

**5595 Task Force
Child Care Improvements
December 13, 2013
10:30-1:00**

I. Continuity and Stability of Care *Identified* Policy Recommendations

- Implement a 12-Month Eligibility Certification Period
 - Terminate eligibility for changes in income only if income exceeds 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL)
 - Allow Retention of Eligibility during Temporary Changes
 - Extend job search eligibility for a minimum of 90 days annually

II. Continuity and Stability of Care Policy Recommendations *For Consideration*

- Pay providers a monthly rate as opposed to the current system of half and full days and implementing a 12 month guaranteed eligibility certification (DEL)

III. Financial Stability for Providers and Parents *Identified* Policy Recommendations

- Do not increase the co-pay amount for changes in income during the 12-month eligibility period
- Eliminate the co-pay requirement at the lower income levels (110% FPL or lower)
- Incentivize parents to put children in higher quality care by offering reduced co-pays
- Utilize a combination of policy options relating to the 12-month eligibility period and changes in co-pay levels to develop a fiscally neutral legislative policy package

IV. Incentivizing Quality *Identified* Policy Recommendations

- Provide quality improvement grants to assist centers and homes in attaining quality care
- Increase quality improvement awards for centers and homes operating at Levels 4 and 5 to reflect the resources needed in order to maintain quality care
- Offer licensed child care providers access to a pool of substitutes
- Contracting a certain number of WCCC slots for licensed child care programs that demonstrate a certain level of high-quality programming
 - Prioritize contracted slots to child care providers that meet the following characteristics:
 - Rated at a level 3, 4, or 5 in Early Achievers

- Offering programs for children diagnosed with a special need, or children experiencing trauma
 - Offering non-standardized hours of care
 - Located in a high-need geographic area
 - Offering full-day early learning and care opportunities
- Require the DEL to update the legislature on strengths, gaps, and lessons learned from the Contracting for Quality Pilot

V. Incentivizing Quality Policy Recommendations *for Consideration*

- Providers with WCCC contracts would be paid for the number of slots for which they have contracted, provided that these slots have not been unfilled for more than 30 days. The DEL will annually determine whether to increase or decrease the number of slots contracted to a program based on its previous year's enrollment
- Payments would not be decreased due to absences, provided that the program contacted families promptly when a child was absent without notice for more than three consecutive days to provide any assistance needed to regularize attendance.
- If the pilot program for contracting slots substantially achieves the benefits to young learners, parents, and providers outlined above, the DEL should take necessary actions to have 20% of its WCCC slots provided by contracts by January 1, 2016. After that date, the DEL should periodically evaluate the benefits, costs and savings of contracting a larger percentage of its WCCC slots
- Contracted Slots specifics for consideration
 - What quantity of contracts should be available for the pilot? What is the long-term goal? A minimum of 20% of slots?
 - When would a child's enrollment in a contracted slot be terminated because of absence or attendance for insufficient hours?
 - What are parent co-pay requirements for contracted slots?
 - What entity should manage/oversee all contracted subsidy slots? DEL?
 - Should it be a requirement that child care providers join together to attain an economy of scale through sharing certain costs of doing business?

VI. Early Learning and WCCC Integration *Identified* Policy Recommendations

- Align child care eligibility to match those of Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP programs to facilitate the seamless delivery of services
- Consolidate the subsidy system and all early learning and care programming under the Department of Early Learning
- Cross-reference Health Care exchange eligibility website with child care eligibility
- Set-one year eligibility determination period for child care assistance

- Reduce the number of reported changes required to maintain eligibility
- Create multiple incentives for providers to combine ECEAP/Head Start and child care services

VII. Early Learning and WCCC Integration Policy Recommendations *for Consideration*

- Create a single, integrated eligibility and payment system for WCCC and Early Learning Programs