
Care 4 Kids Program

POLICY TRANSMITTAL

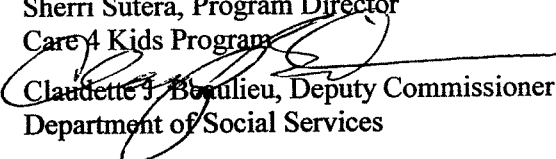


DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES-CHILD CARE TEAM

Transmittal Number: C4K-POL-06-02

Date: March 27, 2006

To: Sherri Sutera, Program Director
Care 4 Kids Program

From:  Claudette J. Boutilieu, Deputy Commissioner of Programs
Department of Social Services

CC: Policy Distribution List

Subject: Removal of the Requirement Regarding Securing Child Support

Program Issue: The Department has reviewed the Care 4 Kids requirement regarding securing child support. The pursuit of court ordered child support is no longer an eligibility requirement. Care 4 Kids will continue to inform families that assistance in pursuing child support is available from the department's Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE).

Background: Since January 2002, Care 4 Kids has required that families pursue court orders for monetary child support from non-custodial parents as a condition of eligibility for child care assistance. Many families have lost eligibility for Care 4 Kids or have experienced delays in receiving benefits because of their failure to meet child support cooperation requirements.

Parents, child care providers and family advocates have made the department aware of the hardships experienced by some families as a result of such requirements. For example, some families have informal but workable financial arrangements with non-custodial parents, which in some cases may be disrupted by the intervention of mandatory child support services. Child care providers also cite the loss of revenue and removal of children from quality care when families opt not to pursue court ordered support. Advocates are concerned that compliance with mandatory child support cooperation requirements can harm delicate family relationships and discourage families from applying for child care assistance.

The department recognizes that despite the proven value of child support for families seeking economic self-sufficiency, the goals of self-direction and self-reliance are sometimes compromised by the imposition of a mandatory child support cooperation requirement. Accordingly, the department is removing the child support cooperation requirement in favor of providing optional access to child support services for the many families who will find such services beneficial in their pursuit of economic stability.

Implementation: Effective April 1, 2006, pursuing court ordered child support is not an eligibility requirement for child care assistance. Care 4 Kids is instructed to modify forms, notices, procedures and training materials as appropriate. Care 4 Kids is instructed to develop staff training, protocols and call center scripts to disseminate information to families and child care providers regarding child support services available through BCSE.

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