

12 month eligibility for child care subsidies

Including wait list, attendance and absence policies

12 month eligibility

- Early Start Act requires DEL to implement 12-month eligibility for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) to promote stability of high quality care.
 - DSHS will not terminate families who qualify for WCCC during the 12-month eligibility period for loss of approved activities or for increases in income that don't exceed federal limits.
 - Families will no longer have to report most changes in circumstances such as loss of work or a raise (so long as income doesn't exceed federal limits).

12 month eligibility timelines

- 12 month eligibility goes into effect July 1, 2016
- On July 1, existing WCCC families will “cut over” to the new rules.
- Existing WCCC families will be on their same schedule for redetermination. If a family’s current authorization runs 10/1/15 to 9/30/16, they will still have a redetermination 10/1/16.

School age care under 12 month eligibility

- When 12 month eligibility goes into effect, DEL will implement rules to allow DSHS to automatically change care hours for school age children when summer vacation begins and ends.
- Families who need more care can always request it and provide verification of need.

Wait list

- WCCC has a budget that limits the amount of families it can serve. When we reach the limit, DSHS places families who apply for WCCC on a wait list and takes them off the list as slots become available.
- Because fewer families leave WCCC under 12 month eligibility, we will likely reach the limit this year.

Wait list process

- When the wait list goes into effect and a family applies for WCCC, DSHS determines eligibility as normal.
- Once eligibility is determined, DSHS places the family on the wait list.
- When a slot becomes available, DSHS contacts the family to let them know.
- The family selects a qualifying provider and DSHS authorizes care hours for a 12 month eligibility period. Time spent on the wait list doesn't count against the 12 months.

Wait list priority groups

- Certain groups (based mostly around vulnerable populations) are priorities in the wait list.
- Prioritized groups are exempt from the wait list.
- In 2011 when WCCC was on a wait list, priority groups included TANF recipients, families with children with special needs, and teen parents.

Attendance and absence – current rules

- Current rules require that a child must attend at least one day in a month in order for a provider to bill the state for WCCC subsidy.
- Providers may bill for unlimited absent days (up to the hours authorized to a family).
- Under 12 month eligibility families are not terminated for loss of work and keep their authorized care hours.

Absence and attendance – the problem

- Under the above rules, providers can bill for entire months of care the child only attended one day.
- Under 12 month eligibility, families keep authorized care even if the parents stop working and care isn't needed.
- The combination means many more providers might bill for care that never occurs.

Attendance and absence – Draft proposal

- Limit absent days to 60 per year. This gives the family flexibility and give the provider stability.
- Promote frequent attendance by making it a means of increasing provider Early Achievers rating.