



COUNTY OF RENFREW
CHILD CARE SERVICES

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COUNTY OF RENFREW CHILD CARE SERVICES
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the County of Renfrew is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for Social Service Programs that are cost shared with the Provincial government.

The County of Renfrew will plan, manage and deliver services in ways that will enable the County to provide child care services and related programs that facilitate the development of children, families and the community. The County will provide a range of services and programs that are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the continuing and changing needs of parents, care givers, children and the broader community. Collaboration with community partners and service providers regarding program planning and implementation will take place. A system of shared responsibility between the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the County of Renfrew, providers and parents will promote efficient and effective management of services within the parameters established by both the County of Renfrew and the Province of Ontario thus ensuring good public value.

DEFINITIONS

DNA:	Day Nurseries Act
Full-day care:	Child care provided for six or more hours per day
LEAP:	Learning, Earning and Parenting
MCSS:	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MCYS:	Ministry of Children and Youth Services
OW:	Ontario Works
OWA:	Ontario Works Act
Part-day care:	Child care provided for less than six hours per day
The County:	The County of Renfrew

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BACKGROUND

Management responsibilities for child care transferred to the County of Renfrew effective April 1, 1999 and include a wide range of services and programs including both for-profit (commercial) and non-profit licensed centre-based care, resource centres (currently known as Ontario Early Years Centres), special needs resource programs and informal child care for Ontario Works.

Child Care funding provides:

- (a) Fee subsidy assistance for parents;
- (b) Wage subsidy grants for agencies offering child care services or early learning programs; and
- (c) Integration services for children with special needs.

RELEVANT ACTS

Child care services are delivered under two separate Acts – the Ontario Works Act and the Day Nurseries Act.

- (a) Day Nurseries Act

An individual providing care on a regular basis for more than five children, who are not of common parentage, must be licensed under the Day Nurseries Act. If care is provided on a premises that receives five or fewer children, it is not required to be licensed or to meet any of the regulations of the Act. There are some regulations in the Day Nurseries Act, which apply to the provision of care for children with special needs and fee subsidies for families that meet financial and other criteria.

- (b) Ontario Works Act

Child care for Ontario Works participants including Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) participants and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients in approved employment assistance activities may be funded through Ontario Works child care. Ontario Works child care funds may be used for licensed (formal) or unlicensed (informal) child care to enable parents to

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participate in approved employment assistance activities as documented in their signed participation agreements.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The child care system in the County of Renfrew operates as a partnership between the County of Renfrew, Provincial Ministries and child care providers.

1. Consolidated Municipal Services Manager

The Corporation of the County of Renfrew has been appointed as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for Social Service programs. The Manager of Child Care Services of the County of Renfrew will be the designated 'Child Care Administrator' under the Day Nurseries Act.

The Manager of Child Care Services will manage the overall child care program including:

- (a) Strategic planning and setting of organizational priorities;
- (b) Management and administration of all purchase of service contracts with child care providers;
- (c) Management of the fee subsidy program;
- (d) Direct delivery of the integration services for children with special needs;
- (e) Provision of an information and referral service on child care options to assist parents to access services and make informed choices;
- (f) Reporting to funders; and
- (g) Ensuring County of Renfrew Child Care Policies and Procedures remain current and up-to-date by conducting annual reviews in order to identify service improvements and trends.

2. Provincial Ministries

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) cost share funding for specific child care services, set

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provincial standards and performance requirements, monitor the delivery agent's (the County) compliance with these standards and license Child Care Providers.

As per the County of Renfrew's agreement with the Ministry, the County is required to submit a comprehensive Child Care Service Plan to MCSS/MCYS for approval as required.

3. Child Care Providers

The County of Renfrew will contract with agencies to provide a range of child care services as approved for funding by the province. While the County may purchase a specific service from an agency, it may not necessarily be purchasing that agency's comprehensive mandate. Community agencies who meet all legislative and program requirements and who enter into a contractual agreement with the County will deliver services on the County's behalf. Service providers will then be responsible for complying with the delivery standards established by Provincial Ministries and the County.

(a) Licensed Child Care

Licensed centres can be operated by:

- (i) Municipalities;
- (ii) First Nations Organization or Community;
- (iii) Non-profit organizations; and
- (iv) Be operated as a business by individual owner/operators or corporations.

There is two kinds of licensed child care services: centre-based and home-based.

Centre-based programs are licensed (by MCYS) for groups of 5 or more children who may range in age from infancy to twelve years. Each centre is licensed to care for a specific number of children based on physical space and allowable group sizes. Licensed capacity varies from centre to centre. Licensed centres are inspected by MCYS to ensure compliance with the minimum acceptable standards set out in the Day Nurseries Act. Fees and policies in areas not governed by the Act are determined by the individual centre owner or governing body.

Licensed home-based child care, is provided in the home of a care giver who is registered and approved by a licensed home child care agency. The private home

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caregiver is supervised by the agency that administers the service. Private licensed home day cares are inspected regularly by staff from the home child care agency. This monitoring and the licensing process, ensures that the requirements of the Day Nurseries Act are being met. As in centre-based care, fees and policies not covered by the Act are determined by the individual agency.

(b) Unlicensed or Informal Child Care

Informal child care may be provided in the community by independent care givers who provide home-based services "informally" and who are not required to be licensed. Parents often access these care givers through newspaper advertisements, community bulletin boards, word of mouth or by referral from friends or relatives. Arrangements for this kind of care are negotiated privately between the caregiver and the parent. Monies to offset child care costs in unlicensed situations may be issued through the Ontario Works program for active participants who have child care needs or costs for care.

(c) Resource Centres

All Resource Centre Programs have become Ontario Early Years Satellites. Family and Children's Services is the lead agency for the Ontario Early Years Program in the district of Renfrew, Nipissing, Pembroke.

4. Funded Programs

Provincial ministries have allocated funding to specific programs managed by the County of Renfrew.

(a) Special Needs Resourcing

Commonly referred to as Integration Services, these services provide a range of supports to assist in the integration of children with special needs into licensed child care settings or qualified recreation programs. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has established basic guidelines and principles as outlined in the Special Needs Resourcing Guidelines. A Special Needs Advocacy Group comprised of community volunteers has been developed to provide input regarding the Integration Services program practices and policies.

Integration Coordinators work with children and their families in developing individualized program plans to enhance the development of children who struggle to meet developmental milestones. Also, Integration staff offer

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consultative support to various supporting agencies and child care programs. The objectives of the program are:

- (i) To facilitate the physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of special needs children;
 - (ii) To promote in each child, through special interactions, a sense of self-worth and belonging;
 - (iii) To support the family of special needs children and to involve them in their community;
 - (iv) To provide resources and support to teachers and caregivers in community-based programs; and
 - (v) To promote and encourage acceptance of children with special needs.
- (b) Wage Subsidy Program
- The Wage Subsidy Program was introduced in 1995 and replaced a series of former wage enhancement programs delivered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, MCSS. This program provides funding for non-profit licensed child care programs and early years centres (formerly resource centres) to supplement the salaries and benefits of permanent staff delivering child care programs, including payments to home child care providers.
- (c) Fee Subsidy Program
- Subsidies may be available to families who meet the financial and activity criteria. Subsidies can be utilized in a variety of child care programs depending upon availability of spaces.
- (d) Best Start Program
- The County is responsible for coordinating the Best Start Network, a coalition of agencies responsible for enhancing the coordination of services to facilitate access for children 0 to 6 years of age and their families. The Network is comprised of service providers from throughout the County and includes representation from each of the service/program areas provided interest and commitment exists.

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POLICY STATEMENT

Child care services can assume a key role in promoting healthy child development. Child care services are also an essential support for many parents/guardians, enabling them to participate in the workforce, pursue education or training.

Residents of the County of Renfrew will have fair and equitable access to fee subsidies that will allow their children to participate in licensed child care services or pre-approved recreation programs. Fee subsidy management practices comply with the requirements and minimum standards established by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

The fee subsidy program will be effectively managed and administered to maximize the number of families who can benefit from the support.

PROCEDURE

1. Eligibility

The Child Care Eligibility Coordinator determines the family’s eligibility for fee subsidy by applying the Income Test according to the standards set by the Day Nurseries Act. The income test determines the available income the family must contribute towards the child care space(s).

Fee subsidies can be provided for:

- (a) Children under 10 years of age or up to 12 years of age in special circumstances
- (b) Youth with special needs up to 18 years of age; and
- (c) Children from 6 to 12 years of age, or for children with special needs 6 – 18 years of age enrolled in approved recreation programs.

Fee subsidies are allocated based on the Wait List Prioritization established by the County of Renfrew. See Policy #CC-03 Fee Subsidy Wait List Prioritization.

All fee subsidy recipients will pay the parent/guardian contribution required under section 66.4 of Regulation 262 of the Day Nurseries Act. The parent/guardian contribution is determined by the Income Test and is payable by the parent/guardian directly to the child care service provider.

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2. Accessibility

Parents require a range of child care services. The County of Renfrew will approve the use of fee subsidies for children in respite, part-time and full-time licensed child care as well as pre-approved recreation programs offering before and after school care and care during school breaks. Child care service providers are encouraged to provide a mix of full and part-time spaces to accommodate the range of service needed at the local level.

As a family and child's needs change an effort is made to provide a seamless transition from part-time to full-time subsidized care.

3. Amount of Child Care to be Subsidized

Consideration is given to both the needs of the parent/guardian and the child when determining whether funding for full-day or part-day child care is appropriate. Funding for full-day child care is only provided as reflected by the family's collective needs.

Decisions reflect an intent to avoid unreasonable disruptions to a child's care and routine and a parent/guardian's ability to pursue and maintain employment wherever possible.

4. Recognized Needs

Child care can be provided in response to the recognized needs of the child and/or their parent/guardian.

A child's recognized needs include:

- (a) A special need as defined under the DNA; and/or
- (b) A social need due to issues with the home/family environment as identified by a recognized partner.¹

A parent/guardian's recognized needs include:

- (a) No parent/guardian in a household is able to care for the child due to participation in one or more of the following activities:
 - (i) Employment;

¹ Partners include: Family and Children's Services, Public Health Unit, family physicians, other early intervention/prevention agencies or professionals

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- (ii) Attendance in an educational or training program and its associated requirements – placements, meetings, study, preparation, etc;
 - (iii) Employment or Community Placement activities through Ontario Works;
 - (iv) Employment support activities through the Ontario Disability Support Program; and
 - (v) Travel associated with the above activities.
- (b) A parent/guardian is unable to care for the child because of an illness or disability and the other parent/guardian is engaged in the above activities;
 - (c) No parent in the household is able to care for the child in between participation in the above activities; and/or
 - (d) A parent/guardian becomes temporarily unemployed and can demonstrate that they are actively searching for work.

It is not possible to outline every specific situation that may occur in which it may be appropriate to provide subsidized child care. The County of Renfrew retains the right to address situations on a case-by-case basis when parents/guardians are facing exceptional circumstances.

5. Residency

In order to receive a fee subsidy in the County of Renfrew, the applicant and the child(ren) requiring care must reside within the County of Renfrew boundaries. If possible, active applicants who identify that they are planning to move outside of the County of Renfrew will be provided with information to assist them in securing subsidy in another delivery agent's boundaries.

All persons are required to provide current and valid documentation regarding their residency status in Canada.

For more information on residence and eligibility refer to Policy #CC-05 Fee Subsidy Intake and Eligibility Assessment.

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POLICY STATEMENT

All Child Care Fee Subsidy applicants will be placed on a County-wide Fee Subsidy Waitlist congruent with the County of Renfrew prioritization policy.

PROCEDURE

1. Prioritization

Admission to subsidized vacancies will be based on the following priorities:

(a) First Level of Priority

(i) Participants in:

- LEAP (Learning, Earning and Parenting) on either a mandatory or voluntary basis;
- Ontario Works Program on a mandatory basis - involvement in Employment Supports, Community or Employment Placement, education, employment or self-employment; or
- working families with a net income of \$20,000 or less with children with special needs or social needs.

(ii) Participants in:

- LEAP (Learning, Earning and Parenting) on either a mandatory or voluntary basis;
- Ontario Works Program on a mandatory basis - involvement in Employment Supports, Community or Employment Placement, education, employment or self-employment; or
- working families with a net income of \$20,000 or less.

(b) Second Level of Priority

(i) Participants in:

- the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) - with involvement in Employment Supports, education, employment or self-employment;
- the Ontario Works Program on a voluntary basis - involvement in Employment Supports, Community or Employment Placement, education, employment or self-employment;

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- an educational institution or training program who are enrolled; or
 - working families with a net income of \$20,000 to \$40,000 or less with children with special needs or social needs.
- (ii) Participants in:
- the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) - involved in Employment Supports, education, employment or self-employment;
 - the Ontario Works Program on a voluntary basis - involvement in Employment Supports, Community or Employment Placement, education, employment or self-employment;
 - an educational institution or training program who are enrolled; or
 - working families with a net income of \$20,000 to \$40,000 or less.
- (c) Third Level of Priority
- (i) Working families with a net income of \$40,000 or greater, with children with special needs or social needs.
- (ii) Working families with a net income of \$40,000 or greater.
- (iii) Persons who are job seeking and require care to enable them to job seek full-time (granted on a time limited basis and as per budget and higher priority caseload demands). See established limits on job seekers in Policy CC-05, Fee Subsidy Intake and Eligibility Assessment.
- (iv) Families with one parent available in the household with children with special or social needs (granted on a time limited basis and as per budget and higher priority caseload demands).

Children with special and social needs are defined in the Ministry of Children and Youth Services Fee Subsidy Guidelines, 2006, page 32.

If families with similar circumstances reach the top of the Waitlist simultaneously, the priority will be established chronologically according to the date of the application.

Geographic distribution of fee subsidies across the County of Renfrew may be considered if demand for fee subsidy significantly exceeds availability. In that circumstance, if one child no longer requires a fee subsidy from a particular geographic area, another child from that area will have first consideration for that subsidy. These decisions will take into account existing priority levels.

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The Eligibility Coordinator may provide recommendation to the Manager of Child Care Services to prioritize cases based on individual circumstances which are unusual, exceptional or not addressed in the prioritization levels.

Admission of children to programs is the decision of both the child care service provider and the parent/guardian. Decisions relating to whether or not the parent/guardian will be in receipt of subsidy are decisions of the Eligibility Coordinator, as approved by the Manager of Child Care Services or designate.

2. Acceptance of a Subsidized Space

From time to time, applicants may accept a subsidized space that is more distant from their place of residence or work than desired (in another community or across town) to enable them to commence or maintain employment or training. These persons could then re-apply to be placed on the Waitlist for a specific location and transferred to a different child care service provider when a subsidized space becomes available. This practice will ensure that residents requiring child care are provided with choices regarding location and current availability. A County of Renfrew Centralized Waitlist form will be completed noting the child for whom they wish to transfer fee subsidy along with their prioritized choices.

3. Transfers

A child may be placed back on the top of the Waitlist for the one of the following reasons:

- (a) Ministry of Community and Youth Services involvement in the child's placement;
- (b) The family relocates to another area within the County boundaries and it is no longer feasible to use the existing placement; and/or
- (c) Space no longer exists with the current child care service provider.

A County of Renfrew Centralized Waitlist form will be completed noting the child for whom they wish to transfer fee subsidy along with their prioritized choices.

It is not possible to outline every specific situation that may occur in waitlist situations, therefore, the County of Renfrew retains the right to address situations on a case-by-case basis when parents/guardians are facing exceptional circumstances.

4. Add a Child to the Waitlist

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A sibling of a child may be added to the Fee Subsidy Waitlist as per their date of request and as per the family's assessed priority.

5. Break in Service

The fee subsidy will be retained for families if the child care service provider is not providing service for a period of time (i.e. nursery school closing for the summer). A voluntary break in service initiated by the parent/guardian will result in the loss of the fee subsidy space. The family can be placed back on the Waitlist.

In special circumstances, if the parent/guardian can prove extreme hardship or a negative impact on the child, the County of Renfrew can protect the fee subsidy for the child when they return to care. This decision will be made on the recommendation of the Eligibility Coordinator and at the discretion of the Manager of Child Care Services or designate.

6. Updating the Waitlist

The Waitlist is updated as vacancies/funding become available. The applicant is contacted up to a maximum of three times to determine if they are interested in a space. Each time they have 24 hours to respond before losing that opportunity.

If they do not respond after three attempts to contact them, the Intake Coordinator will mail the applicant a letter indicating that they must contact the Intake Coordinator within 10 business days or they will be removed from the Waitlist. Also included with this letter is an Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy.

In situations where the Intake Coordinator does not receive a response, the child(ren) is/are removed from the County of Renfrew Waitlist and the applicant can re-apply at any time. A Notice of Fee Subsidy Waitlist Removal letter will be mailed to the applicant(s).

In situations where contact is made with an applicant, and he/she requests the child(ren) be removed from the County of Renfrew Waitlist, a Notice of Fee Subsidy Waitlist Removal letter along with an Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy will be mailed to the applicant(s).

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POLICY STATEMENT

The Intake function consists of the collection of personal data on persons who indicate a desire to apply for a Child Care Fee Subsidy. Basic information is provided by the Applicant through the completion of “Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy”, enabling the identification of circumstances and procedures. Its purpose is to place families in order of priority on the Fee Subsidy Wait List. The County of Renfrew adheres to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in the collection, use, disclosure and disposal of information.

PROCEDURE

1. Application

All persons who submit an Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy will be placed on the Fee Subsidy Wait List according to Policy CC-03 Fee Subsidy Wait List Prioritization. Application information can be mailed, faxed, emailed or completed by telephone or in person in the Child Care Office.

- (a) All Child Care Programs will refer applicants to the County of Renfrew Child Care Services when the need for subsidy has been identified. This will eliminate individual programs and service providers from maintaining internal fee subsidy Wait Lists.
- (b) Applications for Fee Subsidy will generally come from families/parents/guardians as well as from the following sources with parental consent:
 - (i) Ontario Works Agents, Employment Service Agents;
 - (ii) Child Care Program staff including centre-based care, home-based care, and special needs resourcing programs;
 - (iii) Ontario Early Years Centre;
 - (iv) Community Agencies including counselling agencies, employment agencies, etc.; and/or
 - (v) Community Health Care Professionals including Renfrew County Health Unit, physicians, family counselling agencies, etc.

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2. Intake

Prior to placement on the Wait List, all applications will be reviewed by the Intake Coordinator for accuracy and omissions within 3 business days. Any suspected inaccuracies and/or omissions will be clarified with the applicant by telephone through the Intake Coordinator. Once all mandatory application information has been completed, the family will be placed on the Fee Subsidy Wait List in priority of need. See local Policy CC-03 Fee Subsidy Wait List Prioritization.

In order to be placed on the County of Renfrew Wait List, all applicants must complete an Application for Fee Subsidy. While awaiting any outstanding information from the application, the Intake Coordinator will note that the application is pending. Applicants can maintain pending status for up to 30 days. If the required information is not provided within 10 business days, the applicant will be mailed a reminder advising that all information is required within the next 10 business days or they will be determined to have voluntarily withdrawn their request for consideration.

(a) Parameters of Intake

The Intake Coordinator will request only the required data on the Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy to assess priority.

(b) When No Wait List Exists

When no Wait List exists or the wait is not likely to exceed 30 calendar days, the Eligibility Coordinator may proceed to complete an in-person Eligibility Assessment with the applicant after verifying the information provided on the Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy. If eligibility is determined, the applicant will be offered the next available child care space in their preferred child care centre(s).

(c) When a Wait List Exists

Where the Intake has been completed and a subsidized space is not available immediately, the applicant will be mailed a letter confirming receipt of the application. Eligibility for fee subsidy will not be determined until a space becomes available or the wait is not likely to exceed 30 calendar days. Applicants will be further advised that financial eligibility for fee subsidy is based on an Income Test.

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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew is committed to ensuring that all relevant information is taken into consideration when determining eligibility of families for fee subsidies. Decisions align with the stated policies and standards of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Complete files are maintained to demonstrate due diligence.

PROCEDURE

1. Application-Eligibility Assessment Process

The following steps are undertaken during the application-eligibility assessment process.

- (a) The Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy is received and dated by the Intake Coordinator or designate. An application can be submitted by fax, e-mail if scanned in PDF format, in-person, or by telephone.
- (b) The Intake Coordinator will review the application to ensure all essential information has been provided. Essential information includes but is not limited to: income; reason for service; type of care; choice of child care provider; and the names and ages of children requiring care.
- (c) If the application is not complete, the Intake Coordinator will contact the applicant to request the outstanding information. The Intake Coordinator may direct the applicant on ways to access the required information if assistance is needed. If it is clear that the applicant requires additional support to file a complete application, the Intake Coordinator may request that an Eligibility Coordinator contact the applicant to provide assistance.
- (d) Once the Application is completed, the Intake Coordinator places the child(ren) on the Fee Subsidy Waitlist according to their priority level. A Confirmation of Waitlist Placement letter is mailed to the applicant noting that if a vacancy is identified, the applicant is required to respond with up-to-date information within 24 hours.
- (e) When a Vacancy Report is received from a child care service provider, the Intake Coordinator contacts the applicant at the top of the Waitlist in order of priority by

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telephone. The Intake Coordinator will update the information on the Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy form with the applicant and will confirm their continued interest in fee subsidy. If the interest continues, a telephone appointment will be initiated.

- (f) The Eligibility Coordinator reviews the Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy and calculates a preliminary estimate of the parental contribution, prior to the telephone appointment. The Eligibility Coordinator will complete intake screening over the telephone to confirm preliminary eligibility and interest in proceeding. If the applicant continues to be interested, an eligibility assessment interview date, location and time are established. The applicant is also informed of the required verification documents to be submitted at the interview. If the applicant is no longer interested, the family is returned to the Waitlist unless it is their third and final offer of a space in which case they are removed from the Waitlist. The Intake Coordinator or designate will mail the applicant a letter advising them of their removal from the Waitlist. The applicant can reapply at any time by resubmitting an updated Application for Child Care Fee Subsidy.
- (g) The Eligibility Coordinator will complete an eligibility assessment interview with the applicant/spouse. In the case of a two-parent family, both custodial parents' signatures are mandatory on fee subsidy documents with the exception of families serving in the military with a parent on active duty. Upon completion of the interview and a review of all mandatory forms, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will direct the applicant(s) to verify the accuracy of the information recorded and will attain signatures from the applicant and spouse (if applicable) on the application documents. The Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will answer any questions that an applicant may have regarding the information collected and/or the application forms. The applicants will be notified that their child's subsidized placement will not be confirmed or approved until such a time as the mandatory outstanding information has been received and processed.
- (h) If all of the mandatory information has not been provided at the interview, the applicant has 24 hours to provide the outstanding information. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator for special circumstances. While awaiting any outstanding information, the Eligibility Coordinator will note that the eligibility assessment is pending.

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(i) The Eligibility Coordinator will make a determination and recommendation of eligibility and organize the file for signature approval by the Manager of Child Care Services or the designate.

(i) If the applicant is eligible for fee subsidy, the Fee Subsidy Agreement is signed (by the applicant(s), Eligibility Coordinator and the Child Care Manager) and faxed or mailed to the child care provider with contact information regarding the applicant family. The child care provider is then responsible for contacting the applicant(s) in order to begin their intake process. The applicant will also be informed and encouraged to contact the child care provider. Once the Acceptance of Child Care Space form has been received from the provider confirming the start date and attendance schedule, the child is “placed” in the Ontario Child Care Management System with the appropriate attendance schedule for monitoring and payment.

(ii) If the applicant is deemed ineligible, a Notice of Fee Subsidy Ineligibility letter is mailed notifying the applicant that they are ineligible for fee subsidy and will include the reason of ineligibility. The letter will also include instructions on the Internal Review process. See Policy # CC-16 Complaint Resolutions and Appeals.

2. Denial of Applications

If requested by the applicant, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will, despite the applicant’s income being in excess, complete the eligibility assessment interview and will provide the applicant with an opportunity to request an Internal Review of the decision of ineligibility (see Policy # CC-16 Complaint Resolution and Appeals). Response and turnaround times do not apply in these situations and the assessment will be completed by the Eligibility Coordinator as time permits.

3. Time frame

The County of Renfrew strives to fill a vacancy within 10 days. If this timeframe cannot be met, the child care provider is notified and given an estimated time frame for the process to be completed. At this point, the child care provider can choose to grant the space to a full-fee paying applicant.

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4. Office Interviews and Home Visits

Eligibility assessment interviews will be conducted in the County offices in Pembroke, Arnprior, Killaloe and Renfrew. Alternatively, interviews can be held in a Child Care Centre, an Early Years Centre or another convenient public location mutually agreed upon by both parties e.g., Town Hall, public library.

In exceptional circumstances, home visits may be made at the discretion of the Eligibility Coordinator and with approval from the Manager of Child Care Services or designate.

5. Eligibility Assessment Documentation

The Eligibility Coordinator will review original documentation during the eligibility assessment interview. Copies of the documents will be kept on the client file.

As per the Ontario Child Care Service Management Guidelines Fee Subsidy, all families in receipt of a fee subsidy are expected to file an annual Income Tax Return. In the first half of the calendar year, until documentation is available for the previous tax year, parents may present the documentation for two years earlier. Older documentation is not acceptable. The County of Renfrew may update the adjusted income later in the year when more recent documentation is available.

The following documentation is mandatory to verify income and reason for service at the time of the assessment:

- (a) Notice of Assessment (for the most current taxation year);
- (b) Universal Child Care Benefit (e.g. RC 62) (corresponding to the submitted year for the Notice of Assessment);
- (c) Canada Child Tax Benefit Statement (for the most current year);
- (d) Proof of current residency within the County of Renfrew (e.g. current mortgage or rent receipt); and
- (e) Proof of employment, education or special/social needs.

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The following information is also required:

- (a) Birth Verification for all applicants/dependent children e.g. Birth Certificate, Baptismal, Notice of Birth Registration, etc.; and
- (b) Proof of address i.e. current household bill with name and address.

Section 7 outlines the additional information and documentation required in different circumstances to determine eligibility.

Failure to provide the mandatory required documentation will result in a Notice of Fee Subsidy Ineligibility letter outlining the reason for ineligibility. The Eligibility Coordinator is expected to exercise reasonable judgement in requiring copies of other non-mandatory verification documentation. In exceptional circumstances, proof that an application for the required documentation has been made and/or other comparable verification may suffice until such time as the original documentation is submitted to Child Care Services within the required time frame. Where the applicant identifies exceptional or unusual circumstances that prohibit them from providing the required information, an extension may be granted (e.g. risk due to abusive situation).

6. Client File

In addition to the documentation required to determine eligibility, the following forms will be completed and kept on file to represent each eligibility assessment:

- (a) Determination of Available Monthly Income and Parent Contribution;
- (b) Consent to Disclose and Verify Information;
- (c) Rights and Responsibilities form;
- (d) Fee Subsidy Agreement;
- (e) Verification Checklist; and
- (f) Grandparenting Calculation Worksheet (where applicable).

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7. Eligibility Conditions

Financial eligibility for fee subsidies is based on an Income Test. Other circumstances pertaining to eligibility that require clarification are as follows:

- (a) Profile of applicant and reason for fee subsidy;
- (b) Conditions of eligibility including the amount of child care for which the applicant may be eligible; and
- (c) Information required to demonstrate eligibility.

In situations of two-parent families, BOTH applicants must meet the activity criteria in order to become eligible for fee subsidy (does not apply where reason for service is based on a child with special and/or social needs in which documentation confirming the need has been submitted).

Subsidy approval may be considered up to 2 weeks prior to an applicant beginning a confirmed employment or educational activity.

Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
Salaried Employees - full-time	An applicant must be working a minimum of 25 hours per week to qualify for full-time child care which may include up to 5 hours of travel time per week at the discretion of the County of Renfrew. Consideration is given to both travel time and unusual hours of work such as shift work when defining eligibility for full-time care.	Applicant to provide proof of employment e.g. pay stubs, employment contract, etc.
Salaried Employees – part-time	If an applicant is working less than 25 hours per week, including travel time and with consideration given to unusual hours, the eligible child care hours will match the actual hours of work.	Applicant to provide proof of employment schedule and pay stub.

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
Employment exceeding 21.75 days per month	In exceptional circumstances, if the applicant can demonstrate a clear need for care that exceeds 21.75 days/month, it may be provided at the discretion of the Manager of Child Care Services and the child care provider as they must have the appropriate staff and license.	Applicant to provide proof of employment schedule and pay stubs.
Self-Employment	<p>A person is considered to be self-employed if they are actively pursuing or conducting self-employment activity and claiming business expenses against income.</p> <p>The same eligibility conditions exist for eligibility for full and part-time care as for salaried employees.</p> <p>If the recipient experiences a change in circumstance and is challenged to succeed at self-employment, they may be supported for up to 3 months to make the necessary transition i.e. build client base, search for a job.</p>	Applicant to complete and sign a Declaration of Self-Employment. The Declaration will be compared against the Notice of Assessment and the Statement of Business Activities at time of first and subsequent annual reviews. The hours worked will be calculated at the minimum wage against gross income to define the eligible hours of child care when assessing eligibility. If an overpayment is made to the recipient, Policy # CC-07 Fee Subsidy Overpayments and Recoveries will be applicable. The recipient is responsible for initiating modifications to the Declaration of hours worked to avoid an overpayment.
Applicant/recipients who have demonstrated eligibility for a 20% recalculation	An applicant/recipient may apply to the County of Renfrew for a decrease in the amount he or she pays for the cost of child care if the family has a reduction in their adjusted income of 20 % or more during the year compared to their adjusted income	Appropriate documentation must be provided by the applicant(s) to enable the County of Renfrew to verify the change in income such as pay slips, pension benefit statements, RRSP receipts etc. When more accurate information

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
	for the most recent available tax year.	is available, the amount of subsidy that a family was eligible to receive can be reconciled by recovering any overpayments at a future date. See Policy # CC-07 Fee Subsidy Overpayments and Recoveries.
Education/Training - full or part-time	<p>An applicant must be attending school or a recognized training program on a regular basis.</p> <p>Eligible education and training activities includes adult education, high school, post-secondary, apprenticeship programs, and/or correspondence courses.</p> <p>To be eligible for full-time care, the applicant must be taking full-time courses, which is generally considered to be not less than 5 hours per day or 25 hours per week.</p> <p>Part-time is considered to be less than 25 hours per week. In such cases, the eligible child care hours will match the actual hours of education/training with consideration for travel and homework.</p>	Proof of education/training activities and number of hours involved must be provided e.g. class schedule, confirmation of enrollment, etc.
Job Search	An applicant must be looking for work for a prescribed time period up to a maximum of 3 months per calendar year at the discretion of the County of Renfrew.	Applicant to complete and sign a Job Search Declaration outlining their job search requirements and time frames. Applicants are also required to submit a monthly job search journal on the first of each

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
	<p>Job search activities can be full or part- time and care is provided accordingly.</p> <p>Extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances by submitting a written request to the Eligibility Coordinator. In such cases, a review of the circumstances will be completed and recommendation will be made to the Manager of Child Care Services for approval or denial of the request. All approvals and/or denials will be communicated to the applicant in writing. Such extensions, when approved, will be reviewed on a month-to-month basis by the Eligibility Coordinator.</p>	<p>month for the prior month. The same standard applies to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients.</p> <p>The applicant must demonstrate exceptional job search efforts during the initial 3-month period. Likelihood of future employment and/or educational opportunities in the upcoming weeks must be evident. Written verification of the employment and/or start date is required.</p>
Parental Illness/Disability	No parent/guardian in the household is able to care for his/her child(ren) due to one parent having an illness or disability and the other parent is engaged in employment, education/training or job search activities, unless the other parent also has a special need present.	<p>Applicant(s) to provide a note from a physician or a community health professional outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a description of the special need and the reason child care services are required b) the anticipated length of required child care services c) the recommended number of enrollment days <p>A "Documentation of Special Needs/Social Needs" form is available.</p>

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
Child with a Special Need	The Day Nurseries Act defines a child with special needs as ‘A child who has a physical or mental impairment that is likely to continue for a prolonged period of time and who as a result thereof is limited in activities pertaining to normal living as verified by objective psychological or medical findings and includes a child with a developmental disability.’	<p>Applicant(s) to provide a note from a physician or a community health professional outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a description of the special need and the reason child care services are required b) the anticipated length of required child care services c) the recommended number of enrollment days <p>A “Documentation of Special Needs/Social Needs” form is available.</p>
Child with a Social Need	The 2006 Fee Subsidy Guideline defines a child with a social need as “The child may require child care to address a social need due to issues with the home/family environment, ...Social need includes situations where the need is directly related to the child, as well as situations where the child’s need is the result of a greater family need.”	<p>Applicant(s) to provide a note from a Children’s Aid Society, Public Health Unit, family physician, or another early intervention and/or prevention agency/professional recognized by the County of Renfrew outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a description of the special need and the reason child care services are required b) the anticipated length of required child care services c) the recommended number of enrollment days <p>A “Documentation of Special Needs/Social Needs” form is available.</p>

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
Parental Leave	Parent will advise their Child Care Eligibility Coordinator as soon as they begin their Maternity/Parental Leave. Unless parent or child(ren) illness/disability or social needs are present, cancellation notice of the fee subsidy will be activated.	If further care is needed, see above: Parental Illness/Disability or Child with a Special Need or Child with a Social Need.
Custody: Single; Separated; Divorced and/or Blended Families	The fee subsidy applicant(s) must demonstrate they have primary custody and control of the child for whom fee subsidy is requested.	Due to varied custody arrangements, proof of primary custody will be sought through the following documents: Court Orders, Children's Aid Society letters, formal and informal private agreements, etc. In situations where none of the above apply, a written declaration from the applicant may be accepted.
Temporary Care - Ontario Works	Adults caring for children who are receiving temporary care assistance through the Ontario Works program may be eligible for fee subsidies if the caregiver is working, going to school or if a special or social need exists. Such applicants are subject to the Income Test.	Proof of custody arrangements must be provided e.g. Court Order, Children's Aid Society referral.
Temporary Care - Private Arrangement	Adults caring for children who have a defined care arrangement and are not receiving financial assistance through Ontario Works or a Children's Aid Society may be eligible for fee subsidies if the	Proof of the temporary care arrangement shall be provided e.g. Legal documentation (affidavit, Children's Aid Society referral, etc). When legal documentation is not available, a

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	caregiver is working, going to school or if a special or social need exists. These applicants are subject to the Income Test.	written Declaration outlining the custodial arrangement must be provided.
Kinship Service	Adults caring for children who have a defined care arrangement and are not receiving financial assistance through a Children's Aid Society, may be eligible for fee subsidies if the caregiver is working, going to school or if a special or social need exists. These applicants are subject to the Income Test.	Proof of the kinship service arrangement must be provided e.g. Legal documentation (Court Order, Children's Aid Society referral, etc).
Foster Care/Kinship Care	If an applicant is receiving a foster care allowance from a Children's Aid Society, they do not qualify for fee subsidy. Child care is already incorporated into that allowance. This includes Kinship Care when there is a defined financial arrangement to cover child care costs.	
Recent Immigrants	Recent immigrants are defined as people who were not residents of Canada in the previous year and had no Canadian income to report for income tax purposes.	Applicants are not required to have filed an income tax return and their adjusted income should be considered "zero" in the first year. They must provide proof of entry into Canada and proof that they lived outside of Canada in the previous year if there is no Notice of Assessment.

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
		All other eligibility criteria noted within these policies must be met e.g. work, school, special and/or social need.
Applicants without permanent status in Canada e.g. persons with work visas, study visas, or visitors permits	Applicants must demonstrate their intent to stay in Canada in order to be eligible for subsidized child care.	Proof of application for permanent residency must be demonstrated prior to receiving child care fee subsidy.
Sponsored Immigrants	Sponsored immigrants may be eligible for fee subsidies if the applicant(s) is/are working, going to school or if a special or social need exists. See above: Recent Immigrants.	Applicants are not required to have filed an income tax return and their adjusted income should be considered "zero" in the first year. They must provide proof of entry into Canada and proof that they lived outside of Canada in the previous year if there is no Notice of Assessment. All other eligibility criteria noted within these policies must be met e.g. work, school, special and/or social need.
Applicant in receipt of funding for child care from another source e.g. OSAP, EI, Support Agreement, etc.	Money from other sources will not be considered to be directed toward licensed child care unless it is clearly designated for licensed child care. However, the particular circumstances of each case will be	Written documentation outlining funding agreements according to each applicable program and/or funding source.

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Reason for Fee Subsidy	Conditions for Eligibility	Information Required to Demonstrate Eligibility
	reviewed and appropriate child care subsidies will be determined at the discretion of the County of Renfrew.	
Applicants under the age of 18 who have never filed an Income Tax Return	Such applicants may be eligible for an interim child care placement until the Notice of Assessment is received by the applicant. All other eligibility criteria noted within these policies must be met e.g. work, school, special and/or social need.	Income would be considered “zero” with 30 days provided to the applicant to file their first Income Tax Return. The T-1 General will be submitted as proof that an Income Tax Return has been filed. The resulting Notice of Assessment must then be submitted within 30 – 60 days at which time the parent contribution will be confirmed as determined by the Income Test.

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POLICY STATEMENT

Eligibility for fee subsidies will be actively monitored to ensure that recipients meet the eligibility requirements of the County of Renfrew and to comply with the requirements and minimum standards established by the provincial government.

PROCEDURE

Eligibility for fee subsidies is monitored through three distinct processes.

1. Monitoring Attendance

Children are expected to attend the child care program as per their approved hours and days, and fee subsidy recipients are required to notify the child care provider if their child(ren) will be absent for any reason. The County of Renfrew will monitor and review monthly attendance by way of the Record of Attendance in the Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS), an electronic report completed and submitted by the service providers.

(a) Absent Days

Child Care Subsidy will pay for (after the parent's contribution) – up to 20 vacation or absent days per calendar year for each child in the applicant's family unit. The allotted vacation/absent days are pro-rated and the applicant will be held financially responsible for the full cost of vacation/absent days exceeding the allotted maximum. The fee subsidy recipient remains financially responsible for paying their parent contributions during vacation/absent days.

Should a child exceed the allotted vacation/absent days, and additional or subsequent days are utilized, the applicant is responsible for paying the full cost of child care to the provider for that time period. A request can be made for fee subsidy assistance to pay for vacation/absent days in excess of their allotment if extreme family hardship can be demonstrated by completing a Request for Extended Vacation/Absent Days form. The Manager of Child Care Services will review all requests and respond in writing to ensure compliance with reporting standards.

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Should a child be absent more than once on the same day within multiple programs, the child will be considered to have incurred one absence only. (i.e. child is enrolled in both an extended care program as well as a full-day program and is absent for both programs in a given day – this will be counted as one absence only).

(b) Sick Days

A child may be absent from the child care provider for medical/health reasons for up to 24 days per year (pro-rated). An applicant is able to request additional sick days beyond the allotted 24 days in exceptional circumstances (e.g. hospitalization, special needs children with health issues, etc.). Extensions may be approved for extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Manager of Child Care Services.

Both the parent(s) and the child care provider are responsible to report to the Eligibility Coordinator any absence due to illness of a child, which is likely to last longer than 10 consecutive days, which must be accompanied by medical documentation. In addition, if there are prolonged periods of medical/health issues or a pattern of sick days that suggest the fee subsidy is not being well utilized, the County of Renfrew reserves the right to request the parent(s) provide information from a physician outlining the nature of the illness and/or cancel the fee subsidy.

Should a child be absent due to medical/health reasons more than once on the same day within multiple programs, the child will be considered to have incurred one sick day only. (i.e. child is enrolled in both an extended care program as well as a full-day program and is ill from both programs in a given day – this will be counted as one sick day only).

(c) Absent Days – without notice

If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days without notice, the child care provider and the parent(s) are required to contact the Eligibility Coordinator. Dependant upon circumstances, the Eligibility Coordinator may follow-up with the family.

The County of Renfrew reserves the right to cancel fee subsidy of any child who has not been in attendance for 10 business days without notice. Extensions may be approved for extenuating circumstances (hospitalization, severe illness) at the discretion of the Manager of Child Care Services.

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2. Change in Circumstance

The applicant(s) must immediately notify the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator of any changes that occur in their circumstances, which may affect eligibility. This may include changes in residence, marital or family size, employment or schooling, immigration status, etc. Failure to meet this responsibility may result in suspension or immediate cancellation without notice of the child care subsidy, recovery of fees paid on behalf of the parent and/or legal action.

At the time of the eligibility assessment interview, the Eligibility Coordinator will review the reporting procedures with the applicant and attain signatures on the “Rights and Responsibilities” form as part of the application process.

When a change in circumstance is reported, the Eligibility Coordinator will determine if any adjustments are required.

In cases where the applicant has reported a change in circumstance which results in a decreased parental fee, the new parental fee is effective the day the supporting documentation is received. In cases where the applicant has reported a change in circumstance which results in an increase in eligible hours, the effective date is the date the supporting documentation is received dependant upon space availability.

In cases where the applicant has reported a change in circumstance which results in an increased parental fee or a reduced amount of eligible hours, the new parental fee and/or change is effective 10 business days from the date the supporting documentation is processed or at the discretion of the Manager of Child Care Services.

For social assistance recipients: as a social assistance recipient moves to financial independence and exits social assistance, child care assistance remains available as long as the parent is considered eligible under the income test. Best efforts will be made to review a file/case review within 60 days of the social assistance exit, however due to the differences in program procedures/guidelines, it is difficult to anticipate actionable timelines.

For Family and Children Services apprehensions: in cases where a child in receipt of fee subsidy is apprehended and placed in a Family and Children Services Foster Care placement, the Family and Children Services must notify the County of Renfrew Child Care Services within 3 business days. Family and Children Services will thus be responsible for any child care costs incurred following notification. In cases where no notification has been provided ,

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an overpayment will be calculated and issued to Family and Children Services.

3. 12-Month Review

All fee subsidy recipients will have at minimum, a 12- month review to be completed by an Eligibility Coordinator. The Eligibility Coordinator reserves the right to review a file at any time dependant upon a recipient's circumstances. This in-person review is subject to the eligibility conditions defined by the County of Renfrew. See Policy #CC-05 Fee Subsidy Intake and Eligibility Assessment.

The following steps are taken to ensure a review is conducted within a 12-month period.

- (a) A Notice of Child Care Subsidy Review letter outlining the required documentation, will be mailed to the Fee Subsidy Applicant/Spouse 11 months after the previous fee subsidy application/review. The recipient has 10 business days within which to schedule the review appointment.
- (b) During the interview, the Eligibility Coordinator will review the required documentation and determine continued eligibility for fee subsidy.
 - (i) If eligibility continues without change, an updated Fee Subsidy Agreement is completed and parent/guardian signatures are attained. The Manager of Child Care Services or designate will approve all Fee Subsidy Agreements, which are then faxed to the appropriate provider(s). The original document is mailed to the recipient(s) with a copy retained for the file.
 - (ii) If eligibility continues with change, an updated Fee Subsidy Agreement is mailed to the recipient outlining the change(s). In some situations, a Notice of Fee Subsidy Change form may also be applicable. A copy of the Notice of Fee Subsidy Change – Provider Version will be faxed to the provider and a Notice of Fee Subsidy Change – Recipient Version will be mailed to the applicant(s). The Recipient Versions will include information on requesting an Internal Review. Copies of all correspondence will be retained for the client file.
 - (iii) If ineligibility is determined, a Cancellation of Fee Subsidy Notice – Recipient Version is mailed to the recipient outlining the reason for

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cancellation as well as the last day for fee subsidy. In situations where an ongoing fee subsidy is cancelled, Child Care Services will give 10 business days' notice to the recipient(s) and the provider prior to the fee subsidy cancellation date. The letter includes information on requesting an Internal Review. The fee subsidy closure process is initiated by the Eligibility Coordinator. See Policy #CC-08 Fee Subsidy Case Closure.

If an overpayment is incurred, steps will be taken to recover the funds. See Policy #CC-07 Fee Subsidy Overpayments and Recoveries. A Cancellation of Fee Subsidy Notice – Provider Version is faxed to the provider advising of the child's fee subsidy cancellation date (the Provider Version does not include the reason for fee subsidy cancellation).

If the applicant does not provide the necessary information to verify continued eligibility, a Notice of Outstanding Information letter, outlining the required information with the due date, is mailed to the recipient. The letter invites the recipient to contact the Eligibility Coordinator with an explanation if they are having difficulty accessing the required information. The recipient must provide the outstanding information within 10 business days. Failure to submit the outstanding information within the given time period will result in cancellation of the fee subsidy. An extension may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the Eligibility Coordinator.

- (c) In cases where the recipient does not make contact with the Child Care office within 10 business days of the mailing date of the Notice of Fee Subsidy Review, or if the recipient does not attend their scheduled appointment without notice, steps will be taken to cancel the fee subsidy. See Policy #CC-08 Fee Subsidy Case Closure. An extension may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the Eligibility Coordinator.

4. Payment of Parental Contribution Fees

Parent/guardian(s) whose child is enrolled in a Purchase of Service child care agency, will be invoiced by the provider for their per diem fee in accordance with the provider's procedure.

Parent/guardian(s) who have arrears/overpayments directly relating to their Fee Subsidy Agreements with either the County of Renfrew or a Service Provider, with whom the County

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has a contractual agreement, will be required to pay the arrears/overpayment before being considered for future subsidy. Upon confirmation that the arrears/overpayment have been paid in full (letter or receipt from County Finance or Service Provider), an application for fee subsidy may be completed. See Policy # CC-07 Fee Subsidy Overpayments and Recoveries for additional details pertaining to arrears, recovery procedures and recovery rates.

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SECTION: Child Care Services			Policy #: CC-07
POLICY: Fee Subsidy Overpayments and Recoveries			
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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew will establish consistent overpayment and recovery procedures that will outline how overpayments are established and when recoveries will occur as well as establish recovery rates and procedures.

PROCEDURE

1. Standards of Information

At the time of determining initial eligibility, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will inform all applicant of the nature of the fee subsidy they will receive. The Rights and Responsibilities form is designed to inform the applicant regarding their responsibilities in providing information to the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator in order that eligibility can be maintained accurately. It is important at the time of initial eligibility, that the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator is satisfied that the applicant understands their responsibilities. As such, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will explain the Rights and Responsibilities form to the applicant in a manner that is easily understood.

2. What is an Overpayment?

Overpayments may occur in situations where the applicant provides incorrect information regarding their financial circumstances or activity, and fails to notify the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator when changes affecting eligibility have occurred. An overpayment is the difference between the amount of fee subsidy paid on behalf of the applicant less the amount that actually should have been paid according to their circumstances.

Overpayments are established when a fee subsidy was paid on behalf of an applicant that he or she was not eligible to receive. Applicants must report any changes in, marital, employment and/or child circumstances (i.e. custody) to the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator as they occur. Verification of these changes may also be required as they occur.. The Rights and Responsibilities form signed by the applicant(s) at the time of initial eligibility informs them of their responsibility to report all changes that could affect eligibility for fee subsidy or a change in eligible hours of care (i.e. change in child custody, loss of employment, etc.).

3. Notice of Change of Circumstance

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At the time of receiving information which alters eligibility for the fee subsidy, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will inform the applicant regarding the change in their fee subsidy eligibility. Applicants may inform the Eligibility Coordinator of the new information in person, by telephone or in writing. Where the notification is verbal (in person or telephone) the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will input a brief note in the Ontario Child Care Management System Case Notes. The Eligibility Coordinator will also notify the applicant of the effect of the information on eligibility and the new parental contribution and/or the amount of eligible care. If the new information affects the parent contribution amount, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will notify the provider and the applicant in writing. See Policy CC-06 Fee Subsidy Monitoring Eligibility.

4. Recovering Overpayments

If the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator receives information from the recipient informing them of a change which occurred prior to the present date and the changes decrease the amount of eligible fee subsidy, an overpayment will result. The Child Care Eligibility Coordinator should ensure that a Rights and Responsibilities form has been completed within the last twelve months and is present on file.

If an applicant provides inaccurate or incomplete information at the time of the fee subsidy eligibility assessment, and this information would have affected their parent contribution or eligible hours of care, an overpayment will result.

Retroactive calculations must be completed by using the correct information to determine the overpayment amount. These calculations must be documented in the narrative explaining the circumstances involved in the creation of the overpayment and whether the circumstances were within the control of the applicant. The Child Care Eligibility Coordinator will notify the client in writing of the outcome of the overpayment review as well as their right to appeal the decision.

5. Documentation

All overpayments must be documented in a Case Note. This should describe the circumstances surrounding the overpayment, the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator's actions, the change in eligibility and the total overpayment incurred. If an overpayment already exists, this will be mentioned in the report, and the new total amount owing calculated. If the overpayment is determined to be uncollectible, the circumstance supporting this decision should be stated clearly. However, the applicant incurring the uncollectible

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overpayment risks ineligibility of any further fee subsidy until such a time as the overpayment is collected.

6. Notification

All recipients with overpayments will be notified in writing that an overpayment has been incurred, the amount of the overpayment, the reasons for the overpayment as well as the process for an Internal Review.

7. Collection of Overpayments

Collection for ongoing clients of overpayments involving fee subsidy may be collected as an account receivable of the County of Renfrew. However, in some cases, overpayments will be collected by the licensed childcare provider. The entire amount is expected to be paid or suitable arrangements must be negotiated with the Child Care Eligibility Coordinator.

In arranging for repayment terms, a written signed agreement will constitute “acceptable arrangements”. Each repayment agreement will include:

- a) The total amount to be repaid;
- b) Monthly payments not less than 10% of the total amount owed;
- c) The manner in which payments will be made (certified cheque or money order);
- d) The fact that payments must be made on time regardless of postal strikes or poor mail delivery; and
- e) An written understanding that failure to make the payments agreed to will constitute the full amount becoming due and owing. Eligibility for continued fee subsidy will end and court action for recovery of the amount may occur.

In circumstances of re-application where the outstanding overpayment owed is more than the monthly parent contribution to be paid, eligibility for the fee subsidy will be denied. If all other eligibility factors are considered and the individual re-applying would normally be eligible for the fee subsidy, they will be given the option of providing full payment to the County of Renfrew to eliminate the overpayment. Eligibility for the fee subsidy will then be granted.

In the case of file closures, the case file will be forwarded to the Manager of Child Care

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Services for collection. Recovery of the overpayment is expected to occur in a timely fashion. Ineligibility for a future fee subsidy will result due to an outstanding overpayment. For inactive cases, the file will be transferred to the Manager of Child Care Services for collection in cooperation with the Finance Department or in some circumstances, a collection agency may be utilized.

8. Parental Contribution Arrears

In circumstances where a recipient has defaulted in their parental contribution to the provider, the provider is required to advise the County of Renfrew within thirty days of the first default. The provider must submit copies of all outstanding invoices and/or statement of account. The County of Renfrew will review all documentation and may cancel further fee subsidy until the outstanding parent fees are paid in full. This is according to the applicant(s)'s financial obligation to the provider as outlined in their Rights & Responsibilities form. Upon mutual agreement between the applicant and provider, a suitable repayment arrangement may be negotiated.

The Service Provider may charge parents additional sums in the event that a child enrolled receives extra hours of care, separately agreed upon (outside of the Fee Subsidy Agreement approval). Arrears incurred in this arrangement would not constitute an overpayment within the County of Renfrew Fee Subsidy program and is strictly between the applicant(s) and the Provider. The County of Renfrew discourages the practice of user fees.

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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew will establish case closure standards that will outline worker responsibilities related to closing a case and ensure that decisions are properly documented. A consistent procedure for notifying applicants and providers of file closure will be established.

PROCEDURE

1. Cancellation of Fee Subsidy

Child Care subsidy may be cancelled for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include but are not limited to the following circumstances:

(a) County Initiated:

- (i) The applicant is no longer eligible for reasons related to income or activity;
- (ii) Eligibility cannot be determined due to insufficient information;
- (iii) The period for which subsidy was approved has expired (i.e. job searching, training program etc);
- (iv) The situation for which subsidy was approved has changed (i.e. child custody, parent no longer working/school, parent no longer residing within the County of Renfrew etc.);
- (v) The child does not fall within the age parameters of the funding and/or Fee Subsidy Guidelines; and
- (vi) The applicant fails to adhere to the policies and procedures of the County of Renfrew;

(b) Provider Initiated:

- (i) The child care is discontinued due to child's age as determined by the child care license;

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- (ii) Subsidy may be discontinued as a result of the parent and/or child not adhering to the policies and procedures of the provider (i.e. non-payment of fees etc.); and
 - (iii) Failure to comply with the terms of the enrollment agreement (i.e. irregular attendance etc.).
- (c) Parent Initiated:
- (i) At the parent's discretion (i.e. moving or service no longer required); and
 - (ii) Incompatibility between the service and the needs of the parent/child.

2. Notice Periods

(a) Notice by Parent and/or Provider

When a parent receiving subsidized child care determines that they will not require further child care, they must provide a minimum of 10 business days' written notice to the provider, who will in turn notify the County of Renfrew Child Care Services by way of a Notice of Withdrawal signed by both the parent and the provider. Recipients will be advised at the time of application and all subsequent reviews of this requirement. Recipients will remain responsible for their parent contribution fees to the end of the 10 day notice period. Applicants failing to provide 10 days' notice will continue to be charged for the full 10 days for which they were required to have provided notice, unless the space is filled by another child without delay. Where there is a short gap, the client who failed to provide notice will be charged for the number of days the space remained vacant.

Similarly, providers who determine that they will cancel the enrollment agreement with a parent/child must provide 10 business days' notice to the applicant and the County of Renfrew. However, in circumstances where safety issues are of concern, the provider reserves the right to cancel the space immediately. The notice must include the reason that service is being discontinued and the final date of service.

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(b) Notice by the County

All decisions related to ongoing fee subsidy are subject to the notice procedure. In cases where the fee subsidy cancellation is initiated by the County of Renfrew, 10 business days' written notice will be provided to both the provider and the recipient.

3. Preparation of the Closed File

Once the Eligibility Coordinator has made a decision, the details in support of the decision must be noted in the Case Note. The file must also be reviewed to determine if there are any outstanding overpayments. If an outstanding overpayment exists, this information will be added to the Case Note and once all other closure activities have been completed, the file will be forwarded to the Manager of Child Care Services for recovery.

The Eligibility Coordinator will prepare the Fee Subsidy Cancellation Notice letter. In cases of an overpayment, the client will be advised of the procedures for repayment. The original letter will be forwarded to the client and a copy placed in the case file. Where the County of Renfrew has initiated the cancellation of fee subsidy, the recipient will be advised of the Appeals process and the method in which to initiate an Internal Review. See Policy #CC-16 Complaint Resolution and Appeals.

4. Appeals

Applicants found ineligible, or applicants whose subsidy is cancelled or varied may appeal the decision. All letters to applicants must include the reason(s) the applicant is not eligible, the effective date of the decision and reference to the appeal procedure. Decisions made to cancel service which originated with the provider, must be in writing and copied to both the client and the County of Renfrew Child Care Services.

Cancellations initiated by the provider may be appealed by the applicant directly to the Board of Directors (non-profit agencies) or the Director (for-profit agencies) of the respective provider.

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POLICY: Integration Services Referral			
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POLICY STATEMENT

All children and families will have equal access to Integration Services in the County of Renfrew. The process of accessing services involves fully informed parent/guardian choice, consent and confidentiality requirements.

The Day Nurseries Act defines a child with special needs as: *“a child with a physical, mental, or developmental impairment that is likely to continue for a prolonged period of time as verified by an objective psychological or medical findings.”* These needs include developmental deficits in emotional, social, behavioural, communication, fine and gross motor skills.

PROCEDURE

The need for integration support services can be identified in advance of the child entering child care services or when the child is already receiving child care services.

1. New to service and Fee Subsidy not required.

If a child is newly entering the system and does not require fee subsidy the following steps are taken:

- (a) The parent/guardian visits the child care centre/agency and meets with program staff to determine if there is space available in the centre/agency. Note: In some cases a referral has already been made on behalf of the family by another agency. Acceptance of this referral will depend upon parent approval and enrollment of the child in a child care program.
- (b) If there is space and the parent/guardian is interested in having their child receive services through that agency a referral is made to Integration Services.

A referral can be made by:

- (i) The parent/guardian responsible for the child that will be receiving care;
 - (ii) The child care service provider offering the service; or
 - (iii) Other professional agency involved in providing services to the child.
- (c) To make a referral a Referral Form, a Concern Form outlining the nature of the

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concerns and a Consent Form indicating consent to release information are submitted to County of Renfrew Child Care Services. The consent of a parent/guardian is always required in order for a file to become active.

These forms can be faxed, mailed or hand delivered to the County of Renfrew Child Care Services - Integration Services.

- (d) Once a referral is received it is acknowledged in writing. If the referral is not made by the child care provider the provider is notified on receipt of the referral.
- (e) The Integration Coordinator will contact the parent/guardian to get additional information about the child and his/her support needs. The Integration Coordinator will:
 - (i) encourage the parent/guardian to connect with the child care provider of their choice to assess if the centre can accommodate their child. The parent/guardian is responsible for indicating what centre they wish to have their child enrolled in and to meet with the provider to determine if the child's needs could be accommodated;
 - (ii) ask if the child has a confirmed diagnosis and request that diagnosis information from the parent/guardian or determine how to get that information from appropriate agency; and/or
 - (iii) if the child does not have a confirmed diagnosis, the Integration Coordinator will request that the parent/guardian seek a recommendation from their family physician that the child is assessed for the presenting developmental concern and that they apply for assessment from the appropriate agency.

2. New to service and Fee Subsidy required

At the time of application for fee subsidy the parent/guardian has the option of indicating on the Application if the child has special needs. If a child is newly entering the system and does require fee subsidy the following steps are taken:

- (a) If a fee subsidy application indicates a special need, or the Eligibility Coordinators communication with the parent indicates a special need information will be provided to the parent about Integration Services.

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- (b) Fee subsidy applicants will be mailed information about Integration services in the Letter of Confirmation and advised of the referral process for Integration Services.
- (c) If a referral is made to Integration Services, the Intake Coordinator will monitor the child care vacancy rate and an estimated one month before the child is likely to be at the top of the list, the Integration Coordinator will follow-up with parents to confirm that the parent has communicated with the chosen child care service provider regarding the needs of their child.
- (d) If they have not already done so, the parent/guardian will be encouraged to follow-up with the centre to determine if they have the capacity to accommodate a child with special needs. The parent/guardian will inform the Integration Coordinator once they have done so.
- (e) If the parent/guardian has been in contact with the centre, the Integration Coordinator will follow-up with the centre to confirm that they can accommodate the child in the near future once fee subsidies and resource funding is available.
- (f) The Integration Coordinator will review anticipated resource needs against resource availability and inform the Eligibility Coordinator if the required resources are likely to be available once the child is at the top of the waiting list. The Eligibility Coordinator can then proceed with the fee subsidy process with the knowledge that the integration support needs can be met.

If Integration Services receives the referral for service directly and it is indicated that fee subsidy is required, the same process will be followed. See also Policy # CC-04 Fee Subsidy Application and Intake.

3. Child Receiving Service – with or without Fee Subsidy

If a child is already receiving services from a child care service provider, with or without fee subsidy, and a need for integration support has been identified, a referral is made to Integration Services.

The same process for referral is followed as for new applicants for child care services.

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POLICY: Integration Services Assessment and Family Centered Planning			
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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew seeks to ensure that children with special needs have the same opportunity to attend and actively participate in child care programs as their peers. A child with special needs and the child care staff who support them will have access to supports which facilitate high quality inclusive early childhood experiences. The services provided will be established with fully informed parent/guardian choice, consent and confidentiality requirements.

The Day Nurseries Act defines a child with special needs as *“a child with a physical, mental, or developmental impairment that is likely to continue for a prolonged period of time as verified by an objective psychological or medical findings.”* These needs include developmental deficits in emotional, social, behavioural, communication, fine and gross motor skills.

PROCEDURE

1. Developing a Family Centered Plan

An Integration Coordinator takes the following steps (See Policy #CC-09 Integration Services Referral) if a referral is received with the required Consent and Concern Forms attached:

- (a) The Integration Coordinator seeks information about the diagnosis of the child. If the parent/guardian does not have a confirmed diagnosis they are asked to have a form completed and signed by a physician that indicates support for the family to seek an assessment of the developmental concern.
- (b) The Integration Coordinator will schedule a Family Centered Planning meeting to establish the priorities/goals/objectives for the child if:
 - (i) the parent/guardian has a confirmed diagnosis for the child;
 - (ii) a form has been signed by a physician indicating support for the family to seek an assessment of the developmental concern; or
 - (iii) the parent/guardian continues to agree to have Integration Services engaged in providing service.
- (c) The Integration Coordinator invites the following people to participate in the Family Centered Planning meeting:
 - (i) the parent/guardian;

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- (ii) the child care service provider; and
- (iii) appropriate professionals with relevant information about the child's needs and capacities as indicated by parents.
- (d) The Integration Coordinator facilitates the Family Centered Planning meeting. During the first meeting, information is shared to establish:
 - (i) priorities/goals/objectives for the child;
 - (ii) types of supports needed;
 - (iii) whether or not an application will be made for Resource Funding; and
 - (iv) the role of relevant professionals in implementing the plan.
- (e) After the meeting the Integration Coordinator develops the Family Centered Plan and copies are provided to all participants.
- (f) Family Centered Plans are reviewed at a minimum of every 12 months.

2. Simplified Planning Process

For approved recreation programs, a simplified process may occur due to limited time frames. In this situation, the Integration Coordinator will initiate a case conference with the relevant people to define needs and resource funding requirements.

3. Role of Integration Services

The role of the Integration Coordinator is to ensure the inclusion of each child within the overall program of the centre and to encourage a team approach to working with the child.

An Integration Coordinator is able to provide five different types of support related to a particular child:

- (a) Training for staff;
- (b) Environmental assessment;
- (c) Behaviour management recommendations;

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- (d) Resource funding for a child with a confirmed diagnosis or for whom steps have been taken to seek a diagnosis; or
- (e) Lending of resource material.

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POLICY: Integration Services Resource Funding and Levels of Service			
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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew seeks to ensure that children with special needs have the same opportunity to attend and actively participate in child care services as their peers. Children with special needs and child care staff will have access to supports which facilitate high quality inclusive child care services. The appropriate level of Resource Funding is allocated to meet identified needs according to best practices and within eligibility requirements.

PROCEDURES

1. Level of Resource Funding

In order to determine what level of service to provide through Resource Funding the following steps are taken:

- (a) The child care service provider completes and submits a Request for Resource Funding to Integration Services.
- (b) The Application for Resource Funding is completed by the child care service provider. The Resource Funding applied for should reflect the child to staff ratio and whether or not there are existing Resource staff in the classroom.
- (c) The Integration Coordinator makes arrangements to observe the child in the child care setting. They also request relevant observational data from the child care service provider.
- (d) The Integration Coordinator completes the Level of Service Indicator Tool for the hours of Resource funding requested.
- (e) The Integration Coordinator forwards the Application for Resource Funding and the Level of Service Indicator Tool to the Manager of Child Care Services.
- (f) If funding is available and the documents indicate that there is a need for Resource Funding support for the requested hours a Letter of Confirmation will be mailed or faxed to the child care service provider.

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- (g) After receiving the Letter of Confirmation the child care service provider can proceed to hire the appropriate resources to meet the needs of the child within the hours and agreed to times.
- (h) If the request for Resource Funding exceeds the annual budgetary expenditures the child is placed on a waiting list for Resource Funding as per priority of need.
- (i) If the request for Resource Funding exceeds the needs for funding as per Integration Services observations and the Level of Service Indicator Tool further observational data may be required to proceed with consideration of the application. In some cases a temporary plan for Resource Funding may be granted for a period of up to 3 months upon receipt of requested observational data.
- (j) After the 3-month period a final determination is made of the Resource Funding required. Once there is resolution the same steps are followed pending resource availability. See Policy # CC-16 Complaint Resolution and Appeals.

2. Role of the Resource Staff

Resource Staff provide enhanced staffing to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings and recreation programs.

Examples of the types of support services provided include but are not limited to:

- (a) Assistance with feeding, mobility and other activities of daily living;
- (b) Support with socialization and behaviour management;
- (c) Development of cognitive and communication skills;
- (d) Development of fine or gross motor skills;
- (e) Development of self help skills; and
- (f) Development of sleeping habits

3. Responsibilities of the Child Care Service Provider

The child care centre:

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- (a) is responsible for hiring, supervising and training of the Resource Staff related to the centre's operation;
- (b) must demonstrate that the Resource Staff will be considered over and above the staff to child ratio set out in the Day Nurseries Act;
- (c) will create an inclusive child care setting that can accommodate the child with special needs in accordance with the Family Centered Plan and subsequent Implementation Plan;
- (d) will provide time for centre staff, the Resource Staff and Integration Coordinator to meet to support service provision as requested;
- (e) provide relevant information about the child's behaviour, development and health to Integration Services staff;
- (f) will ensure relevant staff participate in required planning and assessment activities, case conferences and training opportunities as needed; and
- (g) abide by all of the terms and conditions set out in the most recent Service Agreement.

4. Billing for Resource Funding

Once the plan is in place for Resource Funding arrangements are made to: maintain appropriate statistics related to service provision; and bill for the agreed upon funding at the end of every month.

The position of a Resource Staff is a casual position. The child care centre will receive Resource Funding from the County of Renfrew under the following parameters:

- (a) If the child is present, full costs are covered as per the agreement;
- (b) If the child is absent with notice the costs of the Resource Staff is not covered; and
- (c) If the child is absent without notice costs are covered for a minimum of 3 hours or a full day at the discretion of the child care service provider.

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5. Changes in Funding

The needs of the child and their family may change over time. The Integration Coordinators review the level of Resource Funding at least once per year or more frequently at the discretion of the Integration Coordinator. The child care service provider can also apply for a change in the level of Resource Funding.

Changes in the level of Resource Funding can reflect but are not limited to the following reasons:

- (a) a change in child care needs/arrangements e.g. a transition to school, family is moving away;
- (b) a change in the presenting condition or status of the child e.g. goals are met, more support is needed;
- (c) incompatibility between the service and the needs of the family/child that can not be resolved;
- (d) the parent/guardian are not adhering to the policies and procedures of the provider;
- (e) the parent/guardian fails to comply with the terms of the enrollment agreement (i.e. irregular attendance); or
- (f) the child care provider fails to follow the recommendations made by the Integration Coordinator.

6. Enhancement to Resource Funding

An application can also be made to increase the level of Resource Funding using the Application for Resource Funding. The Integration Coordinator or the child care service provider can initiate this change.

7. Reduction in Resource Funding

If there is a reduced need for Resource Funding support a Termination/Reduction of Resource Funding form is completed.

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8. Termination of Resource Funding

If Resource Funding is to be terminated a Termination/Reduction of Resource Funding form is completed.

9. Giving Notice

Notice can be provided by the parent, the child care service provider or the County of Renfrew. The following conditions are to be followed:

(a) Notice by Parent

The parent/guardian whose child is supported through Resource Funding who are making a change to the care arrangements must provide notice to the child care provider and Integration Services in writing. Upon notification of the child's status the provider will complete the Termination/Reduction of Resource Funding form.

(b) Notice by Provider

Providers who determine that they will terminate the enrollment agreement with a parent/guardian must provide written notice to Integration Services. The Termination/Reduction of Resource Funding form must include the reason that service is being discontinued and the effective date of the change. Providers are responsible for returning Resource Funding overpayments to the County of Renfrew.

(c) Notice by the County of Renfrew

The County of Renfrew must provide at least two weeks notice to the parent/guardian and the child care service provider if they have initiated the discontinuation of service.

The Termination/Reduction of Resource Funding form must include the reason that service is being discontinued and the final date of service. The parent/guardian will be informed of the reason for termination. The child care service provider and the parent/guardian will also be advised of the appeals process and how to initiate a review. See Policy # CC-16 Complaint Resolution and Appeals.

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SECTION: Child Care Services			Policy #: CC-12
POLICY: Integration Services Implementation Planning and Follow-up			
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POLICY STATEMENT

Appropriate implementation planning and follow-up is required to give children with special needs the same opportunity to attend and actively participate in child care programs with their peers and to ensure that children with special needs and child care staff have access to supports which facilitate high quality inclusive early childhood experiences.

PROCEDURE

1. Implementation Plan

The Integration Coordinator develops an Implementation Plan that outlines the methodology for implementing the goals of the Family Centered Plan. The consulting Psychologist will review and approve the goals and recommendations made in an Implementation Plan by the Integration Coordinator. The Implementation Plan is reviewed with the parent/guardian and the child care service provider. Both parties sign the Implementation Plan to indicate that they agree with the goals and methodology.

Once the plan is complete, the parent/guardian determines which service providers/agencies should receive a copy.

2. Implementation Follow-up

Once an Implementation Plan is in place the Integration Coordinator is responsible for monitoring and follow-up. This involves:

- (a) Monitoring progress of the child - what is working well and what requires change;
- (b) Initiating the development of alternate goals and strategies;
- (c) Modeling effective teaching methods to promote inclusive practices;
- (d) Obtaining and reviewing reports from other service providers¹ involved with the child;

¹ Examples include: Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre, Family and Children's Services – Developmental Services, Infant Development Program, Community Care Access Centre, Preschool Speech & Language, Phoenix Centre.

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- (e) Case conferencing and coordination with other service providers;
- (f) Referrals to other agencies, programs and services;
- (g) Supporting a transition to school part-time or full time;
- (h) Communicating with the parent/guardian about the child's needs and progress;
- (i) Maintaining case notes;
- (j) Making arrangements to lend resources (i.e. books and toys) which require the completion of the Agreement Form for resources received; and/or
- (k) Supporting the transition to other facilities to ensure a smooth transition.

Social Services Policies and Procedures			
SECTION: Child Care Services			Policy #: CC-13
POLICY: Integration Services File Closure			
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POLICY STATEMENT

Integration Resource Funding supports are in place for the period of time that they are actively required by the child and the child care service provider working with the child.

PROCEDURE

1. A file is closed after three months of inactivity. Reasons for closure include but are not limited to:
 - (a) The goals for the child are met;
 - (b) The child is too old for child care services and moves on to school;
 - (c) The child care provider or the parent choose not to continue with Integration Services even though the child remains in the child care service;
 - (d) The child has moved or is removed from the child care service; or
 - (e) A diagnosis has not been attained or is not being sought within 3 months of initial contact.

All correspondence and documentation in the file is organized chronologically with the most current File Closure Form on top.

The file is reviewed to determine if there is any outstanding Resource Funding overpayments made to the child care provider. If an outstanding overpayment exists, this information will be added to the file and once all other termination activities have been completed, the file will be forwarded to the Manager of Child Care Services for recovery from the child care service provider.

A follow up file closure Quality Assurance Survey is sent out to the parents.

Social Services Policies and Procedures			
SECTION: Child Care Services			Policy #: CC-14
POLICY: Wage Subsidy			
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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew is committed to maintaining a wage subsidy program that complies with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Children and Youth Services Guidelines and Day Nurseries Act. The County recognizes the critical role that wage subsidies have in maintaining adequate employment conditions for staff working in childcare agencies/programs.

PROCEDURE

The wage subsidy program is a provider enhancement grant program intended to improve the salary and benefit levels of permanent employees (full-time or part-time) and payments to home child care providers. The funds are intended as a wage enhancement and must be consistent with achievement of pay equity plans and are intended for non-profit agencies only.

1. General Guidelines

- (a) Each service provider who receives wage subsidy funds must submit to the County of Renfrew a Child Care Wage Subsidy Utilization Statement in response to submission deadlines.
- (b) County of Renfrew Wage subsidy funds must be distributed according to the formula established in the Ministry of Children and Youth Services Guidelines and Day Nurseries Act. Child care provider excess funds may not be redistributed, these must be declared as surplus, and returned with the Child Care Wage Subsidy Utilization Statement.
- (c) The purpose of Wage Subsidy Funding is to enhance salaries and benefits of eligible staff, therefore the County of Renfrew will expect that these funds are distributed as part of ongoing salary and wage payments to staff or otherwise approved by the County of Renfrew.
- (d) Additional wage subsidy funding as available for service expansion will only be provided if the expansion is part of the County of Renfrew Child Care Management Plan.
- (e) A portion of the Wage Subsidy grant may be used to fund the employers' share of benefits related to the enhanced salaries.

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2. Providing Wage Subsidy Funds

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the County of Renfrew will review and re-allocate where available, wage subsidy funds to the appropriate programs based on the agreed upon service profile, approved budget and the formulas outlined in Appendix B of the Child Care Wage Subsidy Guidelines and Procedures.

Program operators are responsible for equitably distributing the funds among their permanent positions. Should employee and or service levels drop below the approved maximum levels in the budget-service contract, surplus wage subsidy dollars will result. These may not be redistributed amongst positions that have already received wage subsidy funding but can be redistributed amongst other positions; therefore, service providers must report any significant reduction in service levels and/or staffing to the Manager of Child Care Services.

An annual Child Care Wage Subsidy Review Package is required at the end of each fiscal year in order to provide funds in the next fiscal year.

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POLICY: Agency Reporting Requirements and Accountability			
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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew will identify and implement consistent contractual obligations for service providers who are located within the County of Renfrew boundaries. The agreements will comply with the requirements and minimum standards as established by the Day Nurseries Act and Regulations and the guiding principles for managing childcare services.

PROCEDURES

The reporting requirements for service providers will be different according to the service offered. The streams of service provision include:

- (a) Fee subsidy;
- (b) Wage subsidy and wage improvement; and
- (c) Special Needs Resourcing.

Reporting processes are in place for each of these streams.

In addition, service providers are required to provide access to authorized representatives of the County of Renfrew to program facilities for the purposes of the inspection of records, documentation and data required to be maintained on site by the Operator as required by the Day Nurseries Act and Regulation.

This policy describes the reporting requirements for the monitoring of each individual program, excluding payments. Reporting for the purposes of payment of funds for services provided are detailed in each individual program service contract.

1. Financial Reporting

Each provider with an established service agreement with the County is required to maintain financial records pursuant to the service contracts.

Financial records shall include:

- (a) Assets;
- (b) Liabilities;

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- (c) Income;
- (d) Expenses; and
- (e) Accumulated surplus and deficit.

Providers must retain the financial records for a minimum of seven years as per Ministry of Children and Youth Services and submit an annual audited report or otherwise required documentation by a licensed public accountant within four months of the end of the fiscal year in accordance with County of Renfrew policies.

2. Monthly Program Reporting

Each purchase of service provider will be required to submit monthly Ontario Child Care Management System reports, Integration Services Monthly Expense reports and Integration Services Special Needs Resourcing Ministry Statistics reports as per due date and caseload.

The County of Renfrew reimbursement for Fee Subsidy is based on this monthly report, which will not exceed the daily rate, charged to fee paying parents or the approved County of Renfrew capped rate.

3. Record Keeping

Under the Day Nurseries Act, Regulation 262 requires operators to keep daily records:

48(1) Every operator shall ensure that up-to-date records that are available for inspection by a program adviser at all times are kept on the premises of a day nursery or private-home day care agency operated by the operator that include in respect of each child enrolled...

48(2) Every operator shall ensure that a record is kept of the daily attendance of each child enrolled in each day nursery operated by the operator and in each location where private-home day care is provided by the operator.

The County expects that the monthly reports required above are summaries of the information operators are required to keep to comply with Day Nurseries Act and Regulation. Payments to service providers may be withheld pending all required documents to support payment.

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(a) Quarterly Reports

Each operator and service provider who is in receipt of Wage Subsidy will be required to submit to the County of Renfrew a quarterly report. Each report must contain the required financial information referencing the agreed upon budget which outlines a variance report in actual spending compared to the agreed upon budget.

(b) Annual Program Reports

(i) The Service Provider will maintain financial records and books of account respecting services provided pursuant to this agreement for each site where service is being provided and will allow the County or such other persons appointed by the County, at all reasonable times, to inspect and audit such records and books of account both during the term of this agreement and subsequent to its expiration or termination.

(ii) The Service Provider will, unless the County indicates otherwise, submit to the County within four (4) months of the Service Provider's financial year end, the following:

- Certification Report: Agencies in receipt of annual County of Renfrew wage subsidy, wage improvement, pay equity, fee subsidy and/or Special Needs Resource funds under \$10,000.00 per year;
- Financial Statement: Agencies in receipt of annual County of Renfrew wage subsidy, wage improvement, pay equity and/or fee subsidy funds between \$10,000.00 and \$20,000.00 per year; and
- Audited Financial Statement: Agencies in receipt of annual County of Renfrew wage subsidy, wage improvement, pay equity and/or fee subsidy funds over \$20,000.00 per year.

Year-end reporting packages for each reporting agency will be provided by the County of Renfrew prior to each year-end.

Each agency will be required to complete a Capital Fund Expenditure report at year-end if Capital Funds have been received.

(iii) The Service Provider will retain the records and books of account referred to in section 6(a) above for a period of seven (7) years.

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- (iv) The Service Provider will prepare and submit annually, or at any time upon reasonable request, a financial report in such form and containing such information as the County may require.
- (v) The Service Provider will adhere to any additional financial reporting requirement specified in the attached Service Description / Data Schedule.
- (vi) The Service Provider shall complete and maintain daily attendance records in accordance with their own policies and procedures which records the County may inspect and audit from time to time as they see fit.

3. Purchase of Service Providers

Each Service Provider may be required to provide the following:

- (a) Service information related to the contractual agreement;
- (b) A service profile outlining the services offered, the number and ages of children served and the staff ratio;
- (c) Plans and priorities for change in the coming year;
- (d) A current certificate of renewal for insurance; and/or
- (e) Current rental or lease information.

4. Quality Assurance Accreditation Program

All licensed child care providers with a service agreement will be expected to participate in a quality assurance or accreditation program as approved by the County of Renfrew. Program specifics will be outlined in the annual service contract.

5. Annual Inspections

All service providers must be accessible to an annual inspection of the premises of operation by the County of Renfrew and/or Ministry of Children and Youth Service's staff. An annual inspection may take course over a period of visits both random and planned. Purposes of these inspections are to observe, evaluate and inspect all records related to the services being provided.

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Standards and care provided will be assessed for compliance with the Day Nurseries Act and Regulation, and the following areas of Regulation 262 will be addressed through on-site inspection:

- (a) Building and Accommodation
- (b) Equipment and Furnishings
- (c) Playground
- (d) Fire Safety and Emergency Information
- (e) Health and Medical Supervision
- (f) Nutrition
- (g) Behavior Management
- (h) Enrolment and Records
- (i) Program
- (j) Program Staff Numbers and Group Size
- (k) Staff Qualifications
- (l) Health Assessment and Immunization

The on-site inspection may investigate some areas of the program through selective random inquiry, through the request of one or more staff records to investigate qualifications and immunization etc. In other areas, both written policies and observation of the application of the policies will take place i.e. processes for behavior management. In the case of visits to interview staff, review written policies and inspect physical premises the visit will be pre-arranged. The County reserves the right to conduct random visits where minimal notice will be provided to observe the operation of the program.

6. Cross-Boundary Fee Subsidy

In order to receive a child care fee subsidy, the applicant and the child(ren) requiring care

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must reside within the County of Renfrew boundaries. In extenuating circumstances, a fee subsidy may be provided to residents of the County of Renfrew in order for their child to attend a provider located outside the County boundaries, where a reciprocal agreement has been negotiated with a neighboring child care provider. Each contractual agreement will be child specific and the County of Renfrew reserves the discretion to discontinue any further approval of cross-boundary fee subsidies at any time. When negotiating cross-boundary agreements, consideration will be given to funding availability and vacancies within the County of Renfrew boundaries.

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POLICY: Complaint Resolution and Appeals			
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POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Renfrew will establish a Complaint Resolution and Appeals process to address complaints and disputes related to fee subsidy and resource funding eligibility in order to comply with the requirements and minimum standards as established by the Ministry. The County of Renfrew will provide proper notice to applicants/recipients who are deemed ineligible or have their subsidy assistance reduced or cancelled. The notice will outline the details and responsibilities of the reviewer and provide guidelines for the internal review process.

PROCEDURE

1. Serious Occurrence

A parent/guardian may inform the County of Renfrew of a serious occurrence involving serious harm or injury to a child, serious lack of safety or other such matters. If the parent/guardian is not aware of the process to register a complaint to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the County of Renfrew will provide the contact information and encourage the complainant to make their report immediately. The Manager of Child Care Services will follow up with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to ensure the matter has been addressed. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to follow up and resolve the concerns of the parent/guardian and the child care provider.

If a transfer of the child(ren) from the childcare service is requested as a result of a serious occurrence, the County of Renfrew will consider the family a priority for transfer when a vacancy becomes available.

- a) If the family receives fee subsidy, they will be placed at the top of the priority list for a transfer; or
- b) If the family does not receive fee subsidy, the County of Renfrew will provide information and referral support to the parent/guardian to support their efforts in finding another child care placement.

2. Dissatisfaction with Service

A recipient may on occasion indicate dissatisfaction with the services of a child care service provider. Staff of the County of Renfrew will encourage the recipient to discuss their concerns with the manager or supervisor of that child care service. The County of Renfrew

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will not become directly engaged in disputes between a parent and the child care service provider.

If the recipient and the childcare service provider cannot resolve the issues, the recipient can apply for a transfer of service.

The County of Renfrew reserves the right to cancel a Service Agreement with a Child Care agency due to a licensing suspension or termination as a result of Ministry of Children and Youth Services' involvement.

3. Fee Subsidy Dispute

A parent/guardian may dispute a decision not to provide fee subsidy or to provide a different level of fee subsidy than requested.

(a) Reasons for Dispute

The County of Renfrew may determine that an applicant is ineligible for a fee subsidy. The reasons and manner in which applicants are notified of their ineligibility are as follows:

- (i) Ineligible due to income in excess at the time of application: Applicant has received an Ineligible letter notifying them that they are not eligible for fee subsidy, which includes the reason. See Policy # CC-05 Fee Subsidy Intake and Eligibility Assessment.
- (ii) Ineligible due to an increase in income levels (as determined at the annual review for ongoing clients): Recipient has received a Notice of Fee Subsidy Cancellation letter notifying the applicant that they are no longer eligible for fee subsidy, which will include the reason. See Policy #CC-06 Fee Subsidy Monitoring Eligibility.
- (iii) Change in circumstance resulting in a change in the level of fee subsidy that can be provided: Applicant has received a Notice of Fee Subsidy Change. See Policy #CC-06 Fee Subsidy Monitoring Eligibility.
- (iv) Failure to provide relevant documentation to support the application or ongoing monitoring: Applicant/recipient has received a Notice of Outstanding Information letter notifying them of the outstanding information that is required, along with the due date. Failure to submit the requested information by the due date will result in ineligibility, variation or

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cancellation of fee subsidy. See Policy #CC-05 Fee Subsidy Intake and Eligibility Assessment and Policy #CC-06 Fee Subsidy Monitoring Eligibility.

All notification letters include information regarding the process in which to request an internal review.

4. Fee Subsidy Appeal Process

The Manager of Child Care Services approves all fee subsidy decisions therefore the highest level of 'appeal' for fee subsidy disputes is made to the Director of Social Services for the County of Renfrew or the designate.

Applicant should first discuss the issue with their Eligibility Coordinator in order that the decision can be explained in detail and/or to seek a possible resolution to the dispute.

Should a resolution between the applicant and the Eligibility Coordinator not be attained, the following steps are taken to proceed with an internal review process:

- (a) The applicant requests an internal review in writing within 10 business days of receiving the decision. The request is directed to The Director of Social Services.
- (b) The Director of Social Services or designate will review the file. The reviewer will assess and consider only those facts and explanations offered by the client at the time of the decision. New and differing explanations or documents not revealed or submitted to the worker within the requested timeframe will not be considered relevant in the internal review process. This procedure will hold applicants/recipients accountable for the information they provide to the Eligibility Coordinator. See Policy #CC-05 Fee Subsidy Intake and Eligibility Assessment and Policy #CC-06 Fee Subsidy Monitoring Eligibility.
- (c) If necessary, the Director will request any clarifying information from the Manager of Child Care Services and where appropriate, the Eligibility Coordinator.
- (d) If the decision is related to income eligibility, the Director or the designate may complete the Income Test a second time to compare outcomes against the Eligibility Coordinator's copy. If the decision is related to the absence of eligibility assessment documentation, the Director or the designate may support the decision of the Manager of Child Care Services and advise the client to re-apply and submit the required documents to enable a new eligibility determination.

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- (e) If the Director or designate overturns the original ineligible decision, the Director will notify the applicant/recipient and the Manager of Child Care Services of the decision in writing. In cases where the original ineligible decision is overturned, fee subsidy will be re-instated and/or adjusted as of the original date the change or cancellation was initiated by the Eligibility Coordinator thereby eliminating any break-in-service.
- (f) The Director or the designate will prepare an Internal Review Decision letter to notify the applicant of the review decision. The letter will include information specific to the decision and be signed by the Director or the designate. This letter will be mailed within 10 days of receiving the request for an internal review.
- (g) A copy of the Internal Review Decision letter will be retained in the case file. The Director's office will maintain a monthly record of the number of requests for internal reviews, the reasons for the decision and the outcome of the review.

5. Request for Internal Review Outside Designated Timeframe

If the request for an Internal Review is made outside of the 10-day period, the Internal Review process will be completed at the discretion of the Director of Social Services. The Director will:

- (a) Review the file as requested and consider extenuating circumstances e.g. ill health/hospitalization, literacy/language difficulties, mail disruption; or
- (b) Mail a letter indicating the decision is final as the time limits for an internal review request were not met, therefore the request has been denied. The original appeal letter plus a copy of the Director's response letter will be retained on the client file.

Where the applicant experiences literacy or language difficulties and requires additional time to seek assistance in the completion of the request, consideration may be given to granting a review on a verbal request. However, the individual must agree to submit a written request at a later agreed upon date or sign a request prepared on their behalf.

6. Resource Funding Dispute

A child care provider may dispute a decision not to provide Resource Funding or to provide a different level of Resource Funding than requested. A process is in place to provide temporary Resource Funding for a 3-month period during which time the child care service provider provides observational data and an Integration Coordinator conducts direct observations of the child in the setting before a final decision on the need for additional

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Resource Funding is established. See Policy # CC-11 Integration Services Levels of Service.

In the event that the level of resource funding deemed needed is less than the licensed child care provider’s request, further observational data and assessments may occur prior to reaching a conclusion. In the event that both parties continue to disagree about the level of funding required, the Manager of Child Care Services may approve temporary funding of up to 3 months, or until such a time as the level of funding can be agree upon.