



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Otter Tail County Plan

Administration of the Child Care Assistance Program

2004-2005

444 Lafayette Road North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
(651) 282-6489

ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is designated under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 119B as the lead state agency for supervision of county administration of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.08, subd.3 requires counties to submit a biennial Child Care Fund Plan to the commissioner. The Department of Human Services will complete review and approval of County Child Care Fund Plans. Counties will receive approval letters for their Child Care Fund Plans from the commissioner of DHS.

Child Care Assistance Program administration is subject to all requirements of rule and law including: Public Law 100-485; United State Code, title 42, sections 9858-9858q; Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, parts 98-99; Minnesota Statutes, section 256.045, subdivision 3, chapter 13, chapter 119B; and Minnesota Rules, parts 3400.0010 to 3400.0235. Minnesota Statutes 119B and Minnesota Rule 3400 may be located at – <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.asp>

The Child Care Assistance Program rules and laws allow counties limited discretion to establish some local policies and procedures. These local policies and procedures, when included in this plan and approved by the Commissioner, are considered county policy and are used to support county agency decisions during appeals. **The Department of Human Services encourages counties to develop county optional policies for the child care assistance program in coordination with local child care stakeholders.** This may include regional child care resource and referral agencies, parent participants, employers, family and center based child care providers, community Head Start programs, schools, public health, community collaboratives, employment counselors, and county social services, income maintenance, child support, fraud prevention and other interested governmental and private sector parties.

ALL OPTIONAL COUNTY CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES MUST BE IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN. ALL NEW AND/OR AMENDED COUNTY FORMS AND WRITTEN NOTIFICATIONS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN STANDARDIZED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEC² AND THAT ARE USED IN YOUR COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OF THIS PROGRAM MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS PLAN WHEN SUBMITTED. IF A FORM WAS APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONER DURING REVIEW OF THE COUNTY'S 2002-2003 CHILD CARE FUND PLAN AND THE FORM HAS NOT CHANGED, YOU DO NOT NEED TO SUBMIT THE FORM WITH THE 2004-2005 PLAN.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO ANY POLICIES OR WRITTEN MATERIAL SUBMITTED WITH THIS PLAN REQUIRES PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES THROUGH THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS.

A county may amend its child care fund plan at any time but the amendment must be approved by the commissioner before it becomes effective. If approved by the commissioner, the amendment is effective on the date requested by the county unless a different effective date is set by the commissioner. Plan amendments must be approved or disapproved by the commissioner within 60 days after receipt of the amendment request. MN Rules 3400.0150, subp.3.

The effective date of the 2004 - 2005 Child Care Fund Plan is January 1, 2004

Return completed plans by December 15, 2003.

Return to:
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Kathy Gaida
444 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155-3834

I. CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CONTACT POINTS

These individuals will receive all communications relating to CCAP for the duration of this plan. If agency staff changes occur, please notify Kathy Gaida at (651) 282-6489 or kathy.gaida@state.mn.us

A. AGENCY CONTACT PEOPLE

Identify the name, department, address, phone number, fax number and Internet e-mail address for the following contacts. If more than one person is identified for each agency contact, attach additional pages.

1. County CCAP Administrative Contact

Name: *Jodi Wentland* Position/Title: *Social Services Supervisor*
Leon Anderson *Fiscal Supervisor*
Bev Schoon *Financial Services Supervisor*

Department: *Otter Tail County Human Social Services*

Mailing Address: *530 & 535 W. Fir Avenue*

City, State, Zip: *Fergus Falls, MN 56537* Phone: *(218) 998-8150*

FAX: *(218) 998-8213* Internet E-mail landerson@co.otter-tail.mn.us
bschoon@co.otter-tail.mn.us
jwentlan@co.otter-tail.mn.us

2. County Client Access Contact

If separate contact people have been designated for CCAP subprograms, complete all identified information for each subprogram and identify the subprogram each person is responsible for.

Name: *Julie Stein* Position/Title: *Case Aide*
Linda Hanstad *Case Aide*
Tracey Janssen *Case Aide*
Carla Johnson-Rownd *Financial Worker*
Cheryl Kottom *Financial Worker*

Department: *Otter Tail County Human Services*

Mailing Address: *535 W. Fir Avenue*

City, State, Zip: *Fergus Falls, MN 56537* Phone: *(218) 998-8150*

FAX: *(218)998-8213* Internet E-mail jstein@co.otter-tail.mn.us
ghanstad@co.otter-tail.mn.us
tjanssen@co.otter-tail.mn.us
cjohnson@co.otter-tail.mn.us
ckottom@co.otter-tail.mn.us

3. Intake Phone Number

Please identify a public phone number that can be issued for CCAP client intake. This contact number is posted on the DHS web site.

Name: *All MFIP-S Child Care & TY Child Care Workers* Phone: *(218)998-8230*
Financial Workers
535 W. Fir Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

B. SUBCONTRACTED SERVICES

If your county subcontracts any components of the child care assistance program, indicate the program components that are subcontracted to other agencies and attach a copy of the current contract or agreement. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.7.

1. Subcontracted Program Components

Please identify the CCAP components which have been subcontracted. _____

2. County worker responsible for administration of the subcontract/agreement between the social services agency and the subcontracted agency.

Name _____ Position/Title: _____

Department: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: (_____) _____

FAX: (_) _____ Internet E-mail _____

3. Administrative Contact in Subcontracted Agency

Name: *John Dinsmore* Position/Title: *Director*

Department: *Otter Tail County Human Services*

Mailing Address: *530 W. Fir Avenue*

City, State, Zip: *Fergus Falls, MN 56537* Phone: *(218) 998-8150*

FAX: *(218)998-8213* Internet E-mail: jdinsmor@co.otter-tail.mn.us

4. Client Access Contact in Subcontracted Agency

Name: _____ Position/Title: _____

Department: *Rural Minnesota CEP/Workforce Center*

Mailing Address: *125 Lincoln Avenue West*

City, State, Zip: *Fergus Falls, MN 56537* Phone: *(218) 739-7677*

FAX: *(218) 739-7675* Internet E-mail: *none*

5. Intake Phone Number

Please identify a public phone number that can be issued for CCAP intake at subcontracted agency. This contact number is posted on the DHS web site.

Name: *Rural Minnesota CEP/Workforce Center* Phone: *(218) 739-7675*

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Priorities For Service

Has your county established priorities for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance beyond those required in Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.03, subdivision 4? Yes No

If yes, please identify the additional priorities and county rationale for determining those additional priorities. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.10. _____

B. Education Plans Under The Basic Sliding Fee Program (BSF)

1. Describe your county process for approving an acceptable course of study that will reasonably lead to full-time employment for a student applicant under the Basic Sliding Fee program. Identify the criteria for approval and county rationale for the criteria. Minnesota Rules 3400.0040, subp. 12.

Students are required to complete the Occupational Goal Plan outlining their course and length of study and their reasoning for their career choice. The child care worker's approval of an educational plan that has been submitted by the student, will be done with the guidance of the educational institute (advisor).

If the plan does not outline all required components or indicates a course of study with possible job placement limitations the following steps will occur:

- A. *Contact will be made with Job Service to determine the local labor market.*
- B. *Contact will be made with student to address their willingness/plan to commute or relocate to a community that reflects local labor market needs consistent with the student's course of study.*

New applicants/students are notified and required to maintain satisfactory progress in the educational program and shall submit grades/transcripts for each academic period that child care assistance is provided. If a student fails to meet satisfactory progress in an academic period, child care assistance will continue on a probationary status and will be terminated if the student is unable to meet satisfactory progress within the next academic period.

2. Is your county policy for approving and extending child care assistance for participants whose education programs change the same as the initial approval process stated in B1? Yes No
Minnesota Rules 3400.0040, subp.15.

If not, describe your county process for approval of a change in a course of study for a student in the Basic Sliding Fee child care program. Identify the criteria for approval and county rationale for the criteria.

C. Temporarily Ineligible Families On The Basic Sliding Fee Waiting List

Does your county reserve a family's position under the child care assistance fund if a family reaches the top of the waiting list but is temporarily ineligible for assistance? Yes No
PLEASE refer to Minnesota Rules 3400.0060, subpart 6 and 3400.0040, subpart 17.

Otter Tail County shall reserve a family's position, if the family has been receiving or is approved to receive child care assistance, but is temporarily ineligible due to income, education or family status. Families that advance to the top of the county waiting list and are still temporarily ineligible for child care assistance will remain on the top of the list in the priority section they are listed.

D. Child Care for Job Search Activities

Has your county established policies for the authorization of child care assistance during job search beyond those required in Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.10, subdivision 1(a) and Minnesota Rules, part 3400.0040, subpart 15a.? Yes No
If yes, please identify the criteria used for authorizing child care for job search.

Clients are required to submit a Job Contact Log on a monthly basis for any activities that receive child care fund reimbursement. Failure to provide completed Job Contact Log may result in an overpayment to the client. (see attached Job Contact Form)

E. Expedited Application for School-based Adolescent Parent Programs

Describe your county process to expedite and streamline the child care assistance application process for minor parents participating in school-based adolescent parenting child care programs.
CFL Bulletin #00-004, June 20, 2000

Otter Tail County makes available information regarding the child care assistance program through the local WIC office and the Otter Tail County Minor Parent Program.

Otter Tail County shall coordinate with school districts in providing child care assistance information to the school-based adolescent parenting programs.

If a waiting list exists, minor parents shall be given a priority one on the list.

III. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- A. List the conditions under which a provider or care arrangement will be determined to be unsafe. Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.125, subdivision 4.

Otter Tail County utilizes the Disqualification Look-Back Guidelines for child care licensing. Unsafe care is determined if the information obtained from the background check indicates a conviction, or an admission to committing or a preponderance of the evidence indicating that the person has committed an act that meets a Bar.

Otter Tail County also conducts a social services background check. Unsafe care is determined if the information obtained indicates a substantiated maltreatment or written documentation is provided by the social services agency that the proposed provider is unsafe.

Background checks are conducted on a two-year basis or as deemed necessary.

- B. Describe county process for maintaining a record of substantiated parental complaints concerning the health and safety of children in the care of legal nonlicensed providers and how this information is made available to the public upon request. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.5; 45 C.F.R. § 98.32; Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13.

Otter Tail County shall maintain a log of substantiated parental complaints concerning the health and safety of children in care of legal non-licensed providers. Upon request, information governing substantiated complaints shall be released to the public.

IV. SPECIAL NEEDS RATES

If charged by the provider, counties shall reimburse all providers for the care of children with disabilities or special needs at a rate that exceeds the county maximum rate subject to the approval of the commissioner. The provider must assure that the rate charged is the same as the rate that would be charged for similar services provided to a child with a disability or special need in a family not receiving child care assistance. Minnesota Statutes 119B.13, subd.3; Minnesota Rules 3400.0130, subp.3

Rates will be determined based on the special needs of children and provider's ability to provide specialized services. When four or more providers offer the same specialized care for the same special need in a like environment, the county will identify and pay the 75th percentile rate, the rate negotiated with the provider by the county, or the provider rate, which ever is less.

Rates paid for the care of children with special needs are allowed to exceed county maximum rates in the following special need circumstances:

- A. Special needs rates for a child with a disability applies to the care of children who have a special need due to a disability requiring specialized services, provider training or environmental adaptations necessary to meet the needs of the child. **Rates must be established on an individual basis** when requested by the parent or the provider, and are subject to the approval of the commissioner of DHS. Refer to Minnesota Rules 3400.0020, subpart 17a for the definition of disability.

Please identify the provider type, rate paid and the date of initial request for each special need rate currently paid by your county. Minnesota Statutes 119B.08, subd. 3(3). Do not attach client-specific information to this plan.

PROVIDER TYPE	RATE	DATE OF INITIAL REQUEST
Licensed, LNL, Center	\$/hour/day/week	
L	\$4/hour	05/02
LNL	\$8.75/hour	06/02

B. Special needs rates for care of sick children applies to rates charged above the county maximum by a provider that cares for sick children. Minnesota Rule 3400.0110, subpart 8

Please identify the provider type, rate paid and the date of initial request for each special need rate currently paid above the county maximum when care is for a sick child. Minnesota Statutes 119B.08, subd. 3(3).

PROVIDER TYPE	RATE	DATE OF INITIAL REQUEST
Licensed, LNL, Center	\$/hour/day/week	
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

C. Special needs rates for programs that care for children in an at-risk population group applies to the care of children with significant environmental or familial factors that create barriers to a child’s optimal achievement. See Minnesota Rules 3400.0020, subp 9a for the definition of at-risk.

Please identify the provider type, rate paid and the date of initial request for each rate paid above the county maximum rate for children in an at-risk population.

PROVIDER TYPE	RATE	DATE OF INITIAL REQUEST	DESCRIPTION OF AT-RISK POPULATION
Licensed, LNL, Center	\$/hour/day/week		
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Special needs rates may be requested at any time by submitting the required documentation to the commissioner for approval. (See CCAP Training Manual pgs. 5-24 to 5-31 when submitting requests for special needs rates.) If the county has submitted rate requests that have previously been approved by the commissioner, those rates do not need to be resubmitted with this plan unless there is a rate change. Send requests to:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
 Child Care Assistance Program
 444 Lafayette Road North
 St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
 FAX: (651) 297-4066

NOTE: Special needs rates approved by the commissioner may be paid retroactive to the date of the provider or parent request.

V. PAYMENT POLICIES

A. Payment To Two Providers When A Child Is Sick

Does your county make payments for child care services provided for children who, as a result of illness, are unable to attend the family’s regular provider and, if so, does your county pay both the regular provider and the second provider who is caring for the sick child? Yes No
 Minnesota Rules 3400.0110, subp.8

Currently Otter Tail County does not have any child care providers who care specifically for sick children. Should the need for sick children care reimbursement arise, Otter Tail County would pay the sick child care providers as to their provider policy, up to the county maximum rate. The client’s regular child care provider could also be reimbursed as to their provider policy when the child is in sick child care. These days would be considered absent days. Please see below regarding absent days.

NOTE: If rates for care of sick children exceed county maximum rates, the county rates for care of sick children must be included in the special needs rates section of this plan.

B. Absent Day

Does your county have a child absent day policy that exceeds the statewide policy? Yes No

If yes, submit your county specific policy along with county rationale that was used to determine this policy.

Absent days are paid based upon the written policy of the child care provider that reflects charges for all other families in care for similar absences not exceeding the maximum county rate. Absent days will be paid on days that the provider’s service is available and the child is scheduled to be in child care based on hours of care

authorized for the child care assistance payment made by the county will not exceed the provider's charge to private pay families for the same absence period.

Reimbursement will be made based on authorized and scheduled hours even if the child(ren) attend partial day child care or attends less than hours authorized as based on current local market practice.

Minnesota Rule 3400.0110, subpart 9 requires that counties pay for child absent days according to the statewide absent day policy. See CFL Bulletin 01-003. Counties may choose to adopt child absence payment limits that exceed the statewide child absence payment policy. County-specific policies that exceed the basic statewide payment policy and limits described in this Bulletin must: 1) include locally-based justification; 2) be included in the county's child care fund plan; and 3) receive approval by CFL. Counties are prohibited from adopting policies more restrictive than the statewide policy.

C. Provisional Payment of Registered Providers

Does your county issue provisional authorization and payment to legal non-licensed providers during the time necessary to verify the legal non-licensed provider's compliance with the additional registration requirements required by program modifications enacted by the 2003 Legislature. Minnesota Rules 3400.0120, subpart 2; 3400.0110, subpart 2a; and 3400.0140, subpart 5a Yes No *Provision payment is for a period no greater than 90 CY – 15 CY day.*

D. Submission of Invoices

1. Changes to Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.13, subdivision 6, states that all provider bills must be submitted to the county within 60 days of the last date of service on the bill. **A county may pay a bill submitted after this 60-day limit if the provider shows good cause for the delay.** Counties must define good cause in their child care fund plans and this definition must include county error. **A county cannot pay a bill submitted more than a year after the last date of service.** If a provider submits a bill within 10 days of the end of the service period, the county must issue payment within 30 days of receipt of the bill. **Submit County definition of good cause for delay in bill submissions. County error must be included in this definition.**

Otter Tail County will review on a case by case basis vouchers received after 60 days of the last date of service on the bill and may pay a bill after this 60-day limit if the provider shows good cause for the delay. Factors that will be taken in consideration for good cause:

- A. Agency error
- B. Client unavailable for signature
- C. Unforeseen emergencies on the part of the county, provider or household
- D. Client's/provider's delay in completion of necessary documentation
- E. Other extenuating circumstances

2. Will the county stop payment issued to a provider or refuse to pay a bill submitted by a provider if:
 - a. the provider admits to intentionally giving the county materially false information on the provider's billing forms; or
 - b. a county finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the provider intentionally gave the county materially false information on the provider's billing forms. Yes No

VI. OTHER COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Describe your county methods for providing information on the availability of child care assistance to individuals, child care service providers, social service agencies, local news, etc. to ensure families are aware of the availability of the assistance. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.2.

Otter Tail County reviews the child care funds available monthly. If it is anticipated that additional funding is available, Otter Tail County will: 1) Notify child care providers that funding is available and provide them with the Child Care Assistance Brochure – "Do you need help paying for Child Care" to share with families and/or 2) submit public service announcements utilizing the media and/or 3) notify other Social Services Units of available funds.

- B.** Identify the two or more methods of application your county uses for the Child Care Assistance Program. Minn. Stat. § 119B.03, subd.10. To meet the requirement of this subdivision, a county may provide alternative methods of applying for assistance including, but not limited to, a mail-in application or application sites that are located outside of government offices.

Otter Tail County has implemented two methods of the application process for the Basic Sliding Fee Program.

- A) *Government Office Location: One option that applicants have is to complete the child care assistance application with the child care assistance worker in the government office location.*
- B) *Mail-in Application: Applicants may choose to complete a mail-in child care assistance application. The effective date of eligibility is the date the application is stamped into the county office.*

- C.** Identify any other county policies that apply to the child care assistance program which are not specifically required by state or federal rule or law. Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp.1 and 3400.0150, subp.2. *none*

- D.** Describe strategies used to coordinate and maximize public and private community resources, to coordinate child care assistance with existing community-based programs and service providers to foster collaboration that provides family-focused services to families with young children and to facilitate transition into kindergarten. Minnesota Statutes 119B.08, subd. 3(1).

Otter Tail County Human Services provides partial day reimbursement (refer to Absent Day section).

Otter Tail County Human Services works collaboratively with Child Care Resource and Referral to provide on-going training opportunities for local licensed child care providers to enhance the quality of child care resources available.

Otter Tail County Human Services is a member of the Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative. The Collaborative is providing Universal Home Visiting services to all children under the age of five in Otter Tail County.

- E.** Describe procedures and methods used to make copies of the proposed state plan reasonably available to the public that allows sufficient time for public review and comment. Minnesota Statutes 119B.08, subd. 3(2).

Otter Tail County will make the Child Care Plan available at the Government Office location and post the plan on the county web-site.

- F.** Please attach all new and/or amended county forms, handbooks, agreements or other written documents and materials that have not been standardized with the implementation of MEC² that are used in your county for the administration of child care assistance program payments. Documents that have been submitted with prior plans and have not changed do not need to be resubmitted with this plan.

(See Attachments)

DHS is in the process of making MEC² standardized forms and notices available to those counties that are not currently using MEC². If your county would like to receive these standardized forms and notices, contact your CCAP policy liaison.

VII. COUNTY ASSURANCES

By checking the designated boxes below in items A and B, the county assures compliance with applicable consumer and provider education requirements. It is not necessary for the county to attach copies of this material to this plan.

- A. The county is informing parents about the following as required under Minnesota Rules 3400.0035, subp1.
- federal and state child and dependent care tax credits
 - earned income credits
 - other services for families with young children
 - child care resource and referral services
 - child care assistance program eligibility requirements
 - the documentation necessary to confirm eligibility
 - waiting list information
 - procedures for making application for CCAP
 - family copayment fees and how computed
 - information about how to choose a provider
 - families rights and responsibilities when choosing a provider
 - availability of special needs rates
 - the family's responsibility for paying provider charges that exceed county maximum payments in addition to the family copayment fee; and
 - the importance of prompt reporting of a move to another county to avoid overpayments and to increase the likelihood of continuing benefits.

County Assures Compliance

- B. **The county is distributing the following required information to registered providers:** Distribution requirements may be accomplished by giving the materials directly to the provider, or to the parent and establishing a method to ensure that the provider receives the material.

45 C.F.R. § 98.41, Minnesota Rules 3400.0140, subp. 5, and CFL Bulletin 00-008.

- child immunization requirements
- child nutrition
- child protection reporting responsibilities
- health and safety information
- child development information
- referral to child care resource and referral agency

County Assures Compliance