



New York State
Office of
Children & Family
Services

www.ocfs.state.ny.us

David A. Paterson
Governor

Gladys Carrión, Esq.
Commissioner

Capital View Office Park
52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144

January 22, 2009

Mr. David Sutkowy, Commissioner
Onondaga County Department
Of Social Services
Civic Center
421 Montgomery St.
Syracuse, NY 13502

Dear Commissioner Sutkowy:

This letter is to inform you that the child care section found in the administrative component of your Annual Plan Update 2008-2009 was approved on January 22, 2009. The child care section became effective on January 22, 2009.

This approval is being issued separate from the approval of other sections of your plan in order to accommodate your county's need to implement the child care services provisions. A letter approving the remaining sections of your plan will be sent upon their approval.

If you have any questions about this approval or the child care section found in your Annual Plan Update 2008-2009 please contact Ms. Amy Ryan, (518) 474-9620 or by e-mail at Amy.Ryan@ocfs.state.ny.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janice M. Molnar".

Janice M. Molnar
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services

Cc: Sarah Merrick



F. Child Care Section

APPENDIX G-1

**CHILD CARE SECTION
DATED 2007-2009**

County: Onondaga

I. Administration (Required Section)

Describe how your district is organized to administer the child care program, including any functions that are subcontracted to an outside agency.

1. Identify the unit that has primary responsibility for the administration of child care for:

Public Assistance Families: **Day Care Services Unit and JOBS^{plus!}**

Transitioning Families: **Day Care Services Unit and JOBS^{plus!}**

Income Eligible Families: **Day Care Services Unit and Children's Division**

Title XX: **Children's Division**

Indicate the use of New York State Child Care Block Grant (NYSCCBG) Funds.

FFY 06-07 Rollover Funds (<i>this amount is available from the NYSCCBG ceiling report in the claiming system</i>)	\$919,074
Estimate of FFY 07-08 Rollover Funds	\$1,800,000
Estimate of Flexible Funds for Families (FFFS) for child care subsidies	\$0
NYSCCBG Allocation for SFY 08-09	\$14,252,787
Estimate of Local Share	\$1,200,000

Total Estimated NYSCCBG Amount: \$17,252,787

\$17,252,787

A. Subsidy	\$15,852,787
B. Other program costs (excluding subsidy)	\$1,200,000
C. Administrative costs	\$ 200,000

3. Does your district have a contract or formal agreement with another organization to perform any of the following functions?

<u>Function:</u>	<u>Organization:</u>	<u>Amount of Contract:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility screening Function		
X Assistance in locating care	Child Care Solutions	\$46,200
X Child Care Information Systems	Child Care Solutions	See Above
<input type="checkbox"/> Determining if legally- exempt providers meet State approved additional local standards (if applicable)		
X Other	The Children's Consortium	\$35,391

APPENDIX G-2

II. Other Eligible Families if Funds are Available (Required Section)

Listed below are optional categories of eligible families that your district can include as part of its ICP. Select any categories your district wants to serve and describe any limitations associated with the category.

Optional Categories	Option	Limitations
1. Public Assistance (PA) families participating in an approved activity in addition to their required work activity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	None
2. PA families or families with income up to 200% of the State Income Standard when the caretaker is:		
a) participating in an approved substance abuse treatment program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	TA families – none NTA families – not eligible
b) homeless	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
c) a victim of domestic violence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	None
d) in an emergency situation of short duration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Thirty (30) days, can be extended after review (if medical verification documents return to work in 15 days, i.e. maximum of 45 days). Only for active cases, not applicants.
3. Families with an open child protective services case when child care is needed to protect the child.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	None
4. Families with income up to 200% of the State Income Standard when child care services are needed because the child’s caretaker:		

<p>a) is physically or mentally incapacitated</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Must have been employed and is expected to return to work; short-term duration only, usually thirty (30) days or less, can be extended after review if medical verification documents return to work in 15 days, i.e., maximum of 45 days) or as part of a Children's Services case where a need for child care is determined by the Children's Services Administration. <i>Only for active cases, not at time of application.</i></p>
<p>b) has family duties away from home</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>5. Families with income up to 200% of the State Income Standard when child care services are needed for the child's caretaker to actively seek employment for a period up to 6 months.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>o (2) weeks, can be extended after review, must provide verification of actively seeking employment <i>Only for active cases, not at time of application.</i></p>
<p>6. PA families where a sanctioned parent is participating in unsubsidized employment, earning wages at a level equal to or greater than the minimum amount under law.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Verified employment and transportation hours only</p>
<p>7. Families with income up to 200% of the State Income Standard when child care services are needed for the child's caretaker to participate in:</p>		
<p>a) a public or private educational facility providing a standard high school curriculum offered by or approved by the local school district</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>One time per school year, must maintain 80% attendance, must maintain passing grades in all subjects</p>
<p>b) an education program that prepares an individual to obtain a NYS High School equivalency diploma</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>See below criteria*</p>

<p>c) a program providing basic remedial education in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and oral communications for individuals functioning below the ninth month of the eighth grade level</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>d) a program providing literacy training designed to help individuals improve their ability to read and write;</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>e) English as a second language (ESL) instructional program designed to develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing the English language for individuals whose primary language is other than English</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>f) a two year full-time degree granting program at a community college, a two year college, or an undergraduate college with a specific vocational goal leading to an associate degree or certificate of completion</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>See below criteria*</p>
<p>g) a training program, which has a specific occupational goal and is conducted by an institution licensed or approved by the State Education Department other than a college or university</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>See below criteria*</p>
<p>h) a prevocational skill training program such as, a basic education and literacy training program</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>i) a demonstration project designed for vocational training or other project approved by the Department of Labor.</p> <p>The parent/caretaker must complete the selected programs listed under number seven within 30 consecutive calendar months. The parent/caretaker cannot enroll in more than one program.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

<p>8. PA recipients and low income families with incomes up to 200% of the State Income Standard who are satisfactorily participating in a two-year program other than one with a specific vocational sequence (leading to an associates degree or certificate of completion and that is reasonably expected to lead to an improvement in the parent/caretaker's earning capacity) as long as the parent(s) or caretaker is also working at least 17 ½ hours per week. The parent/caretaker must demonstrate his or her ability to successfully complete the course of study.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>9. <i>PA recipients and low income families with incomes up to 200% of the State Income Standard who are satisfactorily participating in a two-year college or university program (other than one with a specific vocational sequence) leading to an associates degree or a certificate of completion that is reasonably expected to lead to an improvement in the parent/caretaker's earning capacity as long as the parent(s) or caretaker is also working at least 17 ½ hours per week. The parent/caretaker must demonstrate his or her ability to successfully complete the course of study.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

<p>10. PA recipients and low income families with incomes up to 200% of the State Income Standard who are satisfactorily participating in a four-year college or university program (leading to a bachelor degree and that is reasonably expected to lead to an improvement in the parent/caretaker's earning capacity) as long as the parent(s) or caretaker is also working at least 17 ½ hours per week. The parent/caretaker must demonstrate his or her ability to successfully complete the course of study.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
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***The working parent or caretaker must meet the following criteria at the time an application is made:**

- **Must be a single parent or caretaker with a child in the household who is under the age of 13; if two-parent household, applicant must provide information as to why the second parent cannot care for the child during the training hours.**
- **Must be working a minimum of 20 hours per week in unsubsidized employment in 9 of the last 12 months or has graduated from high school or received his/her GED within the last 6 months prior to application.**
- **Must be a resident of Onondaga County but can work outside of the county.**
- **Must be planning on enrolling in, or already enrolled in, an education or training program which is vocational in nature or which leads to a vocational goal with the hard skills necessary for employment. High School Equivalency programs do qualify. A list of approved programs will be available at the Day Care Services Unit.**
- **The applicant must certify that she/he will NOT decrease his/her work hours below a minimum of 20 hours to participate in the training and will NOT increase his/her financial need to qualify for Temporary Assistance.**

Limitations:

Continuation of funding will be made contingent on the student's successful completion of the semester or class, with attendance and grades submitted to the child care worker for review.

APPENDIX G-3

III. Reasonable Distance, Very Low Income, Family Share, Case Closings and Openings, and Fraud and Abuse Control Activities (Required Section)

Reasonable Distance

Your district is required to define reasonable distance based on community standards for determining accessible child care.

The following defines "reasonable distance": **The following definition describes the maximum reasonable distance defined in time or mileage or both that a Temporary Assistance recipient would be expected to travel from home to work activity site with a stop at a child care provider along the way. This information is expressed as a one-way, not a round, trip.**

Public Transportation: In the case of any parent/caretaker/child who uses Onondaga County's CENTRO bus system for transportation, distance should not exceed 22 miles. This distance represents the average of farthest distances from downtown Syracuse East, West, North and South, which CENTRO serves in areas where we currently have sites available.

Personal Vehicle: In the case of a parent who uses private transportation, distance should not exceed 30 miles. This distance represents an average of the distance across the north-south and east-west points of the county where again, activity sites are located.

Walking: In the case of any child six years old or younger, walking either from home to the provider's location, or from the provider to school or to the school bus, should not exceed more than 1/2 mile. This will hold true for older children with medically documented special needs with the case manager arranging the necessary childcare.

Note: The district makes every attempt to arrange child care and activity as close to home as possible, however, it is still maintained that the client has the final say as to where child care is located as long as the child care arrangements are deemed to be legal.

For the most part, the district automatically allows one-half hour on either end of the day for transportation and dropping off or picking up children. However, all cases are handled in an individual manner and adjustments are made for more or less transportation time as needed.

Describe any steps/consultations made to arrive at your definition: In formulating this definition, the following resources were consulted:

1. The current listing of work activity sites utilized by Onondaga County's

employment and training program, **JOBSplus!**

2. A map of Onondaga County redrawn with **JOBSplus!** as the center point.
3. Examination of the current public transportation system (CENTRO's) bus lines.
4. Discussion of current guidelines used by the Child Care Council of Onondaga County.
5. Examination of current travel patterns required for participation in **JOBSplus!**

*Note: **JOBSplus!** is located in downtown Syracuse, approximately five blocks from the main public bus exchange through which most bus connections are made.*

Very Low Income

Very Low Income is defined by each district and is used in determining priorities for child care benefits.

Very Low Income is defined as **125%** of the State Income Standard.

Family Share

Family share is the weekly amount paid towards the costs of the child care services by the child's parent or caretaker. In establishing family share, your district must select a percentage from 10% to 35% to use in calculating the family share. The family share of child care is calculated by applying the family share percentage against the amount of the family's annual gross income that is in excess of the State Income Standard divided by 52.

Family Share Percentage selected by our district **30%**.

Case Closings (select one or two)

1. The district must describe below how priority is given to federally mandated priorities and describe local priorities. If all NYSCCBG funds are committed, the district will discontinue funding to those families that have lower priorities in order to serve families with higher priorities. Described below is how the district will select cases to be closed in the event that there are insufficient or no funds available.

Federally mandated priorities applied in the following order: very low income is first priority and families with children with special needs are the second priority.

For local priorities cases will be closed based upon the priorities established in Appendix G-5. Rank 1 being the highest priority. Within a given priority cases will be closed on a first in, first out basis.

2. The district has not established priorities beyond the federally-mandated priorities. If all NYSCCBG funds are committed, case closings for families which are not eligible under a child care guarantee and are not a federally-mandated priority must be based on the length of time in receipt of services. The length of time used to close cases may be based either on the shortest or longest time receiving child care services but must be consistent for all families. The district has chosen to close cases based on:

- shortest time receiving child care services
- longest time receiving child care services

Case Openings

The district must describe below how priority is given to federally mandated priorities and how the district will select cases to be opened in the event that there are insufficient funds available.

Federally mandated priorities applied in the following order: very low income is first priority and families with children with special needs are the second priority. For local priorities cases will be opened based upon the priorities established in Appendix G-5. Rank 1 being the highest priority. Within a given priority cases will be opened on a first come, first served basis.

Fraud and Abuse Control Activities

The district must identify below the criteria it will use to determine which child care subsidy applications suggest a higher than acceptable risk for fraudulent or erroneous child care subsidy payment and procedures for referring such applications to the district's front end detection system.

The following situations will be referred to FEDS: False address given for provider and/or client, prior history of denial or case closing (or overpayments) resulting from an investigation, provider violations (e.g., improper billing), client failed to report unearned income (listed in other cases that the applicant is currently active in), or client has previously failed to accurately report income, household composition.

The district must describe below its sampling methodology used to determine which cases it will seek verification of an applicant or recipient's continued need for child care including, as applicable, verification of participation in employment, education or other required activities.

Three months after case opening 100% of employed cases will be reviewed for changes in employment participation and earned income. Six months after case opening and recertification 100% of cases will be reviewed for all eligibility factors.

The district must describe below its sampling methodology used to determine which child care providers of subsidized child care services they will review for the purpose of comparing the child care providers attendance forms for children receiving subsidized child care services and any child and adult care food program inspection forms to verify that child care was actually provided on the days listed on the attendance forms.

We expect to have a universe of 250 child care providers that are also in the child and adult care food program annually. Our provider sample size will be 156 annually. Each month we will select 13 providers at random to compare their attendance forms to the child and adult care food program inspection forms. Any provider previously selected will not be included in a subsequent sample for the year.

Note: if our universe is smaller than projected our sample size will be reduced accordingly.

APPENDIX G-4

IV. District Options (Required Section)

Districts have certain flexibility to administer the child care subsidy program to meet local needs. Check which options that your district wishes to include in your county plan. Complete attachments for any area(s) checked.

1. Our district has identified local priorities in addition to the federal priorities (complete Appendix G-5).
2. Our district has chosen to establish funding set-asides for NYSCCBG (complete Appendix G-6).
3. Our district is using Title XX funds for the provision of child care services (complete Appendix G-7).
4. Our district has chosen to establish additional local standards for child care providers (complete Appendix G-8).
5. Our district has chosen to make payments to child care providers for absences (complete Appendix G-9).
6. Our district has chosen to make payments to child care providers for program closures (complete Appendix G-10).
7. Our district has chosen to pay for transportation to and from a child care provider (complete Appendix G-11).
8. Our district has chosen to pay up to a 15% higher than the applicable market rates for regulated child care services that have been accredited by a nationally recognized child care organization (complete Appendix G-11).
9. Our district has chosen to pay up to 15% higher than the applicable market rates for non-traditional hours (complete Appendix G-11).
10. Our district has chosen to pay for child care services while a caretaker who works the second or third shift sleeps (complete Appendix G-11).
11. Our district has chosen to make payments to child care providers who provide child care services, which exceed 24 consecutive hours (complete Appendix G-12).

12. *Our district has chosen to include 18, 19 or 20 year olds in the Child Care Services Unit (complete Appendix G-12).*
13. x Our district is seeking a waiver from one or more regulatory provisions. Such waivers are limited to those regulatory standards that are not specifically included in law (complete Appendix G- 12).
14. Our district has chosen to pay for breaks in activity for low income families (non public assistance families, complete Appendix G-12).
15. Our district has chosen to use local equivalent forms such as, but not limited to, child care application, client notification and/or legally exempt enrollment forms (attach copies of the local equivalent forms your district uses).

Any previous approvals for local equivalent forms will not be carried forward into this county plan. Therefore, any local equivalent forms a district wishes to establish or renew must be included in this plan and will be subject to review and approval by OCFS.

APPENDIX G-12
CHILD CARE EXCEEDING 24 HOURS, CHILD CARE SERVICES UNIT,
WAIVERS, BREAKS IN ACTIVITIES

Child Care Exceeding 24 Hours

Child care services may exceed 24 consecutive hours when such services are provided on a short-term emergency basis or in other cases where the caretaker's approved activity necessitates care for 24 hours on a limited basis.

Describe any limitations for payment of child care services that exceed 24 consecutive hours.

Child Care Services Unit

The Child Care Service Unit is the basis upon which a district will determine which household and/or family members should be counted in determining family size and countable family income.

Our district will include the following in the Child Care Services Unit (check which ones apply).

18 year old 19 year old 20 year old

-OR-

Our district will include only the following in the Child Care Services Unit when it will benefit the family (check which ones apply).

18 year old 19 year old 20 year old

Describe the criteria your district will use to determine whether or not an 18, 19 or 20 year old is included in the Child Care Services Unit.

Waivers

Districts have the authority to request a waiver of any regulatory provision that is non-statutory. Describe and justify why your district is requesting a waiver.

OCFS granted a waiver from the 18 NYCRR 415.3(c) child support requirement for the low-income child care program.

Breaks in Activities

Districts may pay for child care services for low income families during breaks in activities for a period not to exceed two weeks or for a period not to exceed one month

where child care arrangements would otherwise be lost and the subsequent activity is expected to begin within that period (check one).

two weeks four weeks

Districts may provide child care services while the caretaker is waiting to enter an approved activity or employment or on a break between approved activities. The following low income families are eligible for child care services during a break in activities (check any that are eligible):

entering an activity waiting to begin employment break between activities