, re-determine file to change service need and remove income. If the client does not return the form, call them to confirm that they still require child care and assist them in completing the process. If you are still unable to reach the client, change the service need to seeking employment, create the certificate for 3 months and continue with your attempts to contact the client.
- If after 3 months, the client does not have a service need or has not responded to your attempts to contact them, the file may be closed.

- If at any time during the 3 months the client reports they are now employed, self-employed, have returned to school, or are temporarily incapacitated (maternity leave, injury, etc.) request forms necessary to determine service need. Once forms are received, re-determine file to enter new service need but do not enter the new income information. The original eligibility/authorization dates remain the same. The family share amount and certificate hours must remain the same unless the information provided benefits the family's eligibility.

Self-Employment

If client reports that they have closed their business, inform them that they may utilize the service need of Seeking Employment for a period of 3 months. Process as follows:

- Send Seeking Employment Plan, allowing 10 days for return. Inform client that form is required to remove income, change service need and create certificates for 3 months. Once the form is returned, re-determine file to change service need and remove income. If the client does not return the form, call them to confirm that they still require child care and assist them in completing the process. If you are unable to reach the client, change the service need to seeking employment, create the certificate for 3 months and continue your attempts to contact the client.
- If after 3 months, the client does not have a service need or has not responded to your attempts to contact them, the file may be closed.
- If at any time during the 3 months the client reports they are now employed, self-employed, have returned to school, or are temporarily incapacitated (maternity leave, injury, etc.) request forms necessary to determine service need. Once forms are received, re-determine file to enter new service need but do not enter the new income information. The original eligibility/authorization dates remain the same. The family share amount and certificate hours must remain the same unless the information provided benefits the family's eligibility.

Education/Training

If client reports that they are no longer in school or training, inform them that they may utilize the service need of Seeking Employment for a period of 3 months. Process as follows:

- Send Seeking Employment Plan, allowing 10 days for return. Inform client that form is required to change service need and create certificates for 3 months. Once the form is returned, re-determine file to change service need and income. If the client does not return the form, call them to confirm that they still require child care and assist them in completing the process. If you are unable to reach the client, change the service need to seeking employment, create the certificate for 3 months and continue your attempts to contact the client.
- If after 3 months, the client does not have a service need or has not responded to your attempts to contact them, the file may be closed.
- If at any time during the 3 months the client reports they are now employed, self-employed, have returned to school, or are temporarily incapacitated (maternity leave, injury, etc.) request forms necessary to determine service need. Once forms are received, re-determine file to enter new service need but do not enter the new income information. The original eligibility/authorization dates remain the same. The family share amount and certificate hours must remain the same unless the information provided benefits the family's eligibility.

General

Additional reporting changes that may occur during the 12 month authorization period.

Marriage/Other Biological Parent

Client reports they will be or are now married or the biological parent is now in the household. The client is allowed to choose one of the options listed below. Eligibility Specialist is responsible for informing the client of these options.

- Child Care Financial Assistance eligibility remains the same under the client's current 12 month authorization. Process is as follows:

    1. Spouse/other bio parent and children are not added to case and spouse/other bio parent may not apply on his own.
    2. At re-determination, all family members must be on application. Client may not remain as a single entity.
    3. Place a note in CDDIS indicating that new household information is needed at time of re-determination.
- Client may add their spouse/bio parent and his/her children to the household. Process as follows:
    1. Send new application and request forms necessary to determine service need and income for both clients. Allow 10 days for return of application
    2. Once application is received, determine eligibility for 12 months using the new service need and income provided.
    3. Place note in CDDIS indicating that family composition has changed and client requested addition of spouse.

Separation

Client reports they are now separated from spouse. They are allowed to choose one of the options listed below. Eligibility Specialist is responsible for informing the client of these options.

- Child Care Financial Assistance eligibility remains the same under the client's current 12 month authorization. Spouse is not removed from the case.
- Client requests that spouse be removed from case. Process as follows:
    1. Send new application and request forms necessary to determine service need and income for client only. Allow 10 days for return of application.
    2. Once application is received, determine eligibility for 12 months using new information.
    3. Send notice to client informing them that, at re-determination, proof of legal separation or child support will be required in order to determine eligibility.
    4. Place note in CDDIS stating that client is now separated from spouse and requested removal of spouse from case.

Adding a new baby

- When a new baby is added to a single parent household, the client can choose to add the new baby to their case with a new application and all supporting documentation, including child support information, which will restart the 12 month eligibility period for all children in the household. Otherwise, the family continues their eligibility as is until their next annual redetermination.
- When the second parent of the new baby is in the household, the client can choose to not add the baby and the second parent (if they are not already part of the household in CDDIS) or add the second parent and the new baby with a new application and all supporting documentation, which will restart the 12 month eligibility period for all children in the household. Otherwise, the family continues their eligibility as is until their next annual redetermination.
- If the second parent of the new baby is in the household and they need childcare for this child, and the second parent is not the parent of the other children in the household, they can choose to apply together as one household with a new application or have two split files with an application for each parent. New supporting documentation will need to accompany the applications.

Increase in hours

Client reports they are working more hours or school enrollment hours have increased.

- Request paystubs or class schedule to verify hours.
- Re-determine application to increase authorized hours. Leave income the same.
- Inform the client that income will be added at time of re-determination and subsidy percentage may change at that time.

Increase in wages

Client reports that their wages have increased.

- Explain to client that their subsidy will remain the same until their 12 month eligibility is complete.
- Inform client that the income will be added at re-determination and their family share may increase.
- Put a note in CDDIS indicating that client's income has increased but the family share will remain the same until their current eligibility is complete.

Please Note: A family's income must fall on our fee scale to be eligible for Child Care Financial Assistance. If client reports a permanent change in income that moves them above 85% of state median income (SMI), end the certificate effective one service period from date of notice. Send end enrollment notice, to both the parent and provider. However, if the change is temporary no change in eligibility percentage will occur.