

OMB Control No: 0970-0114

Expiration date: 03/31/2027

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13)

The purpose of this information collection is the application for CCDF funds and provides ACF and the public with a description of, and assurance about, the States' and Territories' child care programs. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 150 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing the form. This is a mandatory collection of information (Pub. L. 113–186), and 42 U.S.C. 9858.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0114 and the expiration date is 03/31/2027. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact ACF's Office of Child Care.



**Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan
for
State/Territory Maryland**

FFY 2025 – 2027

Version: Initial Plan

Plan Status: Work in Progress as of 2024-06-07 19:53:14 GMT

This Plan describes the Child Care and Development Fund program to be administered by the State or Territory for the period from 10/01/2024 to 9/30/2027, as provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations. The Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including amending the options selected or described.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

Table of Contents

Overview	4
1 CCDF Program Administration	6
1.1 CCDF Leadership.....	6
1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority	7
1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan.....	10
2 Child and Family Eligibility and Enrollment and Continuity of Care	12
2.1 Reducing Barriers to Family Enrollment and Redetermination.....	12
2.2 Eligible Children and Families.....	14
2.3 Prioritizing Services for Vulnerable Children and Families.....	23
2.4 Lead Agency Outreach to Families Experiencing Homelessness, Families with Limited English Proficiency, and Persons with Disabilities	25
2.5 Promoting Continuity of Care.....	26
3 Child Care Affordability	31
3.1 Family Co-payments.....	31
3.2 Calculation of Co-Payment.....	33
3.3 Waiving Family Co-payment.....	34
4 Parental Choice, Equal Access, Payment Rates, and Payment Practices	35
4.1 Access to Full Range of Provider Options.....	35
4.2 Assess Market Rates and Analyze the Cost of Child Care.....	36
4.3 Adequate Payment Rates.....	40
4.4 Payment Practices to Providers.....	44
4.5 Supply Building.....	46
5 Health and Safety of Child Care Settings	49
5.1 Licensing Requirements	50
5.2 Ratios, Group Size, and Qualifications for CCDF Providers	51
5.3 Health and Safety Standards for CCDF Providers	54
5.4 Pre-Service or Orientation Training on Health and Safety Standards	65
5.5 Monitoring and Enforcement of Licensing and Health and Safety Requirements	67
5.6 Ongoing Health and Safety Training.....	72
5.7 Comprehensive Background Checks	73
5.8 Exemptions for Relative Providers	84
6 Support for a Skilled, Qualified, and Compensated Child Care Workforce	84
6.1 Supporting the Child Care Workforce	84
6.2 Professional Development Framework.....	86
6.3 Ongoing Training and Professional Development.....	88
6.4 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines.....	89
7 Quality Improvement Activities	90
7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment.....	91
7.2 Use of Quality Set-Aside Funds	91

8	Lead Agency Coordination and Partnerships to Support Service Delivery	93
8.1	Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care.....	93
8.2	Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching, and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds.....	95
8.3	Coordination with Child Care Resource and Referral Systems.....	97
8.4	Public-Private Partnerships	98
8.5	Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan.....	99
9	Family Outreach and Consumer Education	100
9.1	Parental Complaint Process	100
9.2	Consumer Education Website	101
9.3	Increasing Engagement and Access to Information	106
9.4	Providing Information on Developmental Screenings.....	108
10	Program Integrity and Accountability	109
10.1	Effective Internal Controls.....	109
10.2	Fraud Investigation, Payment Recovery, and Sanctions	112
	Appendix 1: Lead Agency Implementation Plan	117
	Appendix 1: Form.....	118

DRAFT

Overview

Introduction

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) (42 U.S.C. 9857 *et seq.*), together with section 418 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 618), authorize the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the primary federal funding source devoted to supporting families with low incomes afford child care and increasing the quality of child care for all children. The CCDF program is administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and provides resources to State, Territory, and Tribal governments via their designated CCDF Lead Agency.

CCDF plays a vital role in supporting family well-being and child development; facilitating parental employment, training, and education; improving the economic well-being of participating families; and promoting safe high-quality care and learning environments for children when out of their parents' care.

As required by CCDBG, this CCDF Plan serves as the State/Territory Lead Agency's application for a three-year cycle of CCDF funds and is the primary mechanism OCC uses to determine Lead Agency compliance with the requirements of the statute and regulations. CCDF Lead Agencies must comply with the rules set forth in CCDBG and corresponding ACF-issued rules and regulations. The CCDF Plan is a fundamental part of OCC's oversight of CCDF and is designed to align with and complement other oversight mechanisms including administrative and financial data reporting, the monitoring process, error rate reporting, audits, and the annual Quality Progress Report.

Organization of Plan

In their CCDF Plans, State/Territory Lead Agencies must describe how they implement the CCDF program. The Plan is organized into the following sections:

1. CCDF Program Administration
2. Child and Family Eligibility and Enrollment and Continuity of Care
3. Child Care Affordability
4. Parental Choice, Equal Access, Payment Rates, and Payment Practices
5. Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Support for a Skilled, Qualified, and Compensated Child Care Workforce
7. Quality Improvement Activities
8. Lead Agency Coordination and Partnerships to Support Service Delivery
9. Family Outreach and Consumer Education
10. Program Integrity and Accountability

Completing the Plan

This revised Plan aims to capture the most accurate and up-to-date information about how a State/Territory is implementing its CCDF program in compliance with the requirements of CCDF. In responding to plan questions, Lead Agencies should provide concise and specific summaries and/or bullet points as appropriate to the question. Do not insert tables or charts, add attachments, or copy manuals into the Plan. A State/Territory's CCDF Plan is intended to stand on its own with sufficient information to describe how the Lead Agency is implementing its CCDF program without need for added attachments, tables, charts, or State manuals.

OCC recognizes that Lead Agencies use different mechanisms to establish CCDF policies, such as State statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals, or policy issuances. Lead Agencies must submit their CCDF Plan no later than July 1, 2024.

Review and Amendment Process

OCC will review submitted CCDF Plans for completeness and compliance with federal policies. Each Lead Agency will receive a letter approximately 90 days after the Plan is due that includes all Plan non-compliances to be addressed. OCC recognizes that Lead Agencies continue to modify and adapt their programs to address evolving needs and priorities. Lead Agencies must submit amendments to their Plans as they make substantial policy and program changes during the three-year plan cycle, including when addressing non-compliances.

Appendix 1: Implementation Plan

As part of the Plan review process, if OCC identifies any CCDF requirements that are not fully implemented, OCC will communicate a preliminary notice of non-compliance for those requirements via an emailed letter. OCC has created a standardized template for Lead Agencies to submit as their 60-day response to that preliminary notice. This template is found at Appendix 1: Lead Agency Implementation Plan. This required response via the Appendix will help create a shared understanding between OCC and the Lead Agency on which elements of a requirement are unmet, how they are unmet, and the Lead Agency's steps and associated timelines needed to fully implement those unmet elements.

CCDF Plan Submission

CCDF Lead Agencies will submit their Plans electronically through the Child Care Automated Reporting System (CARS). CARS will include all language and questions included in the final CCDF Plan template approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Note that the format of the questions in CARS could be modified from the Word version of the document to ensure compliance with Section 508 policies regarding accessibility to electronic and information technology for individuals with disabilities.

1 CCDF Program Administration

Strong organizational structures, operational capacity, and partnerships position States and Territories to administer CCDF efficiently, effectively, and collaboratively.

This section identifies the CCDF Lead Agency, CCDF Lead Agency leadership, and the entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the program. It also identifies the partners who were consulted to develop the Plan.

1.1 CCDF Leadership

The governor of a State or Territory must designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency) or establish a joint interagency office to represent the State or Territory as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications.

1.1.1 Designated Lead Agency

Identify the Lead Agency or joint interagency office designated by the State or Territory. OCC will send official grant correspondence, such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications, to the designated contact identified here.

- a. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Office Information:
 - i. Name of Lead Agency: **Maryland State Department of Education**
 - ii. Street Address: **200 W. Baltimore Street**
 - iii. City: **Baltimore**
 - iv. State: **Maryland**
 - v. ZIP Code: **21201**
 - vi. Web Address for Lead Agency:
<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/Default.aspx>
- b. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Official contact information:
 - i. Lead Agency Official First Name: **Carey**
 - ii. Lead Agency Official Last Name: **Wright**
 - iii. Title: **State Superintendent of Schools**
 - iv. Phone Number: **(410) 767-0100**
 - v. Email Address: **carey.wright@maryland.gov**

1.1.2 CCDF Administrator

Identify the CCDF Administrator designated by the Lead Agency, the day-to-day contact, or the person with responsibility for administering the State's or Territory's CCDF program. The OCC will send programmatic communications, such as program announcements, program instructions, and data collection instructions, to the designated contact identified here. If there is more than one designated contact with equal or shared responsibility for administering the CCDF program, identify the Co-Administrator or the person with administrative responsibilities and include their contact information.

- a. CCDF Administrator contact information:

- i. CCDF Administrator First Name: **Keisha**
 - ii. CCDF Administrator Last Name: **Maxwell**
 - iii. Title of the CCDF Administrator: **Administrator of Policy and Special Projects**
 - iv. Phone Number: **410.767.7852**
 - v. Email Address: **Keisha.maxwell@maryland.gov**
- b. CCDF Co-Administrator contact information (if applicable):
- i. CCDF Co-Administrator First Name:
 - ii. CCDF Co-Administrator Last Name:
 - iii. Title of the CCDF Co-Administrator:
 - iv. Phone Number:
 - v. Email Address:
 - vi. Description of the Role of the Co-Administrator:

1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or public or private local agencies as long as the Lead Agency retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program. Administrative and implementation responsibilities undertaken by agencies other than the Lead Agency must be governed by written agreements that specify the mutual roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and other agencies in meeting the program requirements.

1.2.1 Entity establishing CCDF program rules

Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are administered (i.e., set or established) at the State or Territory level or local level? Identify whether CCDF program rules and policies are established by the State or Territory (even if operated locally) or whether the CCDF policies or rules are established by local entities, such as counties or workforce boards.

Check one of the following:

- a. All program rules and policies are set or established by the State or Territory. (If checked, skip to question 1.2.2.)
- b. Some or all program rules and policies are set or established by local entities or agencies. If checked, indicate which entities establish the following policies. Check all that apply:
 - i. Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set:
 - ii. Sliding-fee scale is set by the:

- State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set:
- iii. Payment rates and payment policies are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set:
- iv. Licensing standards and processes are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set:
- v. Standards and monitoring processes for license-exempt providers are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set:
- vi. Quality improvement activities, including QIS, are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set:
- vii. Other. List and describe any other program rules and policies that are set at a level other than the State or Territory level:

1.2.2 Entities implementing CCDF services

The Lead Agency has broad authority to operate (i.e., implement activities) through other agencies, as long as it retains overall responsibility for CCDF. Complete the table below to identify which entity(ies) implements or performs CCDF services.

Check the box(es) to indicate which entity(ies) implement or perform CCDF services.

CCDF Activity	CCDF Lead Agency	TANF Agency	Local Government Agencies	CCR&R	Other
Who conducts eligibility determinations?	[x]	[x]	[]	[]	<p>[x] Describe: he Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has partnered and contracted with the local departments of social services to assess whether individuals or families qualify for assistance. The local departments of social services, operating under the oversight of MSDE, are responsible for determining eligibility specifically and solely for temporary cash assistance customers only.</p>

CCDF Activity	CCDF Lead Agency	TANF Agency	Local Government Agencies	CCR&R	Other
Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?	[x]	[x]	[x]	[x]	<p>[x] Describe: Maryland families receive information through various channels to help them locate child care. These channels include the Maryland State Department of Education's website, https://marylandexcels.org/, which is for providers participating in the State's quality rating and improvement system. Additionally, families are referred to Maryland's resource and referral network contractor, Locate: Child Care https://www.marylandfam</p>

CCDF Activity	CCDF Lead Agency	TANF Agency	Local Government Agencies	CCR&R	Other
					<p>ilynetwork.org/for-parents/locate-child-care. Finally, the consumer education website, https://marylandchild.org/, also serves as a comprehensive resource for families to find information in one place.</p>
Who issues payments?	[x]	[]	[]	[]	<p>[x] Describe: The Maryland State Department of Education has contracted with a vendor to manage payments through our Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS). MSDE's Comptroller's Office then issues the payments.</p>

CCDF Activity	CCDF Lead Agency	TANF Agency	Local Government Agencies	CCR&R	Other
Who monitors licensed providers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:
Who monitors license-exempt providers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:
Who operates the quality improvement activities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:

1.2.3 Information systems availability

For any activities performed by agencies other than the Lead Agency as reported above in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, identify the processes the Lead Agency uses to oversee and monitor CCDF administration and implementation activities to retain overall responsibility for the CCDF program.

Check and describe how the Lead Agency includes in its written agreements the required elements. Note: The contents of the written agreement may vary based on the role the agency is asked to assume or type of project but must include, at a minimum, the elements below.

a. Tasks to be performed.

Yes. If yes, describe:

No. If no, describe:

b. Schedule for completing tasks.

Yes. If yes, describe:

No. If no, describe:

c. Budget which itemizes categorical expenditures in accordance with CCDF requirements.

Yes. If yes, describe:

No. If no, describe:

d. Indicators or measures to assess performance of those agencies.

Yes. If yes, describe:


No. If no, describe:

e. In addition to the written agreements identified above, describe any other monitoring and auditing processes used to oversee CCDF administration. **Through the State Coordinating Entity (SCE) Services for the Maryland Child Care Resource Centers Network (MCCRCN) grant to Maryland Family Network (MFN), Maryland State Department of Education utilizes a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify and select sponsoring agencies to operate child care resource centers. These agencies submit proposals outlining plans to meet the requirements of a Child Care Resource Center, including all services and requirements outlined by Maryland State Department of Education. These agencies sign a Services Agreement (contract) to provide the services outlined**

in the proposal and in accordance with all local, state, and federal applicable laws pertaining to service delivery and funds/budget management. These contracts also require the agency to provide proof of insurance, including workers' compensation, and sign the same assurances which Maryland Family Network signs as the State Coordinating Entity. Monitoring of the sponsoring agencies consists of monthly monitoring meetings with MFN and MSDE to discuss progress, questions, and updates of the grant, annual formal on site monitoring visits of all the Child Care Resource Center and MFN conducted by MSDE, regular meetings between Maryland Family Network and the Child Care Resource Center staff, property maintenance and inventory reports, quarterly narrative and action plan reports, monthly services data, and additional reporting as requested by Maryland State Department of Education or Maryland Family Network. The monitoring tool is modeled after the Maryland State Department of Education tool used to monitor Maryland Family Network as the State Coordinating Entity and includes the standards outlined in the RFP for operation of a Child Care Resource Center as well as a website compliance review to ensure all appropriate information is contained on the website and social media profiles. A final review is completed at the end of the fiscal year to review all data, conducted services, and achievement of goals. Sponsoring agencies submit fiscal year budgets for review and approval by Maryland Family Network prior to the start of the fiscal year; the agency submits monthly invoices which include personnel time and effort statements demonstrating personnel time spent in direct support of Child Care Resource Center services. Budget modifications can be submitted on a rolling basis as needed. The Finance Department at MFN conducts fiscal audits and grant risk assessments of the sponsoring agencies, with additional reviews conducted as needed (typically based on any audit findings). Maryland Family Network and the sponsoring agencies are required to complete an audit in accordance with guidelines specified by Maryland State Department of Education; sponsoring agencies submit the audits to Maryland Family Network for the fiscal department to review.

Also included in the State Coordinating Entity (SEC) Services for the Maryland Child Care Resource Centers Network (MCCRCN) grant to Maryland Family Network, LOCATE: Child Care, is monitored by Maryland State Department of Education and through the external audit conducted of Maryland Family Network annually. The LOCATE: Child Care database contains information for all regulated providers in Maryland, which includes information provided by the program/provider, Maryland State Department of Education, and the LOCATE: Child Care staff. Live services are available by phone to families between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. The online web-based search is available 24/7 with a live chat available during business hours. The LOCATE: Child Care staff member interviews the parent/caller to identify specific child care needs and uses this information to conduct a search of the database to find providers who match those needs. The parent/caller is given up to six referrals and can call back at any time to receive more. In addition to supporting the parent in identifying child care, the staff member also provides information on selecting quality child care, the Maryland EXCELS program, and other programs and support services as appropriate (based on information provided by the parent). When referrals are sent, digital documents are also included: LOCATE's Choosing Child Care Document, a Maryland EXCELS brochure, Information about Child Care Scholarship and Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby's and Toddler's Early Learning. A follow up call is made approximately one to two months later to determine whether the parent found care and other information regarding care found and satisfaction with the service. More referrals are given at the time of follow up if requested. Data reports are run weekly, monthly, and quarterly to evaluate performance and productivity; the data include number of calls, number of referrals sent, number of follow ups, percent of follow ups where parent found care through LOCATE and satisfaction rating.

Child Care Scholarship: MSDE has a contract with a single vendor. The vendor is required to complete a quality assurance review of 25% of cases completed per month. The Child Care Scholarship branch conducts a random secondary review of these cases throughout the year. They also monitor cases to determine accuracy of authorization based upon child care scholarship policies and the absence of Improper Authorization of Payments (IAP) that result in overpayments or underpayments. In addition, the Child Care Scholarship Branch conducts random annual reviews of cases to ensure all entities are authorizing services based upon established policies and procedures. During the annual review, error rates approaching 5% indicate the need for additional technical assistance to keep Maryland below a statewide error rate of 10%.

Maryland provides a grant/contract to Johns Hopkins University/IDEALS Institute to establish and maintain a website with a Find a Program search tool (Find a Program  Maryland EXCELS) for families to find programs participating in QRIS. Programs receiving child care scholarship reimbursement are required to participate in Maryland EXCELS. Grant/contract activities are monitored through weekly calls, a review of monthly invoices, and quarterly grant reports.

1.2.4 Certification of shareable information systems.

Does the Lead Agency certify that to the extent practicable and appropriate, any code or software for child care information systems or information technology for which a Lead Agency or other agency expends CCDF funds to develop is made available to other public agencies? This includes public agencies in other States for their use in administering child care or related programs.

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

1.2.5 Confidential and personally identifiable information

Certification of policies to protect confidential and personally identifiable information

Does the Lead Agency certify that it has policies in place related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF Plan, and consultation with and meaningful input and feedback from a wide range of representatives is critical for CCDF programs to continually adapt to the changing needs of families, child care programs, and the workforce. Consultation involves meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the State or Territory CCDF Plan. As part of the Plan development process, Lead Agencies must consult with the following:

- (1) Appropriate representatives of general-purpose local government. General purpose local governments are defined by the U.S. Census at https://www2.census.gov/govs/cog/g12_org.pdf.
- (2) The State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act) or similar coordinating body pursuant to 98.14(a)(1)(vii).
- (3) Tribe(s) or Tribal organization(s) within the State. This consultation should be done in a timely manner and at the option of the Tribe(s) or Tribal organization(s).

1.3.1 Consultation efforts in CCDF Plan development

Describe the Lead Agency’s consultation efforts in the development of the CCDF Plan, including how and how often the consultation occurred.

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with appropriate representatives of general-purpose local government:
- a. Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body:
- b. Describe, if applicable, how the Lead Agency consulted with Indian Tribes(s) or Tribal organizations(s) within the State: **N/A**
- c. Identify other entities, agencies, or organizations consulted on the development of the CCDF Plan (e.g., representatives from the child care workforce, or statewide afterschool networks) and describe those consultation efforts:

1.3.2 Public hearing process

Lead Agencies must hold at least one public hearing in the State or Territory, with sufficient Statewide or Territory-wide distribution of notice prior to such a hearing to enable the public to comment on the provision of child care services under the CCDF Plan.

Describe the Statewide or Territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan.

- i. Date of the public hearing: **6/13/2024**
Reminder: Must be no earlier than January 1, 2024. If more than one public hearing was held, enter one date (e.g., the date of the first hearing, the most recent hearing date, or any hearing date that demonstrates this requirement).
- ii. Date of notice of public hearing: **5/28/2024**
- iii. Was the notice of public hearing posted publicly at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- iv. Describe how the public was notified about the public hearing, including outreach in other languages, information on interpretation services being available, etc. Include specific website links if used to provide notice
- v. Describe how the approach to the public hearing was inclusive of all geographic

regions of the State or Territory:

- vi. Describe how the content of the Plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing (e.g., the Plan was made available in other languages, in multiple formats, etc.):
- vii. Describe how the information provided by the public was taken into consideration regarding the provision of child care services under this Plan:

1.3.3 Public availability of final Plan, amendments, and waivers

Lead Agencies must make the submitted and approved final Plan, any approved Plan amendments, and any approved requests for temporary waivers publicly available on a website.

- a. Provide the website link to where the Plan, any Plan amendments, and waivers (if applicable) are available. Note: A Plan amendment is required if the website address where the Plan is posted changes.
- b. Describe any other strategies that the Lead Agency uses to make submitted and approved CCDF Plan and approved Plan amendments available to the public. Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant website links as examples.
 - i. Working with advisory committees. Describe:
 - ii. Working with child care resource and referral agencies. Describe:
 - iii. Providing translation in other languages. Describe:
 - iv. Sharing through social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, email). Describe:
 - v. Providing notification to key constituents (e.g., parent and family groups, provider groups, advocacy groups, foundations, and businesses). Describe:
 - vi. Working with Statewide afterschool networks or similar coordinating entities for out-of-school time. Describe:
 - vii. Direct communication with the child care workforce. Describe:
 - viii. Other. Describe:

2 Child and Family Eligibility and Enrollment and Continuity of Care

Stable and reliable child care arrangements facilitate job stability for parents and healthy development of children. CCDF eligibility and enrollment policies can contribute to these goals. Policies and procedures that create barriers to families accessing CCDF, like inaccessible subsidy applications and onerous reporting requirements, interrupt a parent's ability to work and may deter eligible families from participating in CCDF.

To address these concerns, Lead Agencies must provide children with a minimum of 12 months between eligibility determinations, limit reporting requirements during the 12-month period, and ensure eligibility determination and redetermination processes do not interrupt a parent's work or school.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they define eligible children and families and how the Lead Agency's eligibility and enrollment policies support access for eligible children and families.

2.1 Reducing Barriers to Family Enrollment and Redetermination

Lead Agency enrollment and redetermination policies may not unduly disrupt parents' employment, education, or job training activities to comply with the Lead Agency's or designated local entity's requirements. Lead Agencies have broad flexibility to design and implement the eligibility practices that reduce barriers to enrollment and redetermination.

Examples include developing strategies to inform families and their providers of an upcoming redetermination and the information that will be required of the family, pre-populating subsidy renewal forms, having parents confirm that the information is accurate, and/or asking only for the information necessary to make an eligibility redetermination. In addition, Lead Agencies can offer a variety of family-friendly methods for submitting documentation for eligibility redetermination that considers the range of needs for families in accessing support (e.g., use of languages other than English, access to transportation, accommodation of parents working non-traditional hours).

2.1.1 Eligibility practices to reduce barriers to enrollment

- a. Does the Lead Agency implement any of the following eligibility practices to reduce barriers at the time of initial eligibility determination? Check all that apply and describe those elements checked.
 - i. Establishing presumptive eligibility while eligibility is being determined. Describe the policy, including the populations benefiting from the policy, and identify how long the period of presumptive eligibility is: **Beginning July 1, 2023, the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) program began the statewide implementation of presumptive eligibility (Fast-Track). The new Fast-Track Application process grants temporary eligibility determination to eligible applicants within three business days. This population includes (1) A Maryland resident who is working/employed, in an approved training program, or attending school; (2) A recipient of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or within Child Care Scholarship income guidelines. Families applying to receive a 60-day temporary child care scholarship are immediately prompted to apply for a 52-week child care scholarship upon submitting a fast-track Application or within 15 days. Fast-track (presumptive eligibility) scholarships are processed within three business days. The authorization period for a Fast-Track Application is 60 days. Funding for Fast-Track eligibility is paid with state funds.**
 - ii. Leveraging eligibility from other public assistance programs. Describe:
 - iii. Coordinating determinations for children in the same household (while still ensuring each child receives 12 months of eligibility). Describe:
 - iv. Self-assessment screening tools for families. Describe:
 - v. Extended office hours (evenings and/or weekends).
 - vi. Consultation available via phone.
 - vii. Other. Describe the Lead Agency policies to process applications efficiently and make timely eligibility determinations:
 - viii. None.
- b. Does the Lead Agency use an online subsidy application?

Yes.

No. If no, describe why an online application is impracticable.

c. Does the Lead Agency use different policies for families receiving TANF assistance?

Yes. If yes, describe the policies:

No.

2.1.2 Preventing disruption of eligibility activities

a. Identify, where applicable, the Lead Agency's procedures and policies to ensure that parents do not have their employment, education, or job training unduly disrupted to comply with the State's/Territory's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility. Check all that apply.

i. Advance notice to parents of pending redetermination.

ii. Advance notice to providers of pending redetermination.

iii. Pre-populated subsidy renewal form.

iv. Online documentation submission.

v. Cross-program redeterminations.

vi. Extended office hours (evenings and/or weekends).

vii. Consultation available via phone.

viii. Leveraging eligibility from other public assistance programs.

ix. Other. Describe:

b. Does the Lead Agency use different policies for families receiving TANF assistance?

Yes. If yes, describe the policies: **Families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) are permitted to apply for child CCDF benefits with ☐job search☐ as an approved activity.**

No.

2.2 Eligible Children and Families

At eligibility determination or redetermination, children must (1) be younger than age 13; (2) reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the State's median income (SMI) for a family of the same size and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000; and (3)(a) reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program (which can include job search) or (b) receive, or need to receive, protective services as defined by the Lead Agency.

2.2.1 Eligibility criteria: age of children served

Lead Agencies may provide child care assistance for children less than 13 years of age, including continuing to provide assistance to children if they turn 13 during the eligibility period. In addition, Lead Agencies can choose to serve children up to age 19 if those children are unable to care for themselves.

a. Does your Lead Agency serve the full federally allowable age range of children through

age 12?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the age range of children served and the reason why you made that decision to serve less than the full range of allowable children.

Note: Do not include children incapable of self-care or under court supervision, who are reported below in 2.2.1b and 2.2.1c.

- b. Does the Lead Agency extend eligibility for CCDF-funded child care to children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care?

No.

Yes.

i. If yes, the upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19): **19.00**

ii. If yes, provide the Lead Agency definition of physical and/or mental incapacity: **The Lead Agency defines Physical and/or mental incapacity as a child with a physical and/or mental capacity or developmental challenges that prohibit the child from being left alone and able to provide self-care, as documented by the licensed physician or social worker.**

- c. Does the Lead Agency extend eligibility for CCDF-funded child care to children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are under court supervision?

No.

Yes. If yes, and the upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19): **19.00**

- d. How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

i. "residing with": **One or more adults and children, related by blood, marriage, adoption, or legal guardianship, living in the same household.**

ii. "in loco parentis": **A person who is at least eighteen years, who is not a child, parent or legal guardian, with whom the child resides and who has assumed control of the child.**

2.2.2 Eligibility criteria: reason for care

Lead Agencies have broad flexibility on the work, training, and educational activities required to qualify for child care assistance. Lead Agencies do not have to set a minimum number of hours for families to qualify for work, training, or educational activities, and there is no requirement to limit authorized child care services strictly based on the work, training, or educational schedule/hours of the parent(s). For example, the Lead Agency can include travel or study time in calculating the amount of needed services.

How does the Lead Agency define the following terms for the purposes of determining CCDF eligibility?

- a. Identify which of the following activities are included in your definition of "working" by checking the boxes below:

i. An activity for which a wage or salary is paid.

- ii. Being self-employed.
 - iii. During a time of emergency or disaster, partnering in essential services.
 - iv. Participating in unpaid activities like student teaching, internships, or practicums.
 - v. Time for meals or breaks.
 - vi. Time for travel.
 - vii. Seeking employment or job search.
 - viii. Other. Describe: **Working is defined as any paid or unpaid activity. In a public or private work setting. No minimum hours.**
- b. Identify which of the following activities are included in your definition of “attending job training” by checking the boxes below:
- i. Vocational/technical job skills training.
 - ii. Apprenticeship or internship program or other on-the-job training.
 - iii. English as a Second Language training.
 - iv. Adult Basic Education preparation.
 - v. Participation in employment service activities.
 - vi. Time for meals and breaks.
 - vii. Time for travel.
 - viii. Hours required for associated activities such as study groups, lab experiences.
 - ix. Time for outside class study or completion of homework.
 - x. Other. Describe: **Job training means any instructional program, except for post-college graduate programs, and includes an accredited college, an accredited vocational program, or a publicly funded training program.**
- c. Identify which of the following diplomas, certificates, degrees, or activities are included in your definition of “attending an educational program” by checking the boxes below:
- i. Adult High School Diploma or GED.
 - ii. Certificate programs (12-18 credit hours).
 - iii. One-year diploma (36 credit hours).
 - iv. Two-year degree.
 - v. Four-year degree.
 - vi. Travel to and from classrooms, labs, or study groups.
 - vii. Study time.
 - viii. Hours required for associated activities such as study groups, lab experiences.
 - ix. Time for outside class study or completion of homework.
 - x. Applicable meal and break times.

- xi. Other. Describe: **All hours documented on the class schedule or letter from training or educational program; one hour of study time per credit; and a maximum of one hour of travel time from the child care facility to the approved activity and one hour back, unless documentation proves more than 2hrs of travel time is needed per day.**
- d. Does the Lead Agency impose a Lead Agency-defined minimum number of hours of activity for eligibility?
- No.
- Yes.
- If yes, describe any Lead Agency-imposed minimum requirement for the following:
- Work. Describe:
- Job training. Describe:
- Education. Describe:
- Combination of allowable activities. Describe:
- Other. Describe:
- e. Does the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance based on education and training without additional work requirements?
- Yes.
- No. If no, describe the additional work requirements:
- f. Does the Lead Agency extend eligibility to specific populations of children otherwise not eligible by including them in its definition of “children who receive or need to receive protective services?”
- Note: A Lead Agency may elect to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care when foster care parents are *not* working or are *not* in education/training activities, but this provision should be included in the Lead Agency’s protective services definition.
- No. If no, skip to question 2.2.3.
- Yes. If yes, answer the questions below:
- Provide the Lead Agency’s definition of “protective services” by checking below the sub-populations of children that are included:
- Children in foster care.
- Children in kinship care.
- Children who are in families under court supervision.
- Children who are in families receiving supports or otherwise engaged with a child welfare agency.
- Children participating in a Lead Agency’s Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships program.

Children whose family members are deemed essential workers under a governor-declared state of emergency.

Children experiencing homelessness.

Children whose family has been affected by a natural disaster.

Other. Describe:

g. Does the Lead Agency waive the income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis?

No.

Yes.

h. Does the Lead Agency waive the eligible activity (e.g., work, job training, education, etc.) requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis?

No.

Yes.

i. Does the Lead Agency use CCDF funds to provide respite care to custodial parents of children in protective services?

No.

Yes.

2.2.3 Eligibility criteria: deciding entity on family income limits

How are income eligibility limits established?

There is a statewide limit with no local variation.

There is a statewide limit with local variation. Provide the number of income eligibility tables and describe who sets the limits:

Eligibility limits are established locally only. Provide the number of income eligibility tables and describe who sets the limits:

Other. Describe:

2.2.4 Initial eligibility: income limits

a. Complete the appropriate table to describe family income limits.

i. Complete the table below to provide the statewide maximum income eligibility percent and dollar limit or threshold:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	8457.00	60.00	5102.00

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
3	10447.00	60.00	6302.00
4	12437.00	60.00	7503.00
5	14427.00	60.00	8703.00

ii. Does the Lead Agency certify that they use other funds if the income eligibility limit percent exceeds 85% SMI?

Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not allow income eligibility limits above 85% SMI.

Yes, the Lead Agency certifies that they use other funds (non-CCDF funds) for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI.

No. The Lead Agency establishes income eligibility limits above SMI and includes CCDF funds to pay for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI. If checked, describe:

b. Complete the table below if the Lead Agency has local variation in the maximum income eligibility limit. Complete the table for the region/locality with the highest eligibility limit, region/locality with the lowest eligibility limit, and the region/locality that is most populous:

i. Region/locality with the highest eligibility limit:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

ii. Region/locality with the lowest eligibility limit:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1			
2			

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
3			
4			
5			

iii. Region/locality that is most populous:

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) %	Maximum Initial Eligibility Limit (or Threshold) \$
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

iv. Does the Lead Agency certify that they use other funds if the income eligibility limit percent exceeds 85% SMI?

Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not allow income eligibility limits above 85% SMI.

Yes, the Lead Agency certifies that they use other funds (not CCDF funds) for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI.

No. The Lead Agency establishes income eligibility limits above 85% SMI and includes CCDF funds to pay for families with income that exceeds 85% SMI. If checked, describe:

c. How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility at the point of initial determination? Check all that apply:

- i. Gross wages or salary.
- ii. Disability or unemployment compensation.
- iii. Workers’ compensation.
- iv. Spousal support, child support.
- v. Survivor and retirement benefits.
- vi. Rent for room within the family’s residence.
- vii. Pensions or annuities.
- viii. Inheritance.

- ix. Public assistance.
- x. Other. Describe: **"Income" means the actual or potential income of a parent/guardian. Gross income means the sum of earnings, prior to adjustments such as, but not limited to, pretax benefits and rental property depreciation, that are received by an individual for compensation of services rendered on a regular or recurrent basis. "Gross income" includes, but is not limited to Wages; salary; self-employment; Commissions, tips, and bonuses; Dividends and interest; Social Security benefits, including disability and survivors' benefits; Pensions and annuities; Estate income; Military entitlements, bonuses, and allowances; Rental income; Unemployment and Workers' Compensation; and/or Alimony and child support.**

- d. What is the effective date for these income eligibility limits? **May 23, 2022**
- e. Income limits must be established and reported in terms of current SMI based on the most recent data published by the Bureau of the Census, even if the federal poverty level is used in implementing the program.

What federal data does the Lead Agency use when reporting the income eligibility limits?
 LIHEAP. If checked, provide the publication year of the LIHEAP guideline estimates used by the Lead Agency: **2024**

Other. Describe:

- f. Provide the direct URL/website link, if available, for the income eligibility limits.
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocs/COMM_LIHEAP_IM%202024-02_Att4SMITable_0.pdf

2.2.5 Income eligibility: irregular fluctuations in earnings

Lead Agencies must take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings in initial eligibility determination and redetermination processes. The Lead Agency must ensure that temporary increases in income, including temporary increases that can result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of SMI from seasonal employment or other temporary work schedules, do not affect eligibility or family co-payments.

Check the processes that the Lead Agency uses to take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings.

- i. Average the family's earnings over a period of time (e.g., 12 months).
 Identify the period of time
- ii. Request earning statements that are most representative of the family's monthly income.
- iii. Deduct temporary or irregular increases in wages from the family's standard income level.
- iv. Other. Describe the other ways the Lead Agency takes into account irregular fluctuations in earnings: **Maryland's process for initial determination and redetermination is to enter the income as documented on the income verification submitted by the parent. If the income is above the income guideline, the case is denied. If the parent reports that the income is not regular income, the parent can**

submit verification of additional stubs or verification from the employer that the income is not regular and the duration of the irregular income. Maryland's graduate phase-out allows parents to earn above the initial income scale (60% of SMI) at redetermination. Maryland will apply a hold-harmless rule to parents with income above the graduated phase-out income. Benefits will not be reduced below the previous determination between redetermination periods unless income exceeds 85% SMI or 1M in assets.

2.2.6 Family asset limit

- a. When calculating income eligibility, does the Lead Agency ensure each eligible family does not have assets that exceed \$1,000,000?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- b. Does the Lead Agency waive the asset limit on a case-by-case basis for families defined as receiving, or in need of, protective services?
 No.
 Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure:

2.2.7 Additional eligibility criteria

Aside from the eligibility conditions or rules which have been described in 2.2.1 – 2.2.6, is any additional eligibility criteria applied during:

- a. Eligibility determination? If checked, describe: **The parent shall be a resident of the State of Maryland; child shall be a United States citizen unless the child's family is enrolled in Head Start or is a Qualified alien; parent shall submit to the contractor acceptable proof of identity for each family member; non-school-age children using informal care must submit proof of immunization; parent must submit documentation of child care need; documentation of an approved activity for the head of household(s); and proof of Income not to exceed 60% of SMI.**
- b. Eligibility redetermination? If checked, describe: **The parent shall be a resident of the State of Maryland; the child shall be a United States citizen unless child's family is enrolled in Head Start or is a Qualified alien; the parent shall submit to the contractor acceptable proof of identity for each family member; non-school-age children using informal care must submit proof of immunization; parent must submit documentation of child care need; documentation of an approved activity for the head of household(s); and proof of Income not to exceed 60% of SMI.**

2.2.8 Documentation of eligibility determination

Lead Agencies must document and verify that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination.

Check the information that the Lead Agency documents and verifies at initial determination and redetermination and describe what information is required and how often.

Required at Initial Determination	Required at Redetermination	Description
[x]	[x]	Applicant identity. Describe how you verify: The applicant must provide proof of identity for all individuals included in the household count. The vendor confirms that a form of government issued documentation is present for each person listed in the household count and will issue a Missing Information Letter for any missing information.
[x]	[x]	Applicant's relationship to the child. Describe how you verify: The vendor confirms that the parent submitted documentation that establishes the relationship of the child to the head of household. Proof could include birth certificates or other documentation that establish guardianship or relationship by blood or marriage.
[x]	[x]	Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, citizen/immigration status). Describe how you verify: Child must be a resident of the State of Maryland; an United States (U.S.) citizen, enrolled in Head Start or qualified alien; have proof of Identity; be immunized appropriate for the child's age or provide proof of exemption from Immunization; demonstrate a need for child care assistance (parent, caretaker, or legal guardian is not available or capable to care for the child during the time the head of household(s) is engaged in an approved activity); provide proof of relatedness to the head of household(s); and the family of the child must be income eligible. If the child meets all eligibility requirements, they will be eligible for 24 months of Child Care Scholarship (CCS) benefits. The Unit of Care authorized will be based on the hours in which the head of household is engaged in an approved activity or is based upon the number of hours per week the child will attend child care, which is the lesser.

Required at Initial Determination	Required at Redetermination	Description
[x]	[x]	<p>Work. Describe how you verify: No minimum hours. Must provide a work schedule. Acceptable documentation of employment revenues received, including cash gains, are limited to 4-weeks of wage stubs showing gross income from each employer and pay frequency or schedule; a statement from each employer, signed and dated by the employer or bearing the employer’s official business stamp; If available, total gross earnings to date; individual’s most recent federal income tax return, if filed within the past 12 months; payment receipts for services rendered, where the type of employment, such as but not limited to restaurant waitress, beautician, or taxicab driver, may not generate an earnings statement or a pay stub; or if the parent is unable to produce the aforementioned documents, the parent can submit a signed and dated statement attesting to current gross earnings, the frequency or schedule of those earnings, and the type of employment.</p>
[x]	[x]	<p>Job training or educational program. Describe how you verify: Verification of training or school attendance with days and hours of the activity. The parent must submit proof of attendance in the educational program and hours per week.</p>
[x]	[x]	<p>Family income. Describe how you verify: Acceptable documentation of employment earnings received, including cash earnings, is limited to: (a) The most recent 4-weeks of pay stubs indicating gross income from each employer. If the stubs indicate the individual’s pay frequency or schedule; (b) A statement from each employer, signed and dated by the employer or bearing the employer’s official business stamp that indicates the following: (i) Employer’s name, address, and telephone number; (ii) Employer’s type of business; (iii) Gross earnings for the most recent pay period; (iv) Pay frequency or schedule; and (v) If available, total gross earnings to date; (c) The individual’s most recent federal income tax return, if filed within the past 12 months; (d) Payment receipts for services rendered, where the type of employment, such as but not limited to restaurant waitress, beautician, or taxicab driver may not generate an earnings statement, a pay stub, or (e) If none of the types of documentation listed above can be produced, a signed and dated statement from the parent attesting to current gross earnings, the frequency or schedule of those earnings, and the type of employment.</p>

Required at Initial Determination	Required at Redetermination	Description
[x]	[x]	Household composition. Describe how you verify: "Family size" means the number of individuals residing in the same household as a family, as defined by one or more adults and children, related by blood, marriage, adoption, or legal guardianship and are residing under the same roof. A birth certificate or other documentation that establishes legal guardianship is used to prove the relationship of the child(ren) to the head of household(s). The vendor will send a Missing Information Letter for any missing documentation.
[x]	[x]	Applicant residence. Describe how you verify: Child Care Scholarship (CCS) applicants must be residents of Maryland. "Resident" means an individual who lives in Maryland and has no intention of leaving during the time in which CCS benefits provided. The family can submit the following as proof of residence: driver's license with the same address as the CCS Application, utility bill with the same address as the CCS Application, or letter, lease/mortgage statement with the same address as the CCS Application.
[]	[]	Other. Describe how you verify: N/A

2.2.9 Exception to TANF work requirements

Lead Agencies must ensure that families with young children participating in TANF will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned under the TANF work requirement if the custodial parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain child care for a child under age six, in accordance with Section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act.

- a. Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions: **Maryland Department of Human Resources**
- b. Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency:
 - i. "Appropriate child care": **Child care that meets the parent's needs in terms of hours and location, meets the child's needs in terms of health and safety, and is geared toward the healthy development of the child. TANF agency does not currently have these terms defined in policy.**
 - ii. "Reasonable distance": **Based on available transportation, a parent would be expected to travel no more than one hour each way to the child care provider. The TANF agency does not currently have these terms defined in the policy.**
 - iii. "Unsuitability of informal child care": **Only applies to informal providers not approved by the Lead Agency for failure to complete all processes and clearances required to be approved to receive CCDF payments.**
 - iv. "Affordable child care arrangements": **Those arrangements for which the parent**

fee charged by the provider is less than or equal to the assigned copayment for a non-TANF family of the same size and income level who receives a subsidy or where the family can enroll the child without costs interfering with the family's ability to pay for child care and meet or exceed their family's basic living needs.

- c. How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?
 - i. In writing
 - ii. Verbally
 - iii. Other. Describe: **TANF work requirements are provided in writing and verbally during an assessment conducted with the Local Department of Social Services.**

2.3 Prioritizing Services for Vulnerable Children and Families

Lead Agencies must give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, families with very low incomes (considering family size), and children experiencing homelessness. A Lead Agency has the flexibility to prioritize other populations of children.

Note: Statute defines children with disabilities, and CCDF rule gives flexibility to Lead Agencies to include vulnerable populations in their definition of children with special needs.

CCDF defines "child experiencing homelessness" as a child who is homeless, as defined in Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a).

2.3.1 Lead Agency definition of priority groups

Describe how the Lead Agency defines:

- d. "Children with special needs." **A child who has been diagnosed as being physically or mentally incapable of self-care appropriate to the age of the child, as verified by the State, based on a determination by a physician, a licensed or certified psychologist, or a licensed social worker. Services for a child with special needs are given the same priority status as TANF, including not being waitlisted. A child with special needs may be served up to the age of 19.**
- e. "Families with very low incomes." **Maryland defines families of very low incomes as families eligible for TANF. Families receiving TANF are given the highest priority. Families transitioning off TANF are the second highest priority because they are still at risk of becoming eligible for TANF. Low-income families currently not receiving TANF or whose TANF ended in excess of 6 months are the third priority and would be the first group to have child care Scholarship services ended if the current budget could not support all children served.**

2.3.2 Prioritization of child care services

Identify how the Lead Agency will prioritize child care services for the following children and families.

- a. Complete the table below to indicate how the identified populations are prioritized.

Population Prioritized	Prioritize for enrollment in child care services	Serve without placing on waiting list	Waive co-payments as described in 3.3.1	Pay higher rate for access to higher quality care	Use grants or contracts to reserve spots	Other
Children with special needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:
Families with very low incomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:
Children experiencing homelessness, as defined by CCDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:
(Optional) Families receiving TANF, those attempting to transition off TANF, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe:

a. Does the Lead Agency define any other priority groups?

No.

Yes. If yes, identify the populations prioritized and describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes services:

2.3.3 Enrollment and grace period for children experiencing homelessness

Lead Agencies must allow (after an initial eligibility determination) children experiencing homelessness to receive CCDF services while required eligibility documentation is obtained.

Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with State, Territory, or local immunization and other health and safety requirements. The length of such a grace period must be established in consultation with the State, Territorial, or Tribal public health agency.

Note: Any payment for such a child during the grace period may not be considered an error or improper payment.

a. Describe the strategies to allow CCDF enrollment of children experiencing homelessness while required eligibility documentation is obtained: **A 90-day child care scholarship is issued to allow the parent to come into compliance with eligibility requirements. Once a parent comes into compliance with eligibility requirements, they are eligible for 24 months of Child Care Scholarship (CCS) services.**

b. Describe the grace period for each population below and how it allows them to receive

CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements.

i. Provide the policy for a grace period for:

Children experiencing homelessness: **Licensing has temporary admission to care regulations, which allows for a grace period to comply with immunizations and other health and safety requirements. Temporary Admission to Care 1) A provider may temporarily admit or retain a child in care if the child's parent or guardian is unable to provide documentation of immunization required in A(2)(b) of this regulation. 2) For a child temporarily admitted or retained in care, the parent or guardian shall present evidence of the child's appointment with a health care provider or local health department to (a) Receive a medical evaluation to include, if applicable, a lead screening test; (b) Receive a required immunization, (c) Acquire evidence of age-appropriate immunizations on a form approved by the office, or (d) Reconstruct a lost record. 3) The date or the appointment, set to D(2) of this regulation, may not be later than 20 calendar days following the date the child was temporarily admitted or retained. 4) A provider shall exclude from care a child who has been temporarily admitted or retained in care if the parent fails to provide documentation required by A(2) of this regulation within 3 business days after the date of this appointment made pursuant to D(2) of this regulation. While licensing regulations for child care programs give a 20-day grace period, the Child Care Scholarship Program allows an Immunization grace period of 60 days. The child is issued a child care scholarship during this time period to enable the parents experiencing homelessness to be issued the child care scholarship while their parents comply with the immunization requirements. The procedure ensures that the scholarships are not delayed and does not hold issuing the scholarship when ultimately, the parent has to provide proof of immunization to a formal child care provider.**

The Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program issues scholarships to all school-age and non-school-age children applying for a child care scholarship. Any non-school-age child with a parent electing to use informal child care must provide proof of age-appropriate immunization. Any family that cannot produce proof of immunization for a non-school-age child needing to use informal care will be issued a 90-day scholarship to comply with these regulations. MSDE Consulted with DHMH about the length of time a family should be able to come into compliance. The CCS Program allows the public school and the child care program to enforce and monitor immunization compliance for all children enrolled.

Children who are in foster care: **N/A**

ii. Does the Lead Agency certify that the length of the grace period was established in consultation with the State, Territorial, or Tribal public health agency?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

- c. Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates with licensing agencies and other relevant State, Territorial, Tribal, and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families with children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements: **We coordinate with regional licensing managers/specialist to inform them of this priority. These representatives communicate this to childcare providers who have more first-hand knowledge of families experiencing homelessness. The Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program coordinates with the CCS Vendor to issue a 90-day scholarship to any parent who needs to meet the immunization requirement. This procedure enables the parent to access child care services while the immunization requirements are being met.**

2.4 Lead Agency Outreach to Families Experiencing Homelessness, Families with Limited English Proficiency, and Persons with Disabilities

The Lead Agency must conduct outreach and provide services to families with limited English proficiency, families experiencing homelessness, and persons with disabilities.

2.4.1 Families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities: outreach and services

- a. Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to conduct outreach and provide services to eligible families with limited English proficiency. Check all that apply.
 - i. Application in languages other than English (application and related documents, brochures, provider notices).
 - ii. Informational materials in languages other than English.
 - iii. Website in languages other than English.
 - iv. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations.
 - v. Bilingual caseworkers or translators available.
 - vi. Bilingual outreach workers.
 - vii. Partnerships with community-based organizations.
 - viii. Collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, or Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.
 - ix. Home visiting programs.
 - x. Other. Describe: **With the support of the PDG B-5 Grant, Maryland was able to partner with WIDA Early Years to implement an evidence-based program focused specifically on the language development of young multilingual children and support for their families in early care and education (ECE) settings. The WIDA early years project has ended, however the training modules remain accessible for providers. As a result of SB 369 Prekindergarten Mailing Project, MSDE creates and publishes Pre-K flyers in English and Spanish. The flyers are developed for each county and list all available publicly-funded prekindergarten programs in each jurisdiction. The flyers are then distributed by the local departments of social services and departments of health to eligible families visiting those agencies. Child care licensing regulations allow for the temporary admission to care or**

retention of a child in care if the child is homeless.

- b. Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to conduct outreach and provide services to eligible families with a person(s) with a disability. Check all that apply.
- i. Applications and public informational materials available in braille and other communication formats for access by individuals with disabilities.
 - ii. Websites that are accessible (e.g., Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act).
 - iii. Caseworkers with specialized training/experience in working with individuals with disabilities.
 - iv. Ensuring accessibility of environments and activities for all children.
 - v. Partnerships with State and local programs and associations focused on disability- related topics and issues.
 - vi. Partnerships with parent associations, support groups, and parent-to-parent support groups, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers.
 - vii. Partnerships with State and local IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C providers and agencies.
 - viii. Availability and/or access to specialized services (e.g., mental health, behavioral specialists, therapists) to address the needs of all children.
 - ix. Other. Describe: : **In partnership with MSDE’s Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES), we promote and support inclusive settings through program and professional development for preschool special education programs using the National Pyramid Model all paired with ongoing reflective coaching provided by trained coaches. MSDE’s partnership with the Maryland Head Start Association ensures that Head Start and Early Head Start families are provided information and resources on early intervention services, inclusive programs, and at-home support. This partnership also focuses on providing professional development for educators and other program staff. MSDE provides several initiatives designed to support family and child well-being and school readiness. Patty Center ☐ Family Support Services, Judith P. Hoyer Early Learning Hubs, and MSDE Home Visiting programs all are designed to support families and children birth ☐ five. Families are provided with information and support regarding child development and special education services.**

2.4.2 Families experiencing homelessness: Outreach and technical assistance efforts

- a. Check, where applicable, the procedures used to conduct outreach for children experiencing homelessness and their families.
- i. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations.
 - ii. Partnerships with community-based organizations.
 - iii. Partnering with homeless service providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and others who work with families experiencing homelessness to provide referrals to child care.

- iv. Other. Describe: In collaboration with community-based organizations and McKinney-Vento liaisons, MSDE ensures that families experiencing homelessness, are provided information on programs and supports designed to assist their family. Child care regulations allow for the Temporary Admission to Care, which state an operator may temporarily admit or retain a child in care if the child is homeless.
- b. The Lead Agency must provide training and technical assistance (TA) to providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children and families experiencing homelessness.
 - i. Describe the Lead Agency’s training and TA efforts for providers in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness. **MSDE provides guidance to Lead Agencies and providers as to how to support children and families experiencing homelessness. For example, guidance was provided to inform the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that families experiencing homelessness do not need to provide proof of income for Pre-K enrollment. Pre-K programs must enroll all four-year-old applicants who are experiencing homelessness (COMAR §13A.06.02.03.A). Three-year-old children experiencing homelessness also are automatically eligible for Pre-K (COMAR §13A.06.02.03.C(1)). This categorical eligibility means that families experiencing homelessness do not have to provide evidence of income for Pre-K enrollment. A completed eligibility questionnaire, a note from the McKinney-Vento liaison or designated Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW), or any other record that the family has been determined to be experiencing homelessness replaces proof of income. Notarized letters from the family cannot be required, as such a requirement would create a barrier to the child’s enrollment in Pre-K. Providing training and resources to the Lead Agency's Quality Assurance staff to educate, support, and provide technical assistance to the Child Care Community regarding the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program, including serving children and families experiencing homelessness. Securing a Homelessness Liaison within the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program. This individual's primary role is to be the direct resource for parents and providers who need support while experiencing homelessness, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. The Homelessness Liaison also educates parents and providers on the priority application process that occurs once the applicant identifies their housing situation as unstable or that they are experiencing homelessness. Offering Open Office Hours via a Zoom call once a month to allow parents and providers to meet with the Lead Agency's staff with questions regarding the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program, including serving children and families experiencing homelessness. Attending conferences each year, such as the Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) Annual Conference, where the target audience is the provider community. The Lead Agency uses conference opportunities to speak with providers throughout the State of Maryland to help on the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program, including serving children and families experiencing homelessness.**
 - ii. Describe the Lead Agency’s training and TA efforts for Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness. **MSDE provides guidance to Lead Agencies and providers as to how**

to support children and families experiencing homelessness. For example, guidance was provided to inform LEAs that families experiencing homelessness do not need to provide proof of income for Pre-K enrollment. Pre-K programs must enroll all four-year-old applicants who are experiencing homelessness (COMAR §13A.06.02.03.A). Three-year-old children experiencing homelessness also are automatically eligible for Pre-K (COMAR §13A.06.02.03.C(1)). MSDE provides several forms of training and technical assistance to LEAs, both in person and virtual. Some training provided includes: Collecting, Reporting and Using Data, Determining Eligibility and Navigating Best Interests Determination, Identifying and Supporting Unaccompanied Youth, Promoting Racial Equity in McKinney-Vento Services, Supporting Immigrant Students Experiencing Homelessness, etc. Currently, a McKinney-Vento Outreach Toolkit is under development, which will consist of videos, PSAs, brochures, fliers, and a social media campaign. In addition, MSDE is developing online courses for a variety of LEA and program staff, which will be released on a rolling basis starting by May 2024. Our Child Care Scholarship (CCS) application captures the McKinney Veto definition of homelessness. Staff authorizing CCS benefits are provided with technical assistance on how to process the application documenting homelessness when submitting their application. Families experiencing homelessness are given 90 days to align with all eligibility requirements. Staff are also trained in how to provide technical support to shelters and other organizations that support families experiencing homelessness. Maryland State Department of Education approved trainers are required to include how their training content will support children and families experiencing homelessness when submitting new training proposals. In collaboration with Maryland Head Start Association and other community-based organizations, the MSDE McKinney-Vento liaison provided seminars to program staff on identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness.

2.5 Promoting Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies must consider children’s development and promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services and must establish a minimum 12-month period for each child, both at the initial eligibility determination and redetermination.

2.5.1 Children’s development

Describe how the Lead Agency’s eligibility, enrollment, reporting, and redetermination policies promote continuity of care in order to support children’s development. The Maryland State Department of Education has developed a user-friendly, online calculator designed for Prekindergarten providers in both private provider and public school settings to determine families’ income eligibility tier level at the time of enrollment as well as the total cost of state, local, and family share. Upon the completion of a full Child Care Scholarship Application, families are eligible for 24 months of services. Families can enroll with any licensed, registered, or approved licensed exempt program (friend, family, and relative care). Reporting of changes by families is limited to income above 85% of the State Median Income, no longer a Maryland resident, a gain of 1M in assets, the child no longer in care, or a child no longer needing care. At redetermination, the family must meet all points of eligibility to be determined eligible for 24 additional months of benefits. Maryland pays childcare providers based on enrollment and prospectively. All procedures promote continuity of care and support children's development by

minimizing disruption in care once a child is determined eligible. Likewise, the payment practices promote enrollment by being similar to how child care programs receive payment from private paying customers.

2.5.2 Minimum 12-month eligibility

Lead Agencies must establish a minimum 12-month eligibility period for each child, both at the initial eligibility determination and at redetermination to support continuity in child care assistance and reduce barriers to families retaining eligibility. This requirement is:

- Regardless of changes in income, Lead Agencies may not terminate CCDF assistance during the minimum 12-month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the Lead Agency’s income eligibility threshold but not the federal threshold of 85 percent of SMI; and
- Regardless of temporary changes in participation in work, training, or educational activities.
 - a. Does the Lead Agency certify that their policies or procedures provide a minimum 12-month eligibility period for each child at initial eligibility determination?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
 - b. Does the Lead Agency certify that its definition of “temporary change” includes each of the minimum required elements?
 1. Any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness.
 2. Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons.
 3. Any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program.
 4. Any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program.
 5. Any cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program not listed above. In these cases only, Lead Agencies may establish a period of 3 months or longer.
 6. Any change in age, including a child turning 13 years old during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.
 7. Any changes in residency within the State or Territory. Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
 - c. Are the policies different for redetermination?
 No.
 Yes. If yes, provide the additional/varying policies for redetermination: **The parent’s income can go up to 85% (SMI) at redetermination.**

2.5.3 Job search and continued assistance

- a. Does the Lead Agency consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination and/or at the minimum 12-month eligibility redetermination? (Note: If yes, Lead Agencies must provide a minimum of 3 months of job search.) Check all that apply:
- i. Yes. The Lead Agency does consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination. If yes, describe: **For initial/redeterminations: Families approved by the Family Investment Administration located within the Department of Human Services are eligible for 24-Months of Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Services.**
 - ii. Yes. The Lead Agency does consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at redetermination. If yes, describe: **For initial/redeterminations: Families approved by the Family Investment Administration located within the Department of Human Services are eligible for 24-Months of Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Services.**
 - iii. No. The Lead Agency does not consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) as an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination or redetermination.
- b. Does the Lead Agency continue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period when a parent has a non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity?
- Yes. The Lead Agency continues assistance.
- No, the Lead Agency discontinues assistance.
- i. If no, describe the Lead Agency's policies for discontinuing assistance due to a parent's non-temporary change:
 - ii. If no, describe what specific actions/changes trigger the job-search period after each such loss or cessation:
 - iii. If no, how long is the job-search period where a family can continue assistance (must be at least 3 months)?
- c. The Lead Agency may discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination in the limited circumstances listed below. Check and provide the policy for all circumstances in which the Lead Agency chooses to discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination:
- i. Not applicable.
 - ii. Excessive unexplained absences despite multiple attempts by the Lead Agency or designated entity to contact the family and provider, including the prior notification of a possible discontinuation of assistance.

Provide the Lead Agency's policy defining the number of unexplained absences identified as excessive:
 - iii. A change in residency outside of the State or Territory.

Provide the Lead Agency's policy for a change in residency outside the State or Territory: **Care terminates if a family no longer resides in Maryland. COMAR 13A.14.06.03.A.1.**

- iv. Substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility.

Provide the Lead Agency's definition of fraud/intentional program violations that lead to discontinued assistance: **"Fraud/Intentional program violation" means an intentionally false or misleading statement or misrepresentation, concealment, or withholding of facts for the purposes of establishing or maintaining the customer's, recipient's, or provider's, eligibility for Child Care Scholarship payments or for increasing or preventing a reduction of the amount of assistance. COMAR 13A.14.06.02.33.**

2.5.4 Reporting changes during the minimum 12-month eligibility period

Lead Agencies may only require families to report changes that impact a family's eligibility, including only if the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the SMI, taking into account irregular fluctuations in income, or there is a non-temporary change in the parent's work, training, or education status, during the 12-month eligibility period. Lead Agencies may also require families to report that enable the lead agency to contact the family or pay providers, such as a new telephone number or address.

Note: The response below should exclude reporting requirements for a graduated phase-out, which are described in question 2.5.5.

Does the Lead Agency limit what families must report during the 12-month eligibility period to the changes described above?

Yes.

No. If no, describe: **Families must report that they are no longer a resident of Maryland.**

2.5.5 Policies and procedures for graduated phase-out of assistance at redetermination

Lead Agencies that establish initial family income eligibility below 85 percent of SMI must provide a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased above the Lead Agency's initial income threshold at the time of redetermination but remains below the federal threshold of 85 percent of SMI.

Lead Agencies that provide a graduated phase-out must implement a two-tiered eligibility threshold, with the second tier of eligibility (used at the time of eligibility redetermination) to be set at:

- (i) 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size; or,
- (ii) An amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold that:
 - (A) Takes into account the typical household budget of a family with a low income
 - (B) Provides justification that the second eligibility threshold is:
 - (1) Sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for workers with low incomes and that promote and support family economic stability
 - (2) Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption

At redetermination, a child must be considered eligible if their parents are participating in an eligible activity even if their income exceeds the Lead Agency's initial eligibility income limit as long as their income does not exceed the second tier of eligibility. Note that once determined eligible, the child must be considered eligible for a full minimum 12-month eligibility period, even if the parents' income exceeds the second tier of eligibility during the eligibility period, as long as it does not exceed 85 percent of SMI.

A child eligible for services via the graduated phase-out of assistance is considered eligible under the same conditions as other eligible children with the exception of the co-payment restrictions, which do not apply to a graduated phase-out. To help families transition from child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-payment amounts in proportion to a family's income growth for families whose children are determined eligible under a graduated phase-out. Lead Agencies may require additional reporting on changes in family income but must still ensure that any additional reporting requirements do not constitute an undue burden on families.

Check and describe the option that best identifies the Lead Agency's policies and procedures regarding the graduated phase-out of assistance.

- a. Not applicable. The Lead Agency sets its initial eligibility threshold at 85 percent of SMI and therefore is not required to provide a graduated phase-out period. (If checked, skip to question 3.1.1.)
- b. The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at 85 percent of SMI. If checked, describe the policies and procedures: **Once a family is determined eligible for the Child Care Scholarship Program, their income can continue up to, but cannot exceed or equal 85% of SMI.**
 - i. Lead Agency adjusts the family's co-pay during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts co-payment for families under a graduated phase-out period in proportion to a family's income growth. Include information on the percentage or amount of change made in the co-payment during graduated phase-out:
 - ii. Lead Agency requires additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe: **Maryland will collect additional income verification to document fluctuation of income above 85% of SMI. Services will continue if documentation shows that the fluctuation of income is temporary.**
- c. The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at an amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold. If checked, provide the following information:
 - i. Provide the income level (\$/month) and the percent of SMI for the second tier of eligibility for a family of three:
 - ii. Describe how the second eligibility threshold takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family:
 - iii. Describe how the second eligibility threshold is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability:
 - iv. Describe how the second eligibility threshold reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption:

- v. Lead Agency adjusts the family’s co-pay during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts co-payment for families under a graduated phase-out period in proportion to a family’s income growth. Include information on the percentage or amount of change made in the co-payment during graduated phase-out:
- vi. Lead Agency requires additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period. If checked, describe:

3 Child Care Affordability

CCDF subsidies make child care more affordable for eligible families, providing access to a greater range of child care options that allow parents to work, go to school, or enroll in training and they allow parents to access higher quality care options that better support children’s development. CCDF requires some families participating in CCDF to pay an affordable co-payment set by the Lead Agency to cover a part of their care. But co-payments can be a significant and destabilizing financial strain on family budgets and a barrier to parent employment, and the CCDBG Act requires that the co-payment amount not be a barrier to families participating in CCDF. Lead Agencies may not set parent co-payments above 7% of family income regardless of gradual phase-out policies and regardless of the number of children receiving assistance. Lead Agencies are encouraged to set co-payments much lower than 7% to make child care more affordable for more families and have broad flexibility to waive co-payments for to many participants. Lead Agencies must ensure that the total payment to a child care provider is not reduced because of family’s lowered or waived co-payment.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they determine an eligible family’s co-payment, the policies in place to waive or ensure co-payments are affordable for families, and how the Lead Agency improves access for children and families in economically and/or socially marginalized communities.

3.1 Family Co-payments

Lead Agencies must establish and periodically revise a sliding-fee scale for families receiving CCDF services that varies based on income and the size of the family to determine each family’s contribution (i.e., co-payment) and does not create a barrier to receiving CCDF assistance. In addition to income and the size of the family, the Lead Agency may use other factors as appropriate when determining family contributions/co-payments. Lead Agencies may not use price of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining co-payments. Lead Agencies must ensure that the total payment to a child care provider is not reduced because of family’s lowered or waived co-payment.

3.1.1 Family co-payment

Lead Agencies may not charge any family more than 7% of a family’s gross income, regardless of the number of children participating in CCDF.

- a. What is the maximum percent of a family’s gross income any family could be charged as a co-payment? **Maryland's assigned parental copayment is less than 1% of the families gross family income.**
- b. Does the Lead Agency certify that their sliding fee scales are always based on income and

family size (regardless of how many different scales they may use)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

3.1.2 Sliding fee scale

Provide the CCDF co-payments for eligible families in the table(s) below according to family size for one child in care.

a. Is the sliding fee scale set statewide?

Yes.

No. If no, describe how the sliding fee scale is set:

b. Complete the table below. If the sliding fee scale is not set statewide, complete the table for the most populous locality:

	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>
Family Size	Lowest monthly income at initial eligibility where the family is first charged a co-pay (greater than \$0).	What is the monthly co-payment for a family of this size based on the income level in (A)?	What percentage of income is the co-payment in (B)?	Highest monthly income at initial eligibility where a family is charged a co-pay before a family is no longer eligible.	What is the monthly co-payment for a family of this size based on the income level in (D)?	What percentage of income is this co-payment in (E)?
1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	3.00	12.99	0.00	0.00	3.00	12.99
3	0.00	1.30	5101.00	12.99	0.00	1.30
4	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26
5	3.00	12.99	0.00	0.00	3.00	12.99

c. What is the effective date of the sliding-fee scale(s)? **The effective date of the sliding-fee scale May 23, 2022.**

d. Provide the link(s) to the sliding-fee scale(s):

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/copayment_agreement_en_2.pdf

e. Does the Lead Agency allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment in instances where the provider's price exceeds the subsidy payment?

No.

Yes.

If yes:

i. Provide the rationale for the Lead Agency’s policy to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment, including a demonstration of how the policy does not provide a barrier and promotes affordability and access for families: **If Maryland limited child care providers serving children eligible for the child care scholarship to tuition rates equal to the child care scholarship reimbursement and the assigned parental co-payment, that policy decision would limit the parental choice options to less than 34% of the providers currently participating in the Child Care Scholarship Program. In addition, the policy would become a major deterrent to MSDE’s attempt to recruit higher quality child care providers that currently do not accept the child care scholarship, as a form of child care tuition reimbursement. Maryland recognizes child care as a private business, as such, Maryland does not regulate the amount child care providers determine they must collect in child care tuition in order to run their business and to provide quality early care and educational opportunities for children. Not limiting the tuition based upon child care scholarship reimbursement was an imperative policy decision in support of increasing equal access to higher quality child care for all parents, especially when Maryland’s reimbursement rates were at 11th percentile of the Child Care Provider Market Rate Survey (MRS). Effective May 23, 2022, childcare scholarship reimbursements are set at the 70th percentile across Maryland. MSDE’s analysis of the June 2021 Market Rate Survey results supports that this policy should remain in effect to provide a gateway for parents to access educational programs with tuition rates above or below their eligible child care scholarship reimbursement. Data suggests that implementing this policy gives parents greater accessibility to additional child care options. This payment practice allows parents to determine if they can or cannot afford to pay the difference between an early care and educational setting that charges below or above their child care scholarship reimbursement rate. Additional information in support of Maryland’s rationale to allow child care providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment can be found at:** (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/19/09-15-2021_june_2021_mrs_report.pdf)

ii. Provide data (including data on the size and frequency of such amounts) on the extent to which CCDF providers charge additional amounts to families: **Maryland’s analysis of the June 2021 MRS results indicated that 66% of the child care providers charge a tuition rate that is above the reimbursement of the child care scholarship plus the assigned copayment. The following is MSDE analysis of 26,097 scholarships to determine the amount parents pay out-of-pocket above the scholarship reimbursement plus the assigned copayment in order to cover the balance owed by the provider: 13,441 parents pay \$1.00 - \$25.00 per week above their child care scholarship and copayment, an amount totaling \$55,282.00; 3,548 parents pay \$26.00 - \$50.00 per week above their child care scholarship and copayment, an amount totaling \$136,064; 2,734 parents pay \$51.00 \$75.00 per week above their child care scholarship and copayment, an amount totaling \$172,073; 2,398 parents pay \$76.00 - \$100.00 per week above their child care scholarship and copayment, an amount totaling \$212,095; 2,388 parents pay \$101.00 - \$150.00 per week above their child care scholarship and copayment, an**

amount totaling \$29,040; 1,005 parents pay above their child care scholarship and copayment, an amount totaling \$173,713; and 583 parents pay \$200.00 or more per week above their child care scholarship and copayment, an amount totaling \$141,823. A total for 26,097 scholarships with a weekly total of \$920,090 per week.

3.2 Calculation of Co-Payment

Lead agencies must calculate a family's contribution (or co-payment), taking into account income and family size, and Lead Agencies may choose to consider other factors in their calculation.

3.2.1 Family co-payment calculation

a. How is the family's contribution calculated, and to whom is it applied? Check if the fee is a dollar amount or if the fee is a percent of income below, and then check all that apply under the selection, as appropriate.

i. The fee is a dollar amount and (check all that apply):

The fee is per child, with the same fee for each child.

The fee is per child and is discounted for two or more children.

The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.

No additional fee is charged after a certain number of children.

The fee is per family.

The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:

Other. Describe: **An individual or family who uses Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program services shall contribute financially to the cost of those services, except for the exempt categories listed on the Co-Payment Agreement Form located on the Money4childare care website. In addition, families with a referral from the Maryland Office of Refugees and Asylees (MORA) and Head Start, pending TCA applicants with a referral from the Department of Human Services, and families participating in the Department of Human Services/MORA Matching Grant Program are eligible for a zero copayment. Families not eligible for a co-payment waiver are assessed copayments based on the Unit of Care authorized: (a) \$3.00 per week (3-Unit Scholarship); (b) \$2.00 per week (2-Unit Scholarship); and (c) \$1.00 per week (1-Unit Scholarship).**

ii. The fee is a percent of income and (check all that apply):

The fee is per child, with the same percentage applied for each child.

The fee is per child, and a discounted percentage is applied for two or more children.

The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.

No additional percentage is charged after a certain number of children.

The fee is per family.

The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:

Other. Describe:

- b. Does the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's co-payment? (Lead Agencies may not use price of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining co-payments).

No.

Yes.

If yes, check and describe those additional factors below:

- i. Number of hours the child is in care. Describe: **Families not eligible for a co-payment waiver are assessed copayments based on the Unit of Care authorized: (a) \$3.00 per week (3-Unit Scholarship); (b) \$2.00 per week (2-Unit Scholarship); and (c) \$1.00 per week (1-Unit Scholarship).**

- ii. Quality of care (as defined by the Lead Agency). Describe:

- iii. Other. Describe: **The co-payment amount is the same for each child per household authorized for a scholarship.**

- c. Describe any other policies the Lead Agency uses in the calculation of family co-payment to ensure it does not create a barrier to access. Check all that apply:

- i. Base co-payments on only a portion of the family's income. For instance, only consider the family income over the federal poverty level.

- ii. Base co-payments on the number of children in the family and reduce a portion of the co-payments as the number of children being served increases.

- iii. Other. Describe:

3.3 Waiving Family Co-payment

3.3.1 Waiving family co-payment

The Lead Agency may waive family contributions/co-payments for many families to lower their costs and maximize affordability for families. Lead Agencies have broad flexibility in determining for which families they will waive co-payments.

Does the Lead Agency waive family contributions/co-payments?

No, the Lead Agency does not waive any family contributions/co-payments. (Skip to question 4.1.1.)

Yes. If yes, identify and describe which family contributions/co-payments waived.

- i. Families with an income at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level for families of the same size.

- ii. Families with an income above 100% but at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level for families of the same size.

- iii. Families experiencing homelessness.
- iv. Families with children with disabilities.
- v. Families enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start.
- vi. Children in foster care or kinship care, or otherwise receiving or needing to receive protective services. Describe the policy:
- vii. Families meeting other criteria established by the Lead Agency. Describe the policy: **Individuals or families who use CCS Program services are required to contribute financially to the cost of those services, except for families that document participation in the following programs or receipt of the following benefits: Federal Housing Act Housing Choice Voucher Program, Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Migrant Workers, Minor Parents, Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) Program participants, Federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC) recipients, Welfare Avoidance Grant (WAG) recipients, children enrolled in Head Start or State Funded Pre-K, Maryland Office of Refugees and Asylees (MORA) recipients, pending TCA applicants with a referral from the Department of Human Resources, and families participating in the Department of Human Services/MORA Matching Grant Program.**

4 Parental Choice, Equal Access, Payment Rates, and Payment Practices

Core purposes of CCDF are to provide participating parents choice in their child care arrangements and provide their children with equal access to child care compared to those children not participating in CCDF. CCDF requirements approach equal access and parental choice comprehensively to meet these foundational program goals. Providing access to a full range of child care providers helps ensure that families can choose a child care provider that meets their family's needs. CCDF payment rates and practices must be sufficient to support equal access by allowing child care providers to recruit and retain skilled staff, provide high-quality care, and operate in a sustainable way. Supply-building strategies are also essential.

This section addresses many of the CCDF provisions related to equal access, including access to the full range of providers, payment rates for providers, co-payments for families, payment practices, differential payment rates, and other strategies that support parental choice and access by helping to ensure that child care providers are available to serve children participating in CCDF.

In responding to questions in this section, OCC recognizes that each Lead Agency identifies and defines its own categories and types of care. OCC does not expect Lead Agencies to change their definitions to fit the CCDF-defined categories and types of care. For these questions, provide responses that closely match the CCDF categories of care.

4.1 Access to Full Range of Provider Options

Lead Agencies must provide parents a choice of providers and offer assistance with child care services through a child care certificate (or voucher) or with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of child care services. Lead Agencies are reminded that policies and

procedures should not restrict parental access to any type or category of care or provider (e.g., center care, home care, in-home care, for-profit provider, non-profit provider, or faith-based provider, etc.).

4.1.1 Parent choice

- a. Identify any barriers to provider participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices, (including for family child care and in-home providers), based on provider feedback, public comment, and reports to the Lead Agency: **Maryland’s child care scholarship reimbursement rates are currently at the 70th percentile of the June 2021 Market Rate Survey. Likewise, providers receiving CCDF funds from the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program must participate in Maryland’s Quality Rating and Improvement System, Maryland EXCELS. Both the reimbursement rate and the requirement to participate in Maryland EXCELS have been noted as barriers to provider participation. Although the provider participation rate has increased since Maryland began paying child care providers who are participating in the CCS program prospectively, providers have expressed the true-up (payment reconciliation process) as a concern.**

Programs participating in Maryland EXCELS publish quality ratings from 1 to 5. Programs published at a quality rating 1 do not have professional development requirements. As programs increase ratings the programs are expected to hold a Maryland Child Care credential for levels 4 and 5 and for levels 2 and 3 if the provider does not have a credential, approved training that meets the requirements of the standards. Prior to June 30, 2024 providers participating in the Maryland Child Care Credential had access to \$400.00 annually to reimburse for the cost of professional development.

Programs participating in Maryland EXCELS have access to regional quality assurance specialists to assist with understanding and meeting the standard requirements. In addition, the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) provides technical assistance. There are multiple online resources that can be accessed by programs to support participation and increased quality ratings. The CCR&R also provides a parent support staff that will assist with navigating the Child Care Scholarship application process.

- b. Does the Lead Agency offer child care assistance through vouchers or certificates?

Yes.

No.

- c. Does the Lead Agency offer child care assistance through grants or contracts?

Yes.

No.

- d. Describe how the parent is informed that the child care certificate allows the option to choose from a variety of child care categories, such as private, not-for-profit, faith-based providers; centers; family child care homes; or in-home providers: **The Child Care Scholarship Application requires parents to specify whether they want their child to attend formal or informal child care programs. Once parents receive the scholarship, they**

will receive documentation detailing the types of care available and the requirement to choose a Maryland EXCELS participating program. Parents can locate child care programs through the LOCATE: Child Care services. The child care scholarship informs parents of the different care options by providing reimbursement amounts for different types of care, such as center-based, large family, or family care. If a parent selects informal care, the Maryland Child Care Scholarship vendor will provide the parent with information on how to choose this type of care. The Child Care Scholarship vendor, licensing specialist and the Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialist, and community partners are also available to inform parents about the various child care categories and their parental choice to select a care type that best meets their family's needs.

- e. Describe what information is included on the child care certificate: **The child care scholarship will contain information such as the parent's name and address, the child's name, the authorization period, the reimbursement amount, and the assigned parental copayment. If a parent chooses formal care, the child care scholarship will cover the reimbursement amounts assigned for the care units approved for both center care, large family care, and family child care. On the other hand, if the parent opts for informal care, the child care scholarship will cover the reimbursement amounts assigned for the care units approved for informal care (relative/non-relative care).**

4.2 Assess Market Rates and Analyze the Cost of Child Care

To establish subsidy payment rates that ensure equal access, Lead Agencies must collect and analyze statistically valid and reliable data and have the option to conduct either a (1) market rate survey (MRS) reflecting variations in the price to parents of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child, or (2) an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, such as a cost estimation model, which estimates the cost of care by incorporating both data and assumptions to estimate what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different scenarios. All Lead Agencies must analyze the cost of providing child care through a narrow cost analysis or pre-approved alternative methodology.

Prior to conducting the MRS or pre-approved alternative, Lead Agencies must consult with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (designated or established pursuant to the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i)) or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities; and organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers, and directors. Prior to conducting the MRS or pre-approved alternative methodology, Lead Agencies must consult with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (designated or established pursuant to the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i)) or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities; and organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers, and directors.

Note: Any Lead Agency considering using an alternative methodology instead of a market rate survey to set payment rates, is required to submit a description of its proposed approach to OCC for pre-approval in advance of developing and conducting the alternative methodology. Advance approval is not required if the Lead Agency plans to implement both an MRS and an alternative methodology to set rates at a percentile of the market rate, but a Lead Agency conducting a limited market rate survey and using it to inform their cost model would need pre-approval for this approach. In its request for ACF pre-approval, a Lead Agency must provide details on the following elements of their proposed alternative methodology:

- Overall approach and rationale for using proposed methodology
- Description of stakeholder engagement
- Data collection timeframe (if applicable)
- Description of the data and assumptions included in the methodology, including how these elements will yield valid and reliable results from the model
- Description of how the methodology will capture the universe of providers, and reflect variations by provider type, age of children, geographic location, and quality

4.2.1 Completion of the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology

Did the Lead Agency conduct a statistically valid and reliable MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology to meet the CCDF requirements to assess child care prices and/or costs and determine payment rates? Check only one based on which methodology was used to determine your payment rates.

- a. Market rate survey.
- i. When were the data gathered (provide a date range; for instance, September – December 2023)?
- b. ACF pre-approved alternative methodology.
- i. The alternative methodology was completed.
- ii. The alternative methodology is in process.

If the alternative methodology was completed:

When were the data gathered and when was the study completed?

Describe any major differences between the pre-approved methodology and the final methodology used to inform payment rates. Include any major changes to stakeholder engagement, data, assumptions or proposed scenarios.

If the alternative methodology is in progress:

Provide a status on the alternative methodology and timeline (i.e., dates when the alternative methodology activities will be conducted, any completed steps to date, anticipated date of completion, and expected date new rates will be in effect using the alternative methodology).

- c. Consultation on data collection methodology.
- Describe when and how the Lead Agency engaged the following partners and how the consultation informed the development and execution of the MRS or alternative methodology, as appropriate.
- iii. State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body: **Office of Child Care met with members of the Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council to get feedback and to assist with the design of the Market Rate Survey Form.**
- iv. Local child care program administrators: **Office of Child Care met with members of the Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council to get feedback and to assist with the design of the Market Rate Survey. OCC is open to program administrators and**

has a child care program administrator on the board.

- v. Local child care resource and referral agencies: **Office of Child Care met with members of the Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council to get feedback and to assist with the design of the Market Rate Survey. OCC is open to the public and has a representative from the child care resource and referral agency on the board.**
 - vi. Organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers, and directors from all settings and serving all ages: **Office of Child Care met with members of the Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council to get feedback and to assist with the design of the Market Rate Survey. OCC has a representative that represents caregivers, teachers and directors on the board.**
 - vii. Other. Describe:
- d. An MRS must be statistically valid and reliable.
- An MRS can use administrative data, such as child care resource and referral data, if it is representative of the market. Please provide the following information about the market rate survey:
- i. When was the market rate survey completed?
 - ii. What was the time period for collecting the information (e.g., all of the prices in the survey are collected within a three-month time period)?
 - iii. Describe how it represented the child care market, including what types of providers were included in the survey:
 - iv. What databases are used in the survey? Are they from multiple sources, including licensing, resource and referral, and the subsidy program?
 - v. How does the survey use good data collection procedures, regardless of the method for collection (mail, telephone, or web-based survey)?
 - vi. What is the percent of licensed or regulated child care centers responding to the survey?
 - vii. What is the percent of licensed or regulated family child care homes responding to the survey?
 - viii. Describe if the survey conducted in any languages other than English:
 - ix. Describe if data were analyzed in a manner to determine price of care per child:
 - x. Describe if data were analyzed from a sample of providers and if so, how the sample was weighted:

- e. Price variations reflected.

The market rate survey data or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology data must reflect variations in child care prices or cost of child care services in specific categories.

- i. Describe how the market rate survey or pre-approved alternative methodology reflected variation in geographic area (e.g., county, region, urban, rural). Include information on whether parts of the State or Territory were not represented by respondents and include information on how prices or costs could be linked to

local geographic areas.

- ii. Describe how the market rate survey or pre-approved alternative methodology reflected variation in type of provider (e.g., licensed providers, license-exempt providers, center-based providers, family child care home providers, home based providers).
- iii. Describe how the market rate survey or pre-approved alternative methodology reflected age of child (e.g., infant, toddler, preschool, school-age):
- iv. Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, such as quality level:

4.2.2 Cost analysis

If a Lead Agency does not complete a cost-based pre-approved alternative methodology, they must analyze the cost of providing child care services through a narrow cost analysis. A narrow cost analysis is a study of what it costs providers to deliver child care at two or more levels of quality: (1) a base level of quality that meets health, safety, staffing, and quality requirements, and (2) one or more higher levels of quality as defined by the Lead Agency. The narrow cost analysis must estimate costs by levels of quality; include relevant variation by provider type, child's age, or location; and analyze the gaps between estimated costs and payment rates to inform payment rate setting. Lead agencies are not required to complete a separate narrow cost analysis if their pre-approved alternative methodology addresses all of the components required in the narrow cost analysis.

Describe how the Lead Agency analyzed the cost of child care through a narrow cost analysis or pre-approved alternative methodology for the FFY 2025–2027 CCDF Plan, including:

- a. How did the Lead Agency conduct a narrow cost analysis (e.g., a cost model, a cost study, existing data or data from the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator)? **The Narrow Cost analysis was completed by Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies. The methodology used was to use the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC). The PCQC is a web-based tool that calculates the cost of quality child care based on site-level provider data. The PCQC relies on Excel spreadsheets that are aligned with the State's unique reimbursement rate variations including a range of quality and other funding factors.**

The PCQC helps users understand the discrete costs of delivering child care services at different quality levels, along with differences in cost related to the type of provider, the age of the children served and the geographic region of the state, when regionalized expense data is entered. The PCQC is the federally approved tool to support narrow cost analysis and alternative methodology for subsidy rate setting. The PCQC demonstrates if a gap exists between the provider's cost of producing services at a given quality level and the revenue sources that are available to support service delivery.

The data used is from:

- Bureau of Labor Statistics (personnel data)
- Averaged cost data for non-personnel, found in the PCQC
- Salary data collected as part of the Market Rate Survey done with Maryland providers

- b. In the Lead Agency's analysis, were there any relevant variations by geographic location,

category of provider, or age of child?

- c. What assumptions and data did the Lead Agency use to determine the cost of care at the base level of quality (e.g., ratios, group size, staff compensations, staff training, etc.)?
- d. How does the Lead Agency define higher quality and what assumptions and data did the Lead Agency use to determine cost at higher levels of quality (e.g., ratio, group size, staffing levels, staff compensation, professional development requirements)? A Lead Agency can use a quality improvement system or other system of quality indicators (e.g., accreditation, pre-Kindergarten standards, Head Start Program Performance Standards, or State-defined quality measures).
- e. What is the gap between cost and price, and how did the Lead Agency consider this while setting payment rates? Did the Lead Agency target any rate increases where gaps were the largest or develop any long-term plans to increase rates based on this information?

4.2.3 Publicly available report on the cost and price of child care

The Lead Agency must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology and include the Narrow Cost Analysis if an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology was not conducted.

The Lead Agency must make this report widely available no later than 30 days after completion of the report, including posting the results on the Lead Agency website. The Lead Agency must describe in the detailed report how the Lead Agency took into consideration the views and comments of the public or stakeholders prior to conducting the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology.

a. Describe how the Lead Agency made the results of the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology report widely available to the public by responding to the questions below.

- i. Provide the date the report was completed:
- ii. Provide the date the report containing results was made widely available (no later than 30 days after the completion of the report):
- iii. Provide a link to the website where the report is posted and describe any other strategies the Lead Agency uses to make the detailed report widely available:
- iv. Describe how the Lead Agency considered partner views and comments in the detailed report. Responses should include which partners were engaged and how partner input influenced the market rate survey or alternative methodology:

4.3 Adequate Payment Rates

The Lead Agency must set CCDF subsidy payment rates in accordance with the results of the current MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology and at a level to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable with those provided to families not receiving CCDF assistance. Lead Agencies are also required to provide a summary of data and facts to demonstrate how payment rates ensure equal access, which means the Lead Agency must also consider the costs of base level care and higher quality care as part of its rate setting. Finally, the Lead Agency must re-evaluate its payment rates at least every 3 years.

The ages and types of care listed in the base payment rate tables are meant to provide a snapshot of the categories of rates and are not intended to be comprehensive of all categories that might exist or to reflect the terms used by the Lead Agency for particular ages. If rates are not statewide, please provide all variations of payment rates when reporting base payment rates below.

Base rates are the lowest, foundational rates before any differentials are added (e.g., for higher quality or other purposes) and must be sufficient to ensure that minimum health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements are covered. These are the rates that will be used to determine compliance with equal access requirements.

4.3.1 Payment rates

a. Are the payment rates that the Lead Agency is reporting in 4.3.2 set statewide by the Lead Agency?

Yes.

i. If yes, check if the Lead Agency:

Sets the same payment rates for the entire State or Territory.

Sets different payment rates for different regions in the State or Territory.

No.

ii. If no, identify how many jurisdictions set their own payment rates:

b. Provide the date the current payment rates became effective (i.e., date of last payment rate update based on most recent MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology as reported in 4.2.1).

c. If the Lead Agency does not publish weekly rates, then how were the rates reported in 4.3.2 or 4.3.3 calculated (e.g., were daily rates multiplied by 5 or monthly rates divided by 4.3)? **N/A**

4.3.2 Base payment rates

a. Provide the base payment rates in the tables below. If the Lead Agency completed a market rate survey (MRS), provide the percentiles based on the most recent MRS for the identified categories. If the Lead Agency sets different payment rates for different regions in the State or Territory (and checked 4.3.1aii), provide the rates for the most populous region as well as the region with payment rates set at the lowest percentile. Percentiles are not required if the Lead Agency also conducted an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology but must be reported if the Lead Agency conducted an MRS only.

The preamble to the 2016 final rule states that a benchmark for adequate payment rates is the 75th percentile of the most recent MRS. The 75th percentile benchmark applies to the base rates. The 75th percentile is the number separating the lowest 75 percent of rates from the highest 25 percent. Setting rates at the 75th percentile, while not a requirement, would ensure that eligible families can afford three out of four child care providers. In addition to reporting the 75th percentile in the tables below, the Lead Agency must also report the 50th percentile and 60th percentile for each identified category.

If the Lead Agency conducted an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, provide the estimated cost of care for the identified categories, as well as the percentage of the cost

of care covered by the established payment rate. If the Lead Agency indicated it sets different payment rates for different regions in the State or Territory in 4.3.1.a, provide the estimated cost of care and the percentage of the cost of care covered by the established payment rate for the most populous region as well as the region with rates established at the lowest percent of the cost of care.

For each identified category below, provide the percentage of providers who are receiving the base rate without any add-ons or differential payments.

Provide the full-time weekly base payment rates in the table below. If weekly payment rates are not published, then the Lead Agency will need to calculate its equivalent.

i. Table 1: Complete if rates are set statewide. If rates are not set statewide, provide rates for most populous region. Percentiles are not required if the Lead Agency also conducted an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology but must be reported if the Lead Agency conducted an MRS only.

Care Type	Base payment rate (specify unit, e.g., per day, per week, per month)	% of providers receiving Base rate	Full-Time Weekly Base Payment Rate	What is the percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 50th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 60th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 75th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the estimated cost of care? (Alternative Methodology)	What percent of the estimated cost of care is the rate?
Center Care for Infants (6 months)									
Family Child Care for Infants (6 months)									
Center Care for Toddlers (18 months)									

Care Type	Base payment rate (specify unit, e.g., per day, per week, per month)	% of providers receiving Base rate	Full-Time Weekly Base Payment Rate	What is the percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 50th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 60th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 75th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the estimated cost of care? (Alternative Methodology)	What percent of the estimated cost of care is the rate?
Family Child Care for Toddlers (18 months)									
Center Care for Preschoolers (4 years)									
Family Child Care for Preschoolers (4 years)									
Center Care for School-Age (6 years)									
Family Child Care for School-Age (6 years)									

ii. Table 2: Do not complete if rates are set statewide. If rates are not set statewide, provide rates for region with payment rates set at the lowest percentile. Percentiles are not required if the Lead Agency also conducted an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology but must be reported if the Lead Agency conducted an MRS only.

Care Type	Base payment rate (specify unit, e.g., per day, per week, per month)	% of providers receiving Base rate	Full-Time Weekly Base Payment Rate	What is the percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 50th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 60th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 75th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the estimated cost of care? (Alternative Methodology)	What percent of the estimated cost of care is the rate?
Center Care for Infants (6 months)									
Family Child Care for Infants (6 months)									

Care Type	Base payment rate (specify unit, e.g., per day, per week, per month)	% of providers receiving Base rate	Full-Time Weekly Base Payment Rate	What is the percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 50th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 60th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the 75th percentile of the rate? (MRS)	What is the estimated cost of care? (Alternative Methodology)	What percent of the estimated cost of care is the rate?
Center Care for Toddlers (18 months)									
Family Child Care for Toddlers (18 months)									
Center Care for Preschoolers (4 years)									
Family Child Care for Preschoolers (4 years)									
Center Care for School-Age (6 years)									
Family Child Care for School-Age (6 years)									

b. Does the Lead Agency certify that the percentiles reported in the table above are calculated based on their most recent MRS or ACF pre-approved Alternative Methodology?

Yes.

No. If no, what is the year of the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology that the Lead Agency used? What was the reason for not using the most recent MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology? Describe:

4.3.3 Tiered rates, differential rates, and add-ons

Lead Agencies may establish tiered rates, differential rates, or add-ons on top of their base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (e.g., a higher rate for serving children with special needs).

- a. Does the Lead Agency provide any rate add-ons above the base rate?
- Yes. If yes, describe the add-ons, including what they are, who is eligible to receive the add-ons, and how often are they paid: **The child care provider can submit to the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) vendor a completed special disability rate request form that describes the need for the child care provider to provide special accommodation. Upon receipt of a special disability rate request form that meets the requirements to receive funding above the base rate, the Maryland State Department of Education vendor shall: Approve the additional cost not to exceed the annual allocated amount up to 15 percent above the weekly base rate; or If the requested cost exceeds 15 percent, submit a recommendation to the CCS Branch for approval of a higher payment not to exceed the annual allocated amount.**
- No.
- b. Has the Lead Agency chosen to implement tiered reimbursement or differential rates?
- Yes.
- No. Tiered or differential rates are not implemented.
- If yes, identify below any tiered or differential rates, and, at a minimum, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, including if the rates were based on the MRS or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Check and describe all that apply:
- i. Differential rate for non-traditional hours. Describe: **Parents needing non-traditional hours are issued a separate scholarship that covers nontraditional hours. The payment rate for non-traditional hours is higher than scholarship reimbursement rates for non-traditional hours. The differential rate for non-traditional hours is not based upon variation in age but is set based upon the hours the parent needs care. The additional reimbursement rates for non-traditional care exceed the payment rates in §§B-D of Regulation 13A.14.06.11 may be approved when child care is provided during non-traditional hours. Nontraditional hours are defined as: (a) 1 hour or more between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. on Monday through Friday; and (b) Any period of 1 hour or more on Saturday or Sunday. Maryland approves additional costs that exceed the scholarship reimbursement rate when child care is provided during nontraditional hours. Additional costs above the base scholarship reimbursement rate shall be authorized for care provided weekly during nontraditional hours up to: (a) 5 percent for one unit of care; (b) 10 percent for two units of care; or (c) 15 percent for three units of care.**
- ii. Differential rate for children with special needs, as defined by the Lead Agency. Describe: **For a child with a disability/special need, the payment rates of Regulation 13A.14.06.11 apply except if the service provider offers documentation that the cost of caring for the child exceeds the reasonable accommodation definition. In that case, the additional cost may be approved but may not exceed the annual allocated amount up to 15% above the rates set out in §§C and D of the regulation; or if the requested amount exceeds 15%, a recommendation must be submitted to the central Child Care Scholarship branch for approval of a higher payment not to exceed the annual allocated amount.**

- iii. Differential rate for infants and toddlers. Note: Do not check if the Lead Agency has a different base rate for infants/toddlers with no separate bonus or add-on. Describe:
- iv. Differential rate for school-age programs. Note: Do not check if the Lead Agency has a different base rate for school-age children with no separate bonus or add-on. Describe: **Maryland pays a Tiered Reimbursement above the base scholarship rate for higher quality child care (1) Eligibility for tiered reimbursement payments is limited to a child care center or a family child care home that has a published Maryland EXCELS quality rating level of 3, 4, or 5. The rate is determined by program type, age of child, and published quality rating. (2) An informal child care provider is not eligible for tiered reimbursement payments. (3) An eligible provider shall be paid a tiered reimbursement amount for each CCS Program child in care that is: (a) In addition to the child's scholarship payment; and (b) Reflective of the applicable percentage specified at §C(4) of this regulation.**
- v. Differential rate for higher quality, as defined by the Lead Agency. Describe:
- vi. Other differential rates or tiered rates. For example, differential rates for geographic area or for type of provider. Describe:
- vii. If applicable, describe any additional add-on rates that you have besides those identified above.

Does the Lead Agency reduce provider payments if the price the provider charges to private-pay families not participating in CCDF is below the Lead Agency's established payment rate?

Yes. If yes, describe: **Maryland reimburses the provider the lesser amount if the provider's rate is lower than the established reimbursement rate for the provider's payment region .**

No.

4.3.4 Establishing payment rates

Describe how the Lead Agency established payment rates:

- a. What was the Lead Agency's methodology or process for setting the rates or how did the Lead Agency use their data to set rates? **Maryland set rates at the 70th percentile of the Market Rate Survey per recommended increases per legislator.**
- b. How did the Lead Agency determine that the rates are adequate to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF? **Maryland providers were currently meeting the health, safety, quality and staffing requirements set by licensing when reimbursement rates were set at the 30th percentile of the Market Rate Survey in 2019. Therefore, when the reimbursement rate increased to the 70th percentile, the ability of providers to provide safe and quality child care strengthened.**
- c. How did the Lead Agency use the cost of care, either from the narrow cost analysis or the ACF pre-approved alternative methodology to inform rate setting, including how using the cost of care promotes the stabilization of child care providers? **The narrow cost analysis**

was used to inform Maryland that the 70th percentile of reimbursement did not cover the cost of care, did not cover the amount providers charged based upon the Market Rate Survey, and informed Maryland of the need to conduct a cost of care survey to understand better what modifications in payment policies and procedures are needed to increase equal access to child care.

- d. How did the Lead Agency account for the cost of higher quality while setting payment rates? **Maryland uses tiered reimbursement to account for higher quality care above the base Child Care Scholarship reimbursement rate.**
- e. Identify and describe any additional facts (not covered in responses to 4.3.1 – 4.3.3) that the Lead Agency considered in determining its payment rates to ensure equal access. **The reimbursement rate is based on geographical locations (payment regions) with similar costs and care types within the payment region. Maryland has seven payment regions, which consist of the following:**

Region U: Cecil, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Talbot, and Washington Counties;
Region V: Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Somerset, and Wicomico Counties;
Region W: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, and Prince George’s Counties;
Region X: Howard and Montgomery Counties;
Region Y: Baltimore, Frederick, and Harford Counties;
Region Z: Allegany, Garrett, and Worcester Counties; and
Region BC: Baltimore City.

4.4 Payment Practices to Providers

Lead Agencies must use subsidy payment practices that reflect practices that are generally accepted in the private pay child care market. The Lead Agency must ensure timeliness of payment to child care providers by paying in advance or at the beginning of delivery of child care services. Lead Agencies must also support the fixed cost of child care services based on paying by the child’s authorized enrollment, or if impracticable, an alternative approach that will not undermine the stability of child care programs as justified and approved through this Plan.

Lead Agencies must also (1) pay providers based on established part-time or full-time rates rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time, and (2) pay for reasonable, mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents. These policies apply to all provider types unless the Lead Agency can demonstrate that in limited circumstances the policies would not be considered generally-accepted payment practices.

In addition, Lead Agencies must ensure that child care providers receive payment for any services in accordance with a payment agreement or an authorization for services, ensure that child care providers receive prompt notice of changes to a family’s eligibility status that could impact payment, and have timely appeal and resolution processes for any payment inaccuracies and disputes.

4.4.1 Prospective and enrollment-based payment practices

Lead Agencies must use payment practices for all CCDF child care providers that reflect generally-accepted payment practices of providers serving private-pay families, including paying providers in advance or at the beginning of the delivery of child care services and paying based on a child’s authorized enrollment or an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency must demonstrate

paying for a child’s authorized enrollment is not practicable and it will not undermine the stability of child care programs. Lead Agencies may only use alternate approaches for subsets of provider types if they can demonstrate that prospective payments and authorized enrollment-based payment are not generally-accepted for a type of child care setting. Describe the Lead Agency payment practices for all CCDF child care providers:

- a. Does the Lead Agency pay all provider types prospectively (i.e., in advance of or at the beginning of the delivery of child care services)?

Yes. If yes, describe: **Effective January 1, 2023, Maryland implemented advance payment as a strategy to increase the supply of and improve the quality of child care service across the seven (7) payment regions in Maryland. Advance Payment pays providers based on the number of children enrolled in the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program during the prior month. This payment strategy projects the amount owed to the provider for the month and divides it into two payments processed on the 1st and 15th of each month. Paying providers in advance provides greater financial resources to providers at the beginning and in the middle of the month versus paying providers in arrears for services already rendered. Maryland believes that the Advance Payment model combined with child care scholarship reimbursement rates at the 70th percentile across Maryland will increase equal access to higher child care options for children eligible for CCS services. In addition, the major rationale for implementing advance payment was to increase equal access to child care by creating a payment system that exceeded or closely mimicked private pay received by child care providers as possible.**

No, it is not a generally-accepted payment practice for each provider type. If no, describe the provider type not paid prospectively and the data demonstrating it is not a generally-accepted payment practice for that provider type, and describe the Lead Agency’s payment practice that ensures timely payment for that provider type:

- b. Does the Lead Agency pay based on authorized enrollment for all provider types?

Yes. The Lead Agency pays all providers by authorized enrollment and payment is not altered based on a child’s attendance or the number of absences a child has.

No, it is not a generally-accepted practice for each provider type. If no, describe the provider types not paid by authorized enrollment, including the data showing it is not a generally-accepted payment practice for that provider type, and describe how the payment policy accounts for fixed costs:

It is impracticable. Describe provider type(s) for which it is impracticable, why it is impracticable, and the alternative approach the Lead Agency uses to delink provider payments from occasional absences, including evidence that the alternative approach will not undermine the stability of child care programs, and thereby accounts for fixed costs:

4.4.2 Other payment practices

Lead Agencies must (1) pay providers based on established part-time or full-time rates rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time, and (2) pay for reasonable, mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents, unless the Lead Agency provides evidence that such practices are not generally-accepted for providers caring for children not participating in CCDF in its State or Territory.

- a. Does the Lead Agency pay all providers on a part-time or full-time basis (rather than

paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the policies or procedures that are different than paying on a part-time or full-time basis and the Lead Agency's rationale for not paying on a part-time or full-time basis:

- b. Does the Lead Agency pay for reasonable mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents?

Yes. If yes, identify the fees the Lead Agency pays for: **Maryland pays a registration fee per enrollment with a provider in order to increase equal access to child care by reducing the initial costs associated with child care enrollment. The payment of a registration fee will only be paid once per year for the same child re-enrolling multiple times at the same child care facility. Maryland believes the practice of supporting the payment of the child's registration fee increases Parental Choice options for families by reducing out-of-pocket expenses. Thus, the parental choice options are widen when families receive financial assistance with the cost of registration fees that could otherwise be a barrier when selecting specific care types or when having to pay registration fees for more than one child in care. Likewise, parents do not have to fear remaining at the same provider due to losing the registration fee or being unable to pay the registration fee at a subsequent provider. In addition, this practice supports child care providers in their effort to collect additional fees needed to support the provision of quality child care.**

No. If no, identify the data and how data were collected to show that paying for fees is not a generally-accepted payment practice:

- c. Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that providers are paid in accordance with a written payment agreement or an authorization for services that includes, at a minimum, information regarding provider payment policies, including rates, schedules, any fees charged to providers, and the dispute-resolution process: **Maryland's provider payment procedures include the following: (1) A Statement of Understanding that accompanies each scholarship that is a written payment agreement and authorization for services between the parent, child care provider and the Maryland State Department of Education that outlines the Child Care scholarship Programs. (2) Providers are provided with a Child Care Scholarship that outlines the reimbursement amount that Maryland pays and the assigned copayment agreement that is paid by the parent. The Scholarship provides the maximum amount which the Child Care Scholarship reimburses based upon the payment region in which the parent resides and requires the child care provider to enter the amount they charge for private paying customers with children of the same age and Unit of Care. The reimbursement rate on the Child Care Scholarship is based on the family's income, family size, and payment region in which the family resides, as well as whether the provider's rate is lower than Maryland's reimbursement rate. (3) The Co-Payment Agreement that is signed between the parent and the child care provider establishes the assigned co-payment amount and establishes that if the Child Care Scholarship reimbursement amount and the assigned co-payment do not cover the full amount of the Child Care Provider's tuition, the parent is responsible for paying the difference owed. (4) Maryland Child Care Scholarship Regulations address payment procedures for any time a state of emergency, i.e., COVID-19, is declared. During state-declared emergencies, the Child Care Scholarship Program pays based on the last enrollment before the state**

emergency is declared. (5) Providers have an appeal dispute-resolution process in which they can submit an informal inquiry through the Provider Inquiry Link on the Maryland State Department of Education website or an informal appeal. Maryland's formal appeal process is outlined in section 4.4.1e of Maryland's State Plan. (6). Maryland pays based on enrollment instead of attendance and pays providers prospectively.

- d. Describe how the Lead Agency provides prompt notice to providers regarding any changes to the family's eligibility status that could impact payments, and such a notice is sent no later than the day that the Lead Agency becomes aware that such a change will occur: **Maryland provides written notification to parents and the provider at least 5 calendar days before termination of child care services or the reduction of child care benefits. If the child care program is closed on the same day due to a provider being placed in a non-payable status, both the provider and the parent will receive notification on that day of the change, and the parent will be reissued child care scholarships to prevent a break in needed Child Care Scholarship (CCS) services.**
- e. Describe the Lead Agency's timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes: **The Maryland State Department of Education contractor will respond within three business days of the receipt of an appeal for payment disputes or inaccuracies. In addition, Maryland has a very detailed and timely appeal and resolution process that may begin with a customer requesting a hearing if the contractor: (1) Denies, suspends, reduces, or terminates assistance; (2) Fails to act with reasonable promptness on an application for, or a request for adjustment of assistance; or (3) Imposes sanctions on a recipient; or (4) Recovers an overpayment or repayment in which the child care providers submits an inquiry. The customer or provider may appeal within 90 calendar days of the date of the notice of adverse action. An appeal request: (1) Is made by filing a completed Maryland State Department of Education appeal request form with the contractor; (2) May be received by any employee of the contractor whose assignment requires contact with the public; and (3) Shall be submitted immediately by the contractor to the designated hearing coordinator. The filing date of the appeal request is the date the contractor received the completed Maryland State Department of Education appeal request form.**
- The contractor shall send written notice of any adverse action in writing: (1) To the customer; and (2) To a provider who is denied payment for committing an intentional program violation. Notice of any adverse action shall include the: (a) Decision; (b) Basis for the decision; (c) Specific regulation supporting the decision; (d) Right to request an appeal; (e) Method by which an appeal may be requested; (f) Right to be represented in an appeal by a lawyer, relative, friend, or other individual; and (g) Availability of any free legal services.**
- The contractor shall assist the appellant in completing an appropriate appeal request form to ensure that it contains all the information required to process the request and, if necessary, shall provide an interpreter. Processing of appeal requests occurs within 5 business days of the filing date of an appeal request, the contractor shall: (1) Forward the following information to OAH: (a) Date of the request; (b) Name and address of the appellant; (c) Name and address of the local department representative; (d) Action being appealed; (d) Date of the action being appealed; and (e) Date notice of the action was mailed to the appellant; and (f) Acknowledge to the appellant receipt of the appeal request. (2) The Appeal Request may involve scheduling a conference: (a) When the contractor receives an appeal request, the contractor shall promptly offer the appellant a**

conference. (b) A contractor supervisor shall attend the conference. (c) The case manager responsible for the action may also attend. (d) Although a conference may lead to an informal resolution of the dispute, a hearing shall be held unless the appellant withdraws the appeal request in writing.

Continuation of assistance pending appeal involves: (1) Assistance shall be automatically continued or reinstated if the filing date of the appeal request is within 10 calendar days of the intended action. (2) Assistance may not be continued or reinstated pending appeal if: (a) An appellant specifically requests that assistance not be continued or reinstated pending appeal; (b) The eligibility or certification period for the assistance has expired; (c) Assistance has been reduced or terminated due to a change in federal or State law or regulation and the appeal does not appear to concern misapplication of the change; (d) Continuation or reinstatement of the service at issue would threaten the health or safety of other individuals; or (e) The service is terminated because of nonpayment by the family of the copayment stated on the voucher that the contractor assigned. (3) An appeal request form shall contain: (a) An opportunity for the appellant to request assistance not be continued or reinstated pending appeal; and (b) A statement that the appellant is responsible for repaying any assistance paid during the appeal process if the contractor's position is upheld.

Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) may deny or dismiss an appeal if: (1) The appeal request is not complete; (2) The appellant withdraws the request in writing; (3) The appellant fails to appear at the scheduled hearing; (4) Assistance has been reduced or terminated due to a change in federal or State law or regulation and the appeal does not concern misapplication of the change; or (5) The appellant has failed to pay any filing fees required by OAH.

OAH shall complete the following upon the receipt of an appeal: (1) Upon receiving an appeal request, OAH shall: (a) Promptly schedule a hearing; and (b) Send the parties a hearing notice at least 15 calendar days before the scheduled hearing. (2) Intentional Program Violation Hearing. When the contractor makes a referral to OAH concerning an intentional program violation, OAH shall: (a) Promptly schedule a hearing; and (b) Send the parties a hearing notice at least 30 calendar days before the scheduled hearing. (3) Hearing Notice. The hearing notice shall: (a) Summarize the hearing procedures; (b) Advise the appellant of: (i) The date, time, and place of the hearing; (ii) The right to be represented at the hearing by a lawyer, relative, friend, or other individual; (iii) The availability of any free legal services; (iv) The right to present documents and witnesses, including contractor employees, at the hearing; (v) The right to examine the case record in preparation for the hearing; (vi) The procedure to follow if the appellant cannot attend the hearing; and (vii) Except in an appeal concerning an intentional program violation, the authority of an administrative law judge to dismiss the appeal if the appellant fails, without good cause, to attend the hearing; and (c) In an appeal concerning an intentional program violation, include: (i) The charge; (ii) A warning that the decision shall be based solely on information provided at the hearing if the appellant fails to appear at the hearing; (iii) A statement that, to have a hearing rescheduled, the appellant has 10 calendar days from the date of the hearing to present to the administrative law judge good cause for not appearing and for not asking for a postponement before the hearing; (iv) A description of the disqualification penalties and a statement of the applicable penalty; (v) A statement of the appellant's rights during the hearing; and (vi) A warning that the hearing does not preclude the State or federal government from prosecuting the appellant or pursuing collection of the overpayment.

Prehearing appeal procedures include the following: (1) Rescheduling: (a) A party may request a change in a hearing time, date, or location by: (i) Submitting a written request, with copies served on all parties, to the OAH clerk's office at least 5 business days before a scheduled hearing; or (ii) In the case of an unforeseen event requiring postponement and occurring less than 5 business days before a scheduled hearing, calling the OAH clerk's office as soon as possible. (b) If OAH finds that good cause exists, OAH shall set another time or place for the hearing and notify the parties of the change. (c) In an appeal concerning an intentional program violation, the appellant is entitled to one postponement of the scheduled hearing of up to 30 calendar days without the need to demonstrate good cause. (d) Any time limits applicable to the issuance of a final administrative decision are extended by the length of the delay caused by a postponement: (i) Requested by the appellant, or (ii) Granted by the administrative law judge due to the appellant's introduction of new evidence. (2) Summaries.

The contractor shall (a) Prepare a summary of the facts pertinent to the case and of the basis for its action and (b) Send the summary and copies of all documents that it intends to present at the hearing to the appellant and to OAH at least 6 calendar days before the date of the hearing. The Administrative Law Judge's involvement is as follows: (1) The administrative law judge shall render a final decision. (2) The decision shall contain: (a) Separate statements of findings of fact and conclusions of law; (b) Citation to pertinent State and federal law; and (c) An order.

The Final Decision will be as follows: (1) Within 90 calendar days of the filing of the appeal request: (a) The administrative law judge shall issue a final decision to all parties; and (b) The contractor shall complete all administrative or corrective action necessary to implement the decision. (2) If the decision is favorable to the contractor, the contractor may: (a) Take immediate steps to implement the decision; and (b) Reduce or terminate assistance that has been continued while the appeal was pending by: (i) Decreasing the subsidy amount or closing the customer's case; and (ii) Notifying the child care provider of the reduction or termination pursuant to Regulation .10A. (3) If the decision is favorable to the appellant, the contractor shall, within 10 calendar days of the date of the decision: (a) Comply with the decision; (b) Take corrective action retroactive to the date the incorrect action was taken; (c) Restore the services, and (d) Notify OAH that it has completed all required actions. (4) The Record. After issuing a final administrative decision, OAH shall promptly forward to the CCS Branch the complete record, including all: (a) Papers filed; (b) Evidence submitted; and (c) Orders and decisions issued.

f. Other. Describe any other payment practices established by the Lead Agency:

4.4.3 Payment practices and parent choice

How do the Lead Agency's payment practices facilitate provider participation in all categories of care? Paying child care providers in advance provides greater financial resources to child care centers, large family child care homes, family child care homes and informal child care providers at the beginning and in the middle of the month versus paying providers in arrears for services already rendered. Due to prospectively paying providers, the number of child care centers and registered child care programs participating in the Child Care CCS Program has increased. Thus, more parents have greater access to a full range of child care types and parental care options. Maryland believes that the Advance Payment model combined with child care scholarship reimbursement rates at the 70th percentile across Maryland has increased equal access to higher child care options for children eligible for Child Care Scholarship (CCS) services. Paying based upon

Payment regions ensures that the reimbursement rate addresses the private pay rates charged within the counties that make up the payment regions.

4.5 Supply Building

Building a supply of high-quality child care that meets the needs and preferences of parents participating in CCDF is necessary to meet CCDF's core purposes. Lead Agencies must support parent choice by providing some portion of direct services via grants or contracts, including at a minimum for children in underserved geographic areas, infants and toddlers, and children with disabilities.

4.5.1 Child care services available through grants or contracts

Does the Lead Agency provide direct child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots?

Yes, statewide. Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that parents who enroll with a provider who has a grant or contract have choices when selecting a provider:

Yes, in some jurisdictions, but not statewide. Describe how many jurisdictions use grants or contracts for child care slots and how the Lead Agency ensures that parents who enroll with a provider who has a grant or contract have choices when selecting a provider:

No. If no, describe any Lead Agency plans to provide direct child care services through grants and contracts for child care slots: **The Maryland State Department of Education will develop a program that allocates grants and contracts to licensed child care providers. This initiative aims to increase access to affordable child care for low-income families, enhance the quality of early childhood education, and support child care providers in meeting state standards.**

If no, skip to question 4.5.2.

i. If yes, identify the populations of children served through grants or contracts for child care slots (check all that apply). For each population selected, identify the number of slots allocated through grants or contracts for direct service of children receiving CCDF.

Children with disabilities. Number of slots allocated through grants or contracts:

Infants and toddlers. Number of slots allocated through grants or contracts:

Children in underserved geographic areas. Number of slots allocated through grants or contracts:

Children needing non-traditional hour care. Number of slots allocated through grants or contracts:

School-age children. Number of slots allocated through grants or contracts:

Children experiencing homelessness. Number of slots allocated through grants or contracts:

Children in urban areas. Percent of CCDF children served in an average month:

Children in rural areas. Percent of CCDF children served in an average month:

Other populations. If checked, describe:

- ii. If yes, how are rates for slots funded by grants and contracts determined by the Lead Agency?

4.5.2 Care in the child's home (in-home care)

The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use.

Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

Yes.

No.

If yes, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care? Check all that apply.

- i. Restricted based on the minimum number of children in the care of the in-home provider to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage) requirements. Describe:
- ii. Restricted based on the in-home provider meeting a minimum age requirement. Describe: **Provider must be 18 years of age.**
- iii. Restricted based on the hours of care (i.e., certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours). Describe:
- iv. Restricted to care by relatives. (A relative provider must be at least 18 years of age based on the definition of eligible child care provider.) Describe:
- v. Restricted to care for children with special needs or a medical condition. Describe:
- vi. Restricted to in-home providers that meet additional health and safety requirements beyond those required by CCDF. Describe:
- vii. Other. Describe: **Restricted relative in-home care to grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, and older siblings above the age of 18 not included within the household composition of the Child Care Scholarship CCS Program are the only relations that are considered as relative. Relative care may be provided within the home of the child or relative. Non-relative informal care is limited to the home of the child. Both relative and non-relative informal child care requires the provider and anyone in the household that is 18 or older to complete a Criminal Background check and a Child Protective Service clearance.**

4.5.3 Shortages in the supply of child care

Lead Agencies must identify shortages in the supply of child care providers that meet parents' needs and preferences.

What child care shortages has the Lead Agency identified in the State or Territory, and what is the plan to address the child care shortages?

- a. In infant and toddler programs:
 - i. Data sources used to identify shortages:
 - ii. Method of tracking progress:
 - iii. What is the plan to address the child care shortages using family child care homes
 - iv. What is the plan to address the child care shortages using child care centers?
- b. In different regions of the State or Territory:
 - i. Data sources used to identify shortages: **Per the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, by 2027, fifty percent of all prekindergarten slots must be in private provider programs (child care centers and family child care homes). This requirement is currently 30% and must increase each year to achieve 50% by 2027. To that end, MSDE is currently implementing capacity building initiatives to help child care programs improve quality and expand access to prekindergarten slots in child care centers and family child care homes. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) completed Blueprint implementation plans to describe their efforts to improve their mixed delivery system by way of increasing the number of child care centers and family child care homes.**
 - ii. Method of tracking progress: **LEAs complete annual Pre-K Data collection which measures year-over-year increases in family child care homes and child care centers participating in publicly funded Pre-K.**
 - iii. What is the plan to address the child care shortages using family child care homes? **Per the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, by 2027, fifty percent of all prekindergarten slots must be in private provider programs (child care centers and family child care homes). This requirement is currently 30% and must increase each year to achieve 50% by 2027. To that end, MSDE is currently implementing capacity building initiatives to help child care programs improve quality and expand access to prekindergarten slots in child care centers and family child care homes. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) completed Blueprint implementation plans to describe their efforts to improve their mixed delivery system by way of increasing the number of child care centers and family child care homes.**
 - iv. What is the plan to address the child care shortages using child care centers? **Per the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, by 2027, fifty percent of all prekindergarten slots must be in private provider programs (child care centers and family child care homes). This requirement is currently 30% and must increase each year to**

achieve 50% by 2027. To that end, MSDE is currently implementing capacity building initiatives to help child care programs improve quality and expand access to prekindergarten slots in child care centers and family child care homes. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) completed Blueprint implementation plans to describe their efforts to improve their mixed delivery system by way of increasing the number of child care centers and family child care homes.

- c. In care for special populations:
 - i. Data sources used to identify shortages:
 - ii. Method of tracking progress:
 - iii. What is the plan to address the child care shortages using family child care homes?
 - iv. What is the plan to address the child care shortages using child care centers? **Per the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, by 2027, fifty percent of all prekindergarten slots must be in private provider programs (child care centers and family child care homes). This requirement is currently 30% and must increase each year to achieve 50% by 2027. To that end, MSDE is currently implementing capacity building initiatives to help child care programs improve quality and expand access to prekindergarten slots in child care centers and family child care homes.**

4.5.4 Strategies to increase the supply of and improve quality of child care

Lead Agencies must develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and improve the quality of child care services. These strategies must address child care in underserved geographic areas; infants and toddlers; children with disabilities, as defined by the Lead Agency; and children who receive care during non-traditional hours.

How does the Lead Agency identify any gaps in the supply and quality of child care services and what strategies are used to address those gaps for:

- a. Underserved geographic areas. Describe: **Financial incentives are available for all licensed child care programs participating in Maryland EXCELS who publish first time, higher, or maintain quality rating of 4 or 5. An analysis of QRIS participation was conducted to identify regions in Maryland with low participation in Maryland EXCELS. An outreach plan which will include collaboration with community-based organization and resources is being developed and implemented.**
- b. Infants and toddlers. Describe:
- c. Children with disabilities. Describe: **Through the Therapeutic / Medically Fragile Child Care Grant, MSDE provides funding to five child care programs throughout Maryland ☐ PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs ☐ World of Care, PACT ☐ Helping Children with Special Needs ☐ Therapeutic Nursery, The Arc of Montgomery County, The Arc of Prince George's County, and The Reginald S. Lourie Center. These programs provide medically based child care and early education services to children with medical diagnoses and those who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, and behavioral issues that require specialized care.**

Also, the Division of Early Childhood Education partners with the Division of Early Intervention in support of providers serving children with special needs. The Division of Early Intervention leads efforts in providing professional development and resources to providers to assist them in ensuring that students have the necessary accommodations and modifications to help them meet success.

- d. Children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Describe: **Maryland developed and implemented the strategy of increasing the child care scholarship reimbursement amount for families participating in approved activities where their child requires non-traditional child care. By increasing the value of the non-traditional scholarship, Maryland improve the quality of child by reimbursing child care providers closer to the true cost of non-traditional child care and higher quality child care, if applicable.**
- e. Other. Specify what population is being focused on to increase supply or improve quality. Describe: **MSDE is currently increasing efforts to expand access to high quality prekindergarten by recruiting additional programs to participate in Pre-K programming and providing them with technical assistance to improve quality. Low income families, children with disabilities, multi language learners, and children experiencing homelessness are priority for accessing these high quality, publicly funded prekindergarten programs. Financial incentives ranging from \$1,000-\$13,500 are available to licensed child care programs that publish a first time or higher quality rating or maintain a quality rating of 4 or 5.**

4.5.5 Prioritization of investments in areas of concentrated poverty and unemployment

Lead Agencies must prioritize investments for increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and do not currently have sufficient numbers of such programs.

Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have access to high-quality programs. **Publicly funded pre-k programs prioritize low income families, children with disabilities, multilingual learners, and children experiencing homelessness. Additionally, MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution and other factors (including, but not limited to poverty) when increasing access to high quality, publicly funded prekindergarten in child care programs. In center-based programs and home-based care programs outside of the publicly funded pre-k system, enrollment is based on space/slot availability.**

Families eligible for Child Care Scholarship access child care by enrolling in programs participating in Maryland EXCLES. Concentrated efforts have been made to identify specific areas across Maryland that have higher percentages of poverty and conduct needs assessments of the licensed child care providers to determine resources needed to increase quality ratings. These efforts have included setting goals to increase programs with quality ratings of 1 and 2 to 3 or higher as well as increasing participation in areas of the state that have lower than 50% of eligible licensed programs participating in Maryland EXCELS.

5 Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

Child care health and safety standards and enforcement practices are essential to protect the health and safety of children while out of their parents' care. CCDF provides a minimum threshold for child care health and safety policies and practices but leaves authority to **Lead Agencies** to design standards that appropriately protect children's safety and promote nurturing environments that support their healthy growth and development. Lead Agencies should set standards for ratios, group size limits, and provider qualifications that help ensure that the child care environment is conducive to safety and learning and enable caregivers to promote all domains of children's development.

CCDF health and safety standards help set clear expectations for CCDF providers, form the foundation for health and safety training for child care workers, and establish the baseline for monitoring to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements. These health and safety requirements apply to all providers serving children receiving CCDF services – whether the providers are licensed or license-exempt, must be appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served, must include specific topics and training on those topics, and are subject to monitoring and enforcement procedures by the **Lead Agency**. CCDF-required annual monitoring and enforcement actions help ensure that CCDF providers are adopting and implementing health and safety requirements.

Through child care licensing, **Lead Agencies** set minimum requirements, including health and safety requirements, that child care providers must meet to legally operate in that State or Territory. In some cases, CCDF health and safety requirements may be integrated within the licensing system for licensed providers and may be separate for CCDF providers who are license-exempt.

This section addresses CCDF health and safety requirements, **Lead Agency** licensing requirements and exemptions, and comprehensive background checks.

When responding to questions in this section, OCC recognizes that each **Lead Agency** identifies and defines its own categories of care. OCC does not expect **Lead Agencies** to change their definitions to fit the CCDF-defined categories of care. For these questions, provide responses that best match the CCDF categories of care.

5.1 Licensing Requirements

Each Lead Agency must ensure it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services provided within the State/Territory (not restricted to providers receiving CCDF funds).

5.1.1 Providers subject to licensing

For each category of care listed below, identify the type of providers subject to licensing and describe the licensing requirements.

- a. Identify the center-based provider types subject to child care licensing: **Center based child care is offered in a facility other than a residence, and the number of children in care depends on space, materials, equipment, and qualified staff. Child care centers include public child care programs and Letter of Compliance facilities. Letter of Compliance programs are child care programs operated by tax exempt religious organizations in school buildings used exclusively for children who are enrolled in those schools and meet basic health, safety, space and other requirements. Child Care Center COMAR**

13A.16.01.02 (15) states: An agency, institution, or establishment that, on a regular schedule for at least 2 days per week and for at least 2 hours per day, or on a 24-hour basis, offers or provides child care to children who do not have the same parentage. A child care center includes: 1. a nonpublic nursery school approved under Education Article, §2-206, Annotated Code of Maryland in which an educational program is offered or provided for children who are 2 years old or older but younger than 5 years old; 2. a facility providing specialized training in a specific discipline or subject that also offers a child-related service such as, but not limited to, transportation, free play, meals or snacks, tutoring or homework sessions; 3. child care operated by a State or local government agency.

Are there other categories of licensed, regulated, or registered center providers the Lead Agency does not categorize as license-exempt?

Yes. If yes, describe: **Letter of Compliance COMAR 13A.17.01.01(A) Letter of Compliance Facility - means a tax-exempt religious organization that operates a nursery school or child care program in a school building used exclusively for children who are enrolled in that school.**

No.

- b. Identify the family child care providers subject to licensing: **Family child care is offered in the provider's residence. Regulations allow a family childcare provider to care for as many as eight children at any one time dependent on space, materials, equipment, and provider training. There is an additional designation within this category called large family child care homes, which can care for more children, with additional requirements. Family child care is regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Family child care providers offer care in their own home to one or more children who aren't related to the provider. To ensure a safe environment, Maryland limits the number of children in a family child care home: A provider may care for up to eight children with no more than four children under the age of two. There must be one approved adult for every two children under the age of two. The provider's own children under the age of six are counted within the group of eight. COMAR 13A.15.04.03 (D).**

Additionally, there is a category of care, Large Family Child Care Homes. The provider must be a resident of the home and may care for a maximum child care capacity of 12 children. COMAR 13A.18.01.02 (B) (24) Large Family Child Care.

Are there other categories of regulated or registered family child care providers the Lead Agency does not categorize as license-exempt?

Yes. If yes, describe:

No.

- c. Identify the in-home providers subject to licensing: **N/A**

Are there other categories of regulated or registered in-home providers the Lead Agency does not categorize as license-exempt?

Yes. If yes, describe:

No.

5.1.2 CCDF-eligible providers exempt from licensing

Identify the categories of CCDF-eligible providers who are exempt from licensing requirements, the types of exemptions, and describe how these exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children. -Relative providers, as defined in CCDF, are addressed in subsection 5.8.

- a. License-exempt center-based child care. Describe by answering the questions below.
 - i. Identify the categories of CCDF-eligible center-based child care providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. **Certificate of Approval (COA) programs are non public instructional programs that were transferred to the OCC to be monitored for health and safety requirements biannually.**
 - ii. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption. **The COAs serve children ages 2-4 and may operate up to six hours a day.**
 - iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children. **The programs are required to complete the comprehensive background checks and are monitored biannually for health and safety requirements.**
- b. License-exempt family child care. Describe by answering the questions below.
 - i. Identify the categories of CCDF-eligible family child care providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. **N/A**
 - ii. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption. **N/A**
 - iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children. **N/A**
- c. In-home care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative). Describe by answering the questions below.
 - i. Identify the categories of CCDF-eligible in-home care (care in the child's own home by a non- relative) providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. **Friends, family neighbors and relatives providing child care in the child's own home are exempt from licensing requirements.**
 - ii. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption. **N/A**
 - iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children. **Maryland has licensed-exempt In-home care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative) where this exemption type does not endanger the health, safety, and development of children by requiring the following for all licensed-exempt provider types: Criminal Background clearance and Child Protective Service clearance on providers and**

their associated parties; a collaborative effort of the provider and parent to develop and complete an Emergency Preparedness Plan, Emergency Care and Medication Authorization for each child in care; and the Health & Safety Standards and Child Care Provider Agreement. These providers must earn a passing grade of 80 percent or better on the annual Basic Health & Safety Training; and must complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training for all child age groups every two years to earn the Adult, Child and Baby First Aid/ CPR/AED certificate. The care location must pass a health and safety inspection before approval and other inspections (e.g. unannounced inspections) during the year.

5.2 Ratios, Group Size, and Qualifications for CCDF Providers

Lead Agencies must have child care standards for providers receiving CCDF funds, appropriate to the type of child care setting involved, that address appropriate staff:child ratios, group size limits for specific age populations, and the required qualifications for providers. Lead Agencies should map their categories of care to the CCDF categories. Exemptions for relative providers will be addressed in subsection 5.8.

5.2.1 Age classifications

Describe how the **Lead Agency** defines the following age classifications (e.g., Infant: 0 – 18 months).

- a. Infant. Describe: **Children ages birth to 18 months.**
- b. Toddler. Describe: **Children ages 18 months to 24 months.**
- c. Preschool. Describe: **A child who is 2 years of age and older who does not attend kindergarten or a higher grade.**
- d. School-Age. Describe: **A child who is 5 years of age who attends school in grade Kindergarten or higher.**

5.2.2 Ratio and group size limits

Provide the ratio and group size limits for settings and age groups below.

- a. Licensed CCDF center-based care:
 - i. Infant.
Ratio: **1:3**
Group size: **6**
 - ii. Toddler.
Ratio: **1:3**
Group size: **9**
 - iii. Preschool.
Ratio: **2 year olds: 1:6; Three to four year olds 1:10**
Group size: **Two year olds: 12; Three to four year olds: 20.**

iv. School-Age.

Ratio: 1:15

Group size: 30

v. Mixed-Age Groups (if applicable).

Ratio: A mixed age group with infants or toddlers, the following minimum staffing levels apply: Group includes 1 or 2 infants, maximum group size of 9, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 3 or more infants, maximum group size of 6, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 1 or 2 toddlers, maximum group size of 12, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 3 toddlers, 9, maximum group size of 9, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 4 or more toddlers, maximum group size of 9, with a minimum of 3 staff members; and Group includes no infants, 1 or 2 toddlers, and 6 or more 2 year olds, maximum group size of 12, with a minimum of 3 staff members.

In a mixed-age group with preschool children: The group size may not exceed 20 children; If the group contains preschool children 3 years old or older, the staff-to-child ratio is 1 to 10; If the group size is 13 to 20 children, the group may not contain more than six 2- year-olds; and If the group contains children who are 2 years old and the group size varies, the following minimum staffing levels apply: Group Composition Group Size Minimum Staffing Level: Group includes one to three 2-year-old children, maximum group size 7 to 10, with a minimum of 1 staff member; Group includes four or more 2-year-old children, maximum group size 7 to 10, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes one to three 2-year-old children, maximum group size 13 to 20, with a minimum of 2 staff members; and Group includes four to six 2-year-old children, maximum group size 13 to 20, with a minimum of 3 staff members.

School-Age Groups: In a group where 3-year-old and 4-year-old children, enrolled in a public or nonpublic school, are mixed with school-age children, the following minimum staffing levels and maximum group size requirements apply: Group includes up to five children 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size of 30, with a minimum of 1 school-age teacher and 1 assistant or aide; Group includes 6 to 9 children 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size of 30, with a minimum of 1 school-age teacher and 2 assistants or 1 school-age teacher, 1 assistant and 1 aide; Group includes 6 to 9 children, 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size 25, with a minimum of 1 school-age teacher and 1 assistant or aide; and Group includes 10 or more children 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size of 20, with a minimum of 1 preschool teacher and 1 assistant or aide.

Group size: A mixed age group with infants or toddlers, the following minimum staffing levels apply: Group includes 1 or 2 infants, maximum group size of 9, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 3 or more infants, maximum group size of 6, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 1 or 2 toddlers, maximum group size of 12, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 3 toddlers, 9, maximum

group size of 9, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes 4 or more toddlers, maximum group size of 9, with a minimum of 3 staff members; and Group includes no infants, 1 or 2 toddlers, and 6 or more 2 year olds, maximum group size of 12, with a minimum of 3 staff members. In a mixed-age group with preschool children: The group size may not exceed 20 children; If the group contains preschool children 3 years old or older, the staff-to-child ratio is 1 to 10; If the group size is 13 to 20 children, the group may not contain more than six 2- year-olds; and If the group contains children who are 2 years old and the group size varies, the following minimum staffing levels apply: Group Composition Group Size Minimum Staffing Level: Group includes one to three 2-year-old children, maximum group size 7 to 10, with a minimum of 1 staff member; Group includes four or more 2-year-old children, maximum group size 7 to 10, with a minimum of 2 staff members; Group includes one to three 2-year-old children, maximum group size 13 to 20, with a minimum of 2 staff members; and Group includes four to six 2-year-old children, maximum group size 13 to 20, with a minimum of 3 staff members. School-Age Groups: In a group where 3-year-old and 4-year-old children, enrolled in a public or nonpublic school, are mixed with school-age children, the following minimum staffing levels and maximum group size requirements apply: Group includes up to five children 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size of 30, with a minimum of 1 school-age teacher and 1 assistant or aide; Group includes 6 to 9 children 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size of 30, with a minimum of 1 school-age teacher and 2 assistants or 1 school-age teacher, 1 assistant and 1 aide; Group includes 6 to 9 children, 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size 25, with a minimum of 1 school-age teacher and 1 assistant or aide; and Group includes 10 or more children 3 or 4 years old, maximum group size of 20, with a minimum of 1 preschool teacher and 1 assistant or aide.

- b. If different, provide the ratios and group size requirements for the license-exempt center-based providers who receive CCDF funds under the following age groups:
 - i. Not applicable. There are no differences in ratios and group size requirements.
 - ii. Infant:
 - iii. Toddler:
 - iv. Preschool:
 - v. School-Age:
 - vi. Mixed-Age Groups:
- c. Licensed CCDF family child care home providers:
 - i. Infant (if applicable)

Ratio: Family Child Care (FCC) 1:2, Large Family Child Care (LFCC) 1:3

Group size: FCC: 8 children with 2 under age 2 or 8 children with 3 to 4 under age 2, LFCC: 6

- ii. Toddler (if applicable)
 - Ratio: FCC 1:2, LFCC 1:3
 - Group size: FCC: 8 with 2 under age 2 or 8 with 3 to 4 under age 2, LFCC: 9
- iii. Preschool (if applicable)
 - Ratio: FCC: 1:8, LFCC: Two year olds 1:6, 3 & 4 year olds 1:10
 - Group size: FCC: 8, LFCC: 12
- iv. School-Age (if applicable)
 - Ratio: FCC: 1:8, LFCC: 1:12
 - Group size: FCC: 8, LFCC: 12
- v. Mixed-Age Groups
 - Ratio: Family Child Care (FCC): 1:8 or 2:8 if 3 to 4 infants are approved for care.
 - Large Family Child Care (LFCC):
 - Groups of Children Younger than 2 Years Old: In a group of children where each child is younger than 2 years old, the following staff/child ratio and maximum group size requirements apply: Infants, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 6; Toddlers, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 9; Infants and toddlers with 1 to 2 infants in the group, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 9; Infants and toddlers with 3 or more infants in the group, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 6.
 - Mixed-Age Groups with Children Younger than 2 Years Old: In a group where children younger than 2 years old are mixed with children 2 years old or older, the following minimum staffing levels and maximum group size requirements apply: Includes 1 or 2 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 1, with a maximum group size of 8; Includes 1 or 2 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 2 staff, with a maximum group size of 12; Includes 3 or 4 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 2, with a maximum group size of 8; and Includes 3 or 4 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 3, with a maximum group size of 12.
 - Mixed-Age Groups with Children 2 Years Old or Older: In a mixed age group with children who are 3 years old or older, the staff to child ratio is 1 to 10; and in mixed-age groups of varying sizes that include children who are 2 years old, the following minimum staffing levels apply: Includes one to three 2-year-old children, group size up to 10, with a minimum staffing level of 1; and Includes four or more 2-year-old children, group size up to 12, with a minimum staffing level of 2.
 - Group size: Family Child Care (FCC): 1:8 or 2:8 if 3 to 4 infants are approved for care.
 - Large Family Child Care (LFCC):
 - Groups of Children Younger than 2 Years Old: In a group of children where each child is younger than 2 years old, the following staff/child ratio and

maximum group size requirements apply: Infants, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 6; Toddlers, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 9; Infants and toddlers with 1 to 2 infants in the group, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 9; Infants and toddlers with 3 or more infants in the group, 1 to 3 staff/child ratio, with a maximum group size of 6.

Mixed-Age Groups with Children Younger than 2 Years Old: In a group where children younger than 2 years old are mixed with children 2 years old or older, the following minimum staffing levels and maximum group size requirements apply: Includes 1 or 2 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 1, with a maximum group size of 8; Includes 1 or 2 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 2 staff, with a maximum group size of 12; Includes 3 or 4 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 2, with a maximum group size of 8; and Includes 3 or 4 children under the age of 2, minimum staffing level of 3, with a maximum group size of 12.

Mixed-Age Groups with Children 2 Years Old or Older: In a mixed age group with children who are 3 years old or older, the staff to child ratio is 1 to 10; and in mixed-age groups of varying sizes that include children who are 2 years old, the following minimum staffing levels apply: Includes one to three 2-year-old children, group size up to 10, with a minimum staffing level of 1; and Includes four or more 2-year-old children, group size up to 12, with a minimum staffing level of 2.

d. Are any of the responses above different for license-exempt family child care homes?

No.

Yes. If yes, describe how the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt providers vary by age of children served.

Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not have license-exempt family child care homes.

e. Licensed in-home care (care in the child's own home):

i. Infant (if applicable)

Ratio: **1:2**

Group size: **6 children with no more than 2 under age 2.**

ii. Toddler (if applicable)

Ratio: **1:2**

Group size: **6 children with no more than 2 under age 2.**

iii. Preschool (if applicable)

Ratio: **1:6**

Group size: **6**

iv. School-Age (if applicable)

Ratio: 1:6

Group size: 6

- v. Mixed-Age Groups (if applicable)

Ratio: 1:6, with no more than 2 under age 2.

Group size: 6

- f. Are any of the responses above different for license-exempt in-home care?

No.

Yes. If yes, describe how the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt in-home care vary by age of children served. **Six children present in care at the same time; or two children younger than 2 years old in care at the same time. In determining the maximum child care capacity of an informal care home, the contractor shall count a resident in the home who is younger than 6 years old as a child in care.**

5.2.3 Teacher/caregiver qualifications for licensed, regulated, or registered care

Provide the teacher/caregiver qualifications for each category of care.

- a. Licensed center-based care

- i. Describe the teacher qualifications for licensed CCDF center-based care (e.g., degrees, credentials, etc.), including any variations based on the ages of children in care: **Teacher/caregiver qualifications for Infant and Toddler: High school diploma or equivalent; 90 clock hours of approved preservice training; 45 clock hours of approved preservice infant/toddler training; 9 clock hours of approved preservice training in communication; approved ADA compliance training; supporting breastfeeding practices; and 1 year of experience. Minimum age: 19 years old. Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment.**

Teacher/caregiver qualifications for Preschool: High school diploma or equivalent; 90 clock hours of approved preservice training; 9 clock hours of approved preservice training in communication; approved ADA Compliance training; supporting breastfeeding training; and 1 year of experience. Minimum age: 19 years old. Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment.

Teacher/caregiver qualifications for School Age: High school diploma or equivalent; 90 clock hours of approved preservice training; 9 clock hours of approved preservice training in communication; approved ADA Compliance training; and 400 hours working primarily with school age children. Minimum age: 19 years old. Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment.

Aide: 1) Be 16 years old or older; 2) Work under the direct supervision of the staff person in charge of the group of children to whom the aide is assigned; 3) Unless

an individual hired to work as an aide, has completed 90 clock hours or the equivalent in early childhood education preservice training, the individual shall complete, within 6 months after the date of hire, an orientation session that follows guidelines established by the office and includes, but is not limited to: a) Proper child supervision; b) Workplace professionalism; and c) Interacting with parents. Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment.

Directors of Preschool Centers-Specific Requirements: 1) Be at least 21 years old; 2) Hold a high school diploma or equivalent, or have successfully completed at least two courses for credit from an accredited college or university; 3) Have successfully completed 9 clock hours of approved preservice training in communicating with staff, parents, and the public, or at least one academic college course for credit; 3 semester hours or their equivalent of approved administrative training, unless approved as a school-age center director in a center authorized to serve only school-age children; and 3 clock hours of approved training in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act; 4) Have successfully completed 6 semester hours or 90 clock hours, or their equivalent, of approved preservice training, or hold the Child Development Associate National Credential that is issued by the Council for Professional Recognition; and 5) Within 6 months of hire, complete a regulation training that is conducted by the Office of Child Care. 6) Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment. (b) Caring for preschoolers as a registered family child care provider. B. In a preschool center with 20 or fewer children, a director shall have completed 1 year of experience: 1. Working primarily with preschoolers in a licensed child care center, nursery school, church-operated school, or similar setting; or 2. Caring for preschoolers as a registered family child care provider.

- ii. Describe the director qualification for licensed CCDF center-based care, including any variations based on the ages of children in care or the number of staff employed: In a preschool center with infants or toddlers in care, a director, in addition to meeting the requirements of §§B-D of the regulation, as applicable, shall have: 1. 3 semester hours of approved training, or the equivalent, related exclusively to the care of infants and toddlers; and 2. Effective January 1, 2016, approved training in supporting breastfeeding practices.

Directors of School-Age Centers-Specific Requirements: A. In a school-age center with a capacity of 60 or fewer children, the director shall have completed at least: (1) 400 hours of experience working under supervision primarily with school-age children in a licensed child care center, public or private school, or a similar setting; or (2) 1 year of experience caring for school-age children as a registered family child care provider. B. In a school age center with a capacity of 61 or more children, the director shall have completed at least: (1) 800 hours of experience working under supervision primarily with school age children in a licensed child care center, public or private school, or similar setting; or (2) 2 years of experience caring for school age children as a registered family child care provider. C. An individual is considered qualified as a director of a school age center if the individual is certified for kindergarten, nursery school through third grade, or

grades 1 through 8 by the Department or by the state board of any other state.

Specific Requirements for Directors in Combined Preschool and School-Age Centers: A. A preschool center director may have responsibility for the entire center if the center enrolls both preschoolers and school age children. B. A school age center director may have responsibility for the entire center if the center: (1) Does not enroll any infants or toddlers; and (2) Enrolls five or fewer children younger than kindergarten age. b) Licensed CCDF family child care provider.

b. Licensed family child care

Describe the provider qualifications for licensed family child care homes, including any variations based on the ages of children in care: **Family Child Care Teacher/caregiver qualifications:** CPR/First Aid (age appropriate); SIDS (only if caring for children under age 2); 24 clock hours of approved preservice training, medication administration; emergency and disaster planning training; approved ADA Compliance training and Supporting Breastfeeding Practices. Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment. A Minimum age: 18 years old.

Large Family Teacher/caregiver qualifications for Infants and Toddlers: High school diploma or equivalent; 90 clock hours of approved preservice training; 45 clock hours of approved preservice Infant/Toddler training; 9 clock hours of approved preservice training in communication; 1 year of experience; approved ADA Compliance training; and Supporting Breastfeeding Practices. Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment. A Minimum age: 18 years old. **Large Family Aide/caregiver qualifications for Preschool and School Age:** 1) Be 16 years old or older; 2) Work under the direct supervision of the staff person in charge of the group of children to whom the aide is assigned; 3) Unless an individual hired to work as an aide, has completed 90 clock hours or the equivalent in early childhood education preservice training, the individual shall complete, within 6 months after the date of hire, an orientation session that follows guidelines established by the office and includes, but is not limited to: a) Proper child supervision; b) Workplace professionalism; and c) Interacting with parents. 4) Completion of the Basic Health & Safety training within 90 days of employment.

c. Licensed, regulated, or registered in-home care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative)

Describe the provider qualifications for licensed, regulated, or registered in-home care providers (care in the child's own home) including any variations based on the ages of children in care: **In order to qualify as registered in-home care/informal provider, certain criteria must be met;** (1) Informal provider must be at least 18 years or older; (2) Pass both the Criminal Background Check (CBC) and Child Protective Services (CPS); (3) Hold a current Health and Safety Certificate; (4) Current CPR for Adult and Pediatric and AED.

5.2.4 Teacher/caregiver qualifications for license-exempt providers

Provide the teacher/provider qualification requirements (for instance, age, high school diploma, specific training, etc.) for the license-exempt providers under the following categories of care:

- a. License-exempt center-based child care. N/A
- b. License-exempt home-based child care. N/A

- c. License-exempt in-home care (care in the child’s own home). **For License-exempt in-home care (non-relative providers’ care is in the child’s home, relative providers’ care may be in the provider’s home), all providers must be 18 years or older and pass a Criminal Background Check (CBC), both State and Federal, as well as a Child Protective Services Background check (CPC). In addition, they must be CPR certified and pass the Health and Safety Training.**

5.3 Health and Safety Standards for CCDF Providers

Lead Agencies must have health and safety standards for providers serving children receiving CCDF assistance relating to the required health and safety topics as appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served. This requirement is applicable to all child care programs receiving CCDF funds regardless of licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt). The only exception to this requirement is for relative providers, as defined by CCDF. Lead Agencies have the option of exempting certain relatives from any or all CCDF health and safety requirements.

Exemptions for relative providers’ standards requirements will be addressed in question 5.8.1.

Describe the following health and safety standards for programs serving children receiving CCDF assistance on the following topics (note that monitoring and enforcement will be addressed in subsection 5.5):

5.3.1 Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations) health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the prevention and control of infectious diseases for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance standards: Child Care Center 13A.16.11.01 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.01 Exclusion for Acute Illness: A. Child care staff shall: (1) Monitor a child for signs and symptoms of acute illness; (2) Notify a child's parent or other designated person upon observing a sign or symptom of acute illness; and (3) Provide temporary isolation for the affected child in a suitably equipped separate area within sight and hearing of an adult. B. Except in centers for children with acute illness, an operator may not admit a child to care or allow a child to remain in care when the child is exhibiting symptoms of acute illness. C. A child may not be readmitted to care after an absence of 3 days or more due to illness without a written statement from the parent or physician that the child may return to a regular schedule.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.02 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.02 Infectious and Communicable Disease: A. An operator shall immediately transmit to the health officer a report of the name and address of a child or a staff member who appears to be infected with a reportable communicable disease or who has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease as indicated in COMAR 10.06.01.03. B. Except in centers for children with acute illness, an operator may not knowingly admit to care or retain in care a child with a transmissible infection or a communicable disease during the period of exclusion recommended for that infection or disease as shown in the Communicable Disease Summary, as

published by the Maryland Department of Health, unless the health officer grants approval for the child to attend child care during that period.

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.03 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.03 Preventing the Spread of Disease: A. A written handwashing procedure approved by the office shall be posted at each sink used for washing hands. B. Hands shall be washed according to the posted approved procedure by a center employee, substitute, volunteer, or child in care at least: (1) After toileting or diapering; (2) Before food preparation or eating; and (3) After an outdoor activity or handling an animal. C. Diapering shall be performed in accordance with a written diapering procedure approved by the office.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care:**

13A.15.05.03 Cleanliness and Sanitation: A. All areas of the home, including food preparation, service, and storage areas shall be maintained in a state of cleanliness so as not to endanger the children's health. B. Paper towels, a trash receptacle, soap, and toilet paper shall be placed within reach of a child capable of using the toilet without assistance. C. Trash, garbage, and wet or soiled diapers shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner. D. After toileting and diapering, before food preparation and eating, after playing outdoors, after handling animals, and at other times when necessary to prevent the spread of disease, the provider or substitute shall: (1) Wash the provider's or substitute's hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water; and (2) Ensure that a child's hands are washed thoroughly, by the provider or by the child, with soap and warm running water. E. To assist in preventing the spread of disease, the provider or substitute shall: (1) Promptly change a child's diaper, clothing, and bedding when soiled or wet; (2) Follow diapering procedures designed to prevent the transmission of disease, which are established and supplied by the office; and (3) Maintain the surface used for diapering in a clean and sanitary manner. F. If used, portable toilets, also known as potty-chairs, shall be: (1) Placed on a nonabsorbent surface or mat; (2) Located away from food preparation, food service, and eating areas; and (3) Cleaned and sanitized after each use in accordance with procedures established by the office.

13A.15.11.02 Exclusion for Acute Illness: A. The provider or substitute shall: (1) Monitor children for signs and symptoms of acute illness; and (2) Notify immediately a child's parent or other person designated on the child's emergency card upon observing a sign or symptom of acute illness. B. The provider or substitute may not allow a child to enter or remain in care if the child is exhibiting symptoms of acute illness such as, but not limited to: (1) Vomiting; (2) Fever; (3) Seizures; (4) Severe pain; or (5) Diarrhea.

13A.15.11.03 Infectious and Communicable Disease: A provider or substitute may not knowingly care for a child who has a serious transmissible infection or communicable disease during the period of exclusion for that infection or disease shown in the Communicable Disease Summary, as published by the Maryland Department of Health.

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.11.01 Exclusion for Acute Illness: B. Child care staff shall: (1) Monitor a child for signs and symptoms of acute illness; (2) Notify a child's parent or other designated person upon observing a sign or symptom of acute illness; and (3) Provide temporary isolation for the affected child in a suitably equipped separate area within sight and hearing of an adult. B. Except in centers for children with acute illness, an operator may not admit a child to care or allow a child to remain in care when the child is exhibiting symptoms of acute illness. C. A child may not be readmitted to care after an absence of 3 days or more due to illness without a written statement from the parent or physician that the child may return to a regular schedule.

13A.18.11.02 Infectious and Communicable Disease: A. An operator shall immediately transmit to the health officer a report of the name and address of a child or a staff member who appears to be infected with a reportable communicable disease or who has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease as indicated in COMAR 10.06.01.03. B. Except in centers for children with acute illness, an operator may not knowingly admit to care or retain in care a child with a transmissible infection or a communicable disease during the period of exclusion recommended for that infection or disease as shown in the Communicable Disease Summary, as published by the Maryland Department of Health, unless the health officer grants approval for the child to attend child care during that period.

13A.18.11.03 Preventing the Spread of Disease: A. A written handwashing procedure approved by the office shall be posted at each sink used for washing hands. B. Hands shall be washed according to the posted approved procedure by a center employee, substitute, volunteer, or child in care at least: (1) After toileting or diapering; (2) Before food preparation or eating; and (3) After an outdoor activity or handling an animal. C. Diapering shall be performed in accordance with a written diapering procedure approved by the office.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **The license-exempt provider will promptly change a child's diaper, clothing, and bedding when soiled or wet; Follow diapering procedures designed to prevent the transmission of disease; Maintain the surface used for diapering in a clean and sanitary manner located away from food preparation, food service, and eating areas; Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water; Trash/garbage and wet or soiled diapers shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner; Clean and sanitize after each use in accordance with procedures established by the office; and, Bio contaminants and biohazards shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner.**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard:
N/A

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **The license-exempt provider will promptly change a child's diaper, clothing, and bedding when soiled or wet; Follow diapering procedures designed to prevent the transmission of disease; Maintain the surface used for diapering in a clean and sanitary manner located away from food preparation, food service, and eating areas; Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water; Trash/garbage and wet or soiled diapers shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner; Clean and sanitize after each use in accordance with procedures established by the office; and, Bio contaminants and biohazards shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance standards: Child Care Center 13A.16.11.01 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.01 Exclusion for Acute Illness: A. Child care staff shall: (1) Monitor a child for signs and symptoms of acute illness; (2) Notify a child's parent or other designated person upon observing a sign or symptom of acute illness; and (3) Provide temporary isolation for the affected child in a suitably equipped separate area within sight and hearing of an adult. B. Except in centers for children with acute illness, an operator may not admit a child to care or allow a child to remain in care when the child is exhibiting symptoms of acute illness. C. A child may not be readmitted to care after an absence of 3 days or more due to illness without a written statement from the parent or physician that the child may return to a regular schedule.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.02 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.02 Infectious and Communicable Disease: A. An operator shall immediately transmit to the health officer a report of the name and address of a child or a staff member who appears to be infected with a reportable communicable disease or who has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease as indicated in COMAR 10.06.01.03. B. Except in centers for children with acute illness, an operator may not knowingly admit to care or retain in care a child with a transmissible infection or a communicable disease during the period of exclusion recommended for that infection or disease as shown in the Communicable Disease Summary, as published by the Maryland Department of Health, unless the health officer grants approval for the child to attend child care during that period.

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.03 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.03 Preventing the Spread of Disease: A. A written handwashing procedure approved by the office shall be posted at each sink used for washing hands. B. Hands shall be washed according to the posted approved procedure by a center employee, substitute, volunteer, or child in care at least: (1) After toileting or diapering; (2) Before food preparation or eating; and (3) After an outdoor activity or handling an animal. C. Diapering shall be performed in accordance with a written diapering procedure approved by the office.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address that children attending child care programs under CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, according to the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the respective State public health agency, for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.03.02 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.03.04: Child Records: G. Unless a school-age child attends a school-age program located in the child’s school, the operator shall obtain, and maintain at the center, an immunization record showing that: (1) The child has had immunizations appropriate for the child's age which meet the immunization guidelines set by the Maryland Department of Health; (2) The child has had at least one dose of each vaccine appropriate for the child's age before entry and is scheduled to complete the required immunizations; (3) A licensed physician or a health officer has determined that immunization is medically contraindicated according to accepted medical standards; or (4) The parent objects to the child's immunization because it conflicts with the parent's bona fide religious beliefs and practices.**
 - ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care: 13A.15.03.02A(2)(b) Admission to Care: The provider may not admit a child to the home for child care or allow a child to remain in care unless the provider has received: (2)Unless the child is temporarily admitted or retained pursuant to §D of this regulation: (b) Evidence, on a form supplied or approved by the office, that the child has had immunizations appropriate for the child's age that meet the immunization guidelines set by the Maryland Department of Health. 13A.15.03.04C(2) Child Records: During the period of a child's enrollment and for 2 years after the child's disenrollment, a provider shall maintain a file for each child that includes records of: (2) The child’s health assessment, immunizations, and allergies, if any, to include: (a) As required by COMAR 10.11.04.**
Large Family Home 13A.18.03.04: Child Records G. Unless a school-age child attends a school-age program located in the child’s school, the operator shall obtain, and maintain at the center, an immunization record showing that: (1) The child has had immunizations appropriate for the child's age which meet the immunization guidelines set by the Maryland Department of Health; (2) The child has had at least one dose of each vaccine appropriate for the child's age before entry and is scheduled to complete the required immunizations; (3) A licensed physician or a health officer has determined that immunization is medically contraindicated according to accepted medical standards; or (4) The parent objects to the child's immunization because it conflicts with the parent's bona fide religious beliefs and practices.
 - iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:
 Not applicable.
 - iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License-exempt/informal only monitors the immunization requirements for non-school-aged children.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.03.02 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.03.04: Child Records: G. Unless a school-age child attends a school-age program located in the child’s school, the operator shall obtain, and maintain at the center, an immunization record showing that: (1) The child has had immunizations appropriate for the child's age which meet the immunization guidelines set by the Maryland Department of Health; (2) The child has had at least one dose of each vaccine appropriate for the child's age before entry and is scheduled to complete the required immunizations; (3) A licensed physician or a health officer has determined that immunization is medically contraindicated according to accepted medical standards; or (4) The parent objects to the child's immunization because it conflicts with the parent's bona fide religious beliefs and practices.**

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.2 Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices health and safety standard

Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and use of safe sleeping practices for the following CCDF-eligible providers:

- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.06.06 Directors of Preschool Centers-Specific Requirements: In a preschool center with infants or toddlers in care, a director, in addition to meeting the requirements of §§B of this regulation, as applicable, shall have: (1) 3 semester hours of approved training, or the equivalent, related to the care of infants and toddlers.**

13A.16.08.08 Rest Time Supervision: During a rest period for a group of children who are younger than 2 years old: (1) The required staff/child ratio applicable to that group shall be maintained; and (2) Each staff member assigned to the group shall remain with the children.

13A.16.09.04 Rest Furnishings: A.(4) A crib with a snugly fitting mattress, moisture-proof mattress covering, and tight fitting sheet for each child in the center who is: (a) Younger than 12 months old; F. Soft bedding items, including but not limited to pillows, quilts, comforters, and crib bumpers, may not be used as rest furnishings for a child using a crib. G. A child under 12 months who falls

asleep in a furnishing other than a crib shall be moved immediately to an approved sleeping arrangement specified at §A of this regulation.

Letter Of Compliance: Not applicable as they do not serve children under age 2.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care:**

13A.15.06.02E(2): Training Requirements Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Training. (a) The office may not approve a request by an applicant or a provider to provide care for a child younger than 24 months old unless the applicant or provider presents evidence of having successfully completed, within 5 years before the date of the request, approved SIDS training. (b) SIDS training may not be used to satisfy the continued training requirements set forth in §B of this regulation.

13A.15.08.01D Supervision of Resting Children: (1) If a resting or napping child is younger than 2 years old, the provider or substitute shall: (a) Remain within sight and sound of the child; and (b) Observe the child at least every 15 minutes to determine that the child is safe, breathing normally, and in no physical distress. (2) If a resting or napping child is 2 years old or older, the child: (a) May be on a different level of the home from the provider or substitute if: (i) That level is approved by the office for child care use; and (ii) The provider has informed the child's parent that the child is permitted to be on a different level of the home; and (b) Shall be observed by the provider or substitute to ensure the child's safety and comfort at intervals of at least every 15 minutes. (3) If a resting or napping child is in a different room from the provider or substitute and that room can be closed off from the rest of the home by a door, screen, or similar furnishing, the provider or substitute shall ensure that the door, screen, or similar furnishing remains open so that the view into the room is unobstructed.

13A.15.10.06 Rest Time Safety Unless specified otherwise in writing by the child's physician, a child who: (1) Cannot roll over without assistance shall be placed for sleep on the child's back; or (2) Is younger than 12 months old but can roll over unassisted shall be placed for sleep on the child's back, but may be allowed to adopt whatever position the child prefers for sleep. B. Unless the need for a positioning device that restricts a child's movement while the child is resting is specified in writing by the child's physician, an object or device, including, but not limited to, a strap, wedge, roll, or swaddling, that restricts movement may not be used with a child in a crib, portable crib, playpen, cot, bed, mat, or other rest furnishing.

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.06.05E(5): Child Care Home Directors: Unless previously approved by the office to direct a child care program serving children younger than 2 years old, have completed 3 semester hours of approved training, or the equivalent, related to the care of children younger than 2 years old;

13A.18.06.06E(2) Family Child Care Teachers: Unless previously qualified by the

office to supervise an infant or a toddler: (a) Meet the requirements of §§A and B of this regulation and have completed 3 semester hours of approved training, or the equivalent, related to the care of children younger than 2 years old;

13A.18.08.08 Rest Time Supervision: During a rest period for a group of children who are younger than 2 years old: (1) The required staff/child ratio applicable to that group shall be maintained; and (2) Each staff member assigned to the group shall remain with the children. B. During a rest period for a group of children who are 2 years old or older: (1) The required staff/child ratio applicable to that group shall be maintained until all the children are resting quietly; and (2) Once all the children in the group are resting quietly: (a) At least one family child care teacher or aide assigned to the group shall continue to remain in the room with the children; and (b) Other staff members, if any, assigned to the group may leave the room but shall remain on the premises and within hearing range. C. To determine if a resting child is safe, breathing normally, and in no physical distress: (1) Each resting child shall be observed at intervals of at least every 15 minutes; and (2) A resting child younger than 12 months old shall be observed at least every 15 minutes.

13A.18.09.04 Rest Furnishings A(4) A crib, portable crib, or playpen with a snugly fitting mattress, moisture-proof mattress covering, and tight-fitting sheet for each child in the child care home who is: (a) Younger than 12 months old; F. Soft bedding items, including but not limited to pillows, quilts, comforters, and crib bumpers, may not be used as rest furnishings for a child using a crib, portable crib, or playpen. G. A child under 12 months who falls asleep in a furnishing other than a crib shall be moved immediately to an approved sleeping arrangement specified at §A(4) of this regulation.

13A.18.10.05 Rest Time Safety A. Unless specified otherwise in writing by the child's physician, a child who: (1) Cannot roll over without assistance shall be placed for sleep on the child's back; or (2) Is younger than 12 months old but can roll over unassisted shall be placed for sleep on the child's back, but may be allowed to adopt whatever position the child prefers for sleep. B. Unless the need for a positioning device is specified in writing by a child's physician, a restricting device of any type may not be applied to a resting child.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: The topic of sudden infant death syndrome and safe sleep practices provides information for the high-risk populations experiencing SIDS, the factors that are believed to contribute to SIDS cases, and measures to prevent SIDS for children in care. Additionally, providers are required to provide the approved and age-appropriate rest furnishings, provide age-appropriate supervision to resting children, and complete visible checks on sleeping.**

vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **The topic of sudden infant death syndrome and safe sleep practices provides information for the high-risk populations experiencing SIDS, the factors that are believed to contribute to SIDS cases, and measures to prevent SIDS for children in care. Additionally, providers are required to provide the approved and age-appropriate rest furnishings, provide age-appropriate supervision to resting children, and complete visible checks on sleeping.**

vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.06.06 Directors of Preschool Centers-Specific Requirements: In a preschool center with infants or toddlers in care, a director, in addition to meeting the requirements of §§B-F of this regulation, as applicable, shall have: (1) 3 semester hours of approved training, or the equivalent, related to the care of infants and toddlers.**

13A.16.08.08 Rest Time Supervision: During a rest period for a group of children who are younger than 2 years old: (1) The required staff/child ratio applicable to that group shall be maintained; and (2) Each staff member assigned to the group shall remain with the children.

13A.16.09.04 Rest Furnishings: A.(4) A crib with a snugly fitting mattress, moisture-proof mattress covering, and tight fitting sheet for each child in the center who is: (a) Younger than 12 months old; F. Soft bedding items, including but not limited to pillows, quilts, comforters, and crib bumpers, may not be used as rest furnishings for a child using a crib. G. A child under 12 months who falls asleep in a furnishing other than a crib shall be moved immediately to an approved sleeping arrangement specified at §A of this regulation.

Letter of Compliance: Not applicable as they do not serve children under age 2.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.3 Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent health and safety standard

a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the administration of medication for the following CCDF-eligible providers:

i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center: The medication administration training includes safe and accurate administration of medication, including measuring, proper dosage, purpose of medication and the 6 Rights of Medication Administration. Allergic reaction is also discussed along with the proper administration of Asthma medications and treatment for Anaphylaxis. Participants will practice using the new Epi-pen. Additionally, Maryland requires providers to obtain a Medication Authorization form to be completed and signed by the child’s health care professional for all children who are prescribed medication that is to be administered while in child care. Providers**

are required to review children's forms including a listing of any medications administered to children. Only staff that have successfully completed the training are approved to administer medications as directed by the required medication forms. As well, the approved staff ensure that medication is stored according to COMAR requirements.

13A.16.03.04(I)(3) Child Records I. The operator shall record or maintain on file:
(3) Child medication records required by COMAR 13A.16.11.04A(1)

13A.16.11.04 Medication Administration and Storage Medication Administration. (1) Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received at the center before the medication is administered; and (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage. (2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home. (3) If medication is by prescription, it shall be labeled by the pharmacy or physician with: (a) The child's name; (b) The date of the prescription; (c) The name of the medication; (d) The medication dosage; (e) The administration schedule; (f) The administration route; (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; (h) The duration of the prescription; and (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. B. Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. C. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recently dated. D. Recording Requirements. (1) Each administration of a prescription or nonprescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record. (2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be noted in the child's record. E. Medication Storage. (1) Each medication shall be: (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date; (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation. (2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each employee designated by the operator to administer medication. F. Medication Administration Training. (1) Whenever children in care are present, there shall be at least one center employee present who has completed medication administration training approved by the office. Medication may be administered to a child in care only by an employee who has completed approved medication administration training. G. Section F of this regulation does not apply if: (1) The center employs a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or medication technician certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to administer medication to children in care; or (2) Responsibility for administering medication

to children in care is delegated to a center employee by a delegating nurse in accordance with COMAR 10.27.11. H. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, the operator shall: (a) Have a written order from the child's physician and the written request of the child's parent for the child's self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child's parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician's written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. (2) Revocation of Authorization to Self-Administer. (a) An operator may revoke a child's authorization to self-administer medication if the child fails to follow the written procedure required by §H(1)(b) of this regulation. (b) Immediately upon revoking the child's authorization to self-administer medication, the operator shall notify the child's parent of that revocation. (c) The operator shall document the revocation of authorization to self-administer and the notification to the child's parent in the child's record. I. Medical Cannabis. (1) The administration of medical cannabis by a caregiver to a child who is a qualifying medical cannabis patient is governed by COMAR 10.62.01 and 10.62.37. (2) The administration of medical cannabis that includes smoking or vaping is prohibited.

Letter of Compliance:

13A.17.03.04 Child Records 13A.17.11.04 Medication Administration and Storage: Medication Administration. (1) Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received at the center before the medication is administered; and (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage. (2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home. (3) If medication is by prescription, it shall be labeled by the pharmacy or physician with: (a) The child's name; (b) The date of the prescription; (c) The name of the medication; (d) The medication dosage; (e) The administration schedule; (f) The administration route; (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; (h) The duration of the prescription; and (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. B. Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. C. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recently dated. D. Recording Requirements. (1) Each administration of a prescription or nonprescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record. (2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be noted in the child's record. E. Medication Storage. (1) Each medication shall be: (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date; (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or

returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation. (2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each employee designated by the operator to administer medication. F. Medication Administration Training. (1) Whenever children in care are present, there shall be at least one center employee present who has completed medication administration training approved by the office. (2) Medication may be administered to a child in care only by an employee who has completed approved medication administration training. G. Section F of this regulation does not apply if: (1) The center employs a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or medication technician certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to administer medication to children in care; or (2) Responsibility for administering medication to children in care is delegated to a center employee by a delegating nurse in accordance with COMAR 10.27.11. H. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, the operator shall: (a) Have a written order from the child's physician and the written request of the child's parent for the child's self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child's parent, establish a written procedure for self-administration of medication by the child based on the physician's written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. (2) Revocation of Authorization to Self-Administer. (a) An operator may revoke a child's authorization to self-administer medication if the child fails to follow the written procedure required by §H(1)(b) of this regulation. (b) Immediately upon revoking the child's authorization to self-administer medication, the operator shall notify the child's parent of that revocation. (c) The operator shall document the revocation of authorization to self-administer and the notification to the child's parent in the child's record. I. Medical Cannabis. (1) The administration of medical cannabis by a caregiver to a child who is a qualifying medical cannabis patient is governed by COMAR 10.62.01-10.62.37. (2) The administration of medical cannabis that includes smoking or vaping is prohibited.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care (FCC):**
The medication administration training includes safe and accurate administration of medication, including measuring, proper dosage, purpose of medication and the 6 Rights of Medication Administration. Allergic reaction is also discussed along with the proper administration of Asthma medications and treatment for Anaphylaxis. Participants will practice using the new Epi-pen. Additionally, Maryland requires providers to obtain a Medication Authorization form to be completed and signed by the child's health care professional for all children who are prescribed medication that is to be administered while in child care. Providers are required to review children's forms including a listing of any medications administered to children. Only staff that have successfully completed the training are approved to administer medications as directed by the required medication forms. As well, the approved staff ensure that medication is stored according to COMAR requirements. Family Child Care 13A.15.03.04C(5) Child Records Child medication records as required by COMAR 13A.15.11.04; 13A.15.06.02F(1)(b) Training Requirements F. The office may not approve an application for an initial registration or a continuing registration unless the applicant has completed: (1)

Approved training in (b) Medication administration 13A.15.06.03(E)(2) Provider Substitute E. Before allowing a substitute to provide or to assist in providing care, the provider shall orient the substitute to child health and safety matters, including, but not limited to: (2) Medication administration information for each child authorized to receive medication; 13A.15.11.04 Medication Administration and Storage .04 Medication Administration and Storage. A. Medication Administration. (1) Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received by the provider or substitute before the medication is administered; and (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage. (2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home. (3) If medication is by prescription, it shall be labeled by the pharmacy or physician with: (a) The child's name; (b) The date of the prescription; (c) The name of the medication; (d) The medication dosage; (e) The administration schedule; (f) The administration route; (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; and (h) The duration of the prescription; and (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. B. Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. C. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recently dated. D. Recording Requirements. (1) Each administration of a prescription or nonprescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record. (2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be noted in the child's record. E. Medication Storage. (1) Each medication shall be: (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date; (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation. (2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to the provider, substitute, or additional adult. F. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, a provider shall: (a) Have a written order from the child's physician and the written request of the child's parent for the child's self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child's parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician's written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. (2) Revocation of Authorization to Self-Administer. (a) A provider may revoke a child's authorization to self-administer medication if the child fails to follow the written procedure required by §F(1)(b) of this regulation. (b) Immediately upon revoking the child's authorization to self-administer medication, the provider shall notify the child's parent of that revocation. (c) The provider shall document the revocation of authorization to self-administer and

the notification to the child's parent in the child's record. G. Effective January 1, 2016, medication may be administered to a child in care only by an individual who has completed approved medication administration training, unless: (1) The individual is a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or medication technician certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to administer medication to children in care; or (2) Responsibility for administering medication to children in care has been delegated to the individual by a delegating nurse in accordance with COMAR 10.27.11. H. Medical Cannabis. (1) The administration of medical cannabis by a caregiver to a child who is a qualifying medical cannabis patient is governed by COMAR 10.62.01-10.62.37. (2) The administration of medical cannabis that includes smoking or vaping is prohibited.

Large Family Child Care (LFCCC):

13A.18.03.04(1)(3) Child Records I. The provider shall record or maintain on file: (3) Child medication records required by COMAR 13A.18.11.04D; 13A.18.11.04 Medication Administration and Storage A. Medication Administration. (1) Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received at the child care home before the medication is administered; and (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage. (2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home. (3) If medication is by prescription, it shall be labeled by the pharmacy or physician with: (a) The child's name; (b) The date of the prescription; (c) The name of the medication; (d) The medication dosage; (e) The administration schedule; (f) The administration route; (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; (h) The duration of the prescription; and (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. B. Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. C. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a registered health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recently dated. D. Recording Requirements. (1) Each administration of a prescription or nonprescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record. (2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be noted in the child's record. E. Medication Storage. (1) Each medication shall be: (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date; (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation. (2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each staff member designated by the provider to administer medication. F. Medication Administration Training. (1) Whenever children in care are present, there shall be at least one child care home staff member present who

has completed medication administration training approved by the office. (2) Medication may be administered to a child in care only by a staff member who has completed approved medication administration training. G. The requirements of §F of this regulation shall not apply if: (1) The child care home employs a registered nurse, registered practical nurse, or medication technician certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to administer medication to children in care; or (2) Responsibility for administering medication to children in care is delegated to a staff member by a delegating nurse in accordance with COMAR 10.27.11. H. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, a provider shall: (a) Have a written order from the child’s physician and the written request of the child’s parent for the child’s self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child’s parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician’s written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. (2) Revocation of Authorization to Self-Administer. (a) A provider may revoke a child’s authorization to self-administer medication if the child fails to follow the written procedure required by §H(1)(b) of this regulation. (b) Immediately upon revoking the child’s authorization to self-administer medication, the provider shall notify the child’s parent of that revocation. (c) The provider shall document the revocation of authorization to self-administer and the notification to the child’s parent in the child’s record. I. Medical Cannabis. (1) The administration of medical cannabis by a caregiver to a child who is a qualifying medical cannabis patient is governed by COMAR 10.62.01-10.62.37. (2) The administration of medical cannabis that includes smoking or vaping is prohibited.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form provided by the office, that is received by the provider (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center: The medication administration training includes safe and accurate administration of medication, including measuring, proper dosage, purpose of medication and the 6 Rights of Medication Administration. Allergic reaction is also discussed along with the proper administration of Asthma medications and treatment for Anaphylaxis. Participants will practice using the new Epi-pen. Additionally, Maryland requires providers to obtain a Medication Authorization form to be completed and signed by the child’s health care professional for all children who are prescribed medication that is to be administered while in child care. Providers**

are required to review children's forms including a listing of any medications administered to children. Only staff that have successfully completed the training are approved to administer medications as directed by the required medication forms. As well, the approved staff ensure that medication is stored according to COMAR requirements.

13A.16.03.04(I)(3) Child Records I. The operator shall record or maintain on file:
(3) Child medication records required by COMAR 13A.16.11.04A(1)

13A.16.11.04 Medication Administration and Storage Medication Administration. (1) Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received at the center before the medication is administered; and (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage. (2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home. (3) If medication is by prescription, it shall be labeled by the pharmacy or physician with: (a) The child's name; (b) The date of the prescription; (c) The name of the medication; (d) The medication dosage; (e) The administration schedule; (f) The administration route; (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; (h) The duration of the prescription; and (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. B. Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. C. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recently dated. D. Recording Requirements. (1) Each administration of a prescription or nonprescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record. (2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be noted in the child's record. E. Medication Storage. (1) Each medication shall be: (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date; (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation. (2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each employee designated by the operator to administer medication. F. Medication Administration Training. (1) Whenever children in care are present, there shall be at least one center employee present who has completed medication administration training approved by the office. Medication may be administered to a child in care only by an employee who has completed approved medication administration training. G. Section F of this regulation does not apply if: (1) The center employs a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or medication technician certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to administer medication to children in care; or (2) Responsibility for administering medication

to children in care is delegated to a center employee by a delegating nurse in accordance with COMAR 10.27.11. H. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, the operator shall: (a) Have a written order from the child's physician and the written request of the child's parent for the child's self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child's parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician's written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. (2) Revocation of Authorization to Self-Administer. (a) An operator may revoke a child's authorization to self-administer medication if the child fails to follow the written procedure required by §H(1)(b) of this regulation. (b) Immediately upon revoking the child's authorization to self-administer medication, the operator shall notify the child's parent of that revocation. (c) The operator shall document the revocation of authorization to self-administer and the notification to the child's parent in the child's record. I. Medical Cannabis. (1) The administration of medical cannabis by a caregiver to a child who is a qualifying medical cannabis patient is governed by COMAR 10.62.01 and 10.62.37. (2) The administration of medical cannabis that includes smoking or vaping is prohibited.

Letter of Compliance:

13A.17.03.04 Child Records 13A.17.11.04 Medication Administration and Storage: Medication Administration. (1) Medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless: (a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received at the center before the medication is administered; and (b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage. (2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home. (3) If medication is by prescription, it shall be labeled by the pharmacy or physician with: (a) The child's name; (b) The date of the prescription; (c) The name of the medication; (d) The medication dosage; (e) The administration schedule; (f) The administration route; (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; (h) The duration of the prescription; and (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. B. Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. C. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recently dated. D. Recording Requirements. (1) Each administration of a prescription or nonprescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record. (2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be noted in the child's record. E. Medication Storage. (1) Each medication shall be: (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date; (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or

returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation. (2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each employee designated by the operator to administer medication. F. Medication Administration Training. (1) Whenever children in care are present, there shall be at least one center employee present who has completed medication administration training approved by the office. (2) Medication may be administered to a child in care only by an employee who has completed approved medication administration training. G. Section F of this regulation does not apply if: (1) The center employs a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or medication technician certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to administer medication to children in care; or (2) Responsibility for administering medication to children in care is delegated to a center employee by a delegating nurse in accordance with COMAR 10.27.11. H. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, the operator shall: (a) Have a written order from the child's physician and the written request of the child's parent for the child's self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child's parent, establish a written procedure for self-administration of medication by the child based on the physician's written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. (2) Revocation of Authorization to Self-Administer. (a) An operator may revoke a child's authorization to self-administer medication if the child fails to follow the written procedure required by §H(1)(b) of this regulation. (b) Immediately upon revoking the child's authorization to self-administer medication, the operator shall notify the child's parent of that revocation. (c) The operator shall document the revocation of authorization to self-administer and the notification to the child's parent in the child's record. I. Medical Cannabis. (1) The administration of medical cannabis by a caregiver to a child who is a qualifying medical cannabis patient is governed by COMAR 10.62.01-10.62.37. (2) The administration of medical cannabis that includes smoking or vaping is prohibited.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address obtaining permission from parents to administer medications to children for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.03.04(I)(3) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.03.02(I)(3): Child Records I. The operator shall record or maintain on file: (3) Child medication records required by COMAR 13A.16.11.04A(1) and 13A.17.11.04.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.04A(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.04A(1)(a):

Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received by the provider or substitute before the medication is administered;

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.04 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.04 F. Self-

Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, a provider shall: (a) Have a written order from the child’s physician and the written request of the child’s parent for the child’s self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child’s parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician’s written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. or tap here to enter text.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care: 13A.15.03.04C(5) Child Records Child medication records as required by COMAR 13A.15.11.04.**

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.03.04(I)(3) Child Records I. The provider shall record or maintain on file: (3) Child medication records required by COMAR 13A.18.11.04D.

Family Child Care 13A.15.11.04A(1)(a) and Large Family Child Care 13A.18.11.04A(1)(a): Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received by the provider or substitute before the medication is administered.

Family Child Care 13A.15.11.04 and Large Family Child Care 13A.18.11.04 F. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, a provider shall: (a) Have a written order from the child’s physician and the written request of the child’s parent for the child’s self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child’s parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician’s written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:

Not applicable.

- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License - Exempt/Informal Providers: The standard is addressed as the parent authorizes the Informal Provider to administer medication as noted by the healthcare provider. The parent attests that they have administered at least one dose of the medication to the child without adverse effects and certifies they have the legal authority, understand the risk, and do consent to medical treatment by the provider, including the administration of medication for the named child. The Emergency Care & Medication Authorization Form is completed, dated, and signed and is required at the initial application, each informal provider renewal, and at any medical or medication prescription change.**

vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.03.04(I)(3) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.03.02(I)(3):**
Child Records I. The operator shall record or maintain on file: (3) Child medication records required by COMAR 13A.16.11.04A(1) and 13A.17.11.04.

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.04A(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.04A(1)(a):
Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office, that is received by the provider or substitute before the medication is administered;

Child Care Center 13A.16.11.04 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.11.04 F. Self-Administration of Medication. (1) Before a child may self-administer medication while in care, a provider shall: (a) Have a written order from the child's physician and the written request of the child's parent for the child's self-administration of medication; (b) In consultation with the child's parent, establish a written procedure for self administration of medication by the child based on the physician's written order; and (c) Authorize the child to self-administer medication. or tap here to enter text.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.4 Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the *prevention* of emergencies due to food and allergic reactions for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Providers are required to maintain and review children's records for information pertaining to allergies and asthma including allergy action plans for children with allergies. The regulations also require providers to maintain and post a planned weekly menu of the food and snacks to be served to the children for up to 4 weeks in case of a possible allergic reaction. Additionally, all providers and child care staff are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training and Emergency Preparedness training which includes information about the prevention of and response to emergencies related to food and allergic reactions.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.03.04D(2) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.03.04D(2)
Child Records: Unless a parent objects to a child's medical examination because of bona fide religious beliefs and practices, a health assessment of the child shall be provided by the child's parent that: (2) If applicable, includes a statement of allergies

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.05 Staff Records C(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.05B(1) Staff Records: During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain

a record for each individual that includes: (1) The individual's: (a) Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under this subtitle;

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.01A and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.01A A. Emergency and Disaster Plan. (1) At least one center employee shall: (a) Complete emergency preparedness training that is approved by the office; and (b) As part of the approved emergency preparedness training, prepare a written emergency and disaster plan for the center.

Child Care Center 13A.16.12.01E and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.12.01E Food Service: E. Menus. An operator shall: (1) Post in a conspicuous place a weekly planned menu of foods and beverages furnished by the center for meals and snacks; and (2) Keep a dated record of food actually served in the center, and to each child on a modified diet, on file for at least 4 weeks, correcting the planned menu if necessary.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: Providers are required to maintain and review children's records for information pertaining to allergies and asthma including allergy action plans for children with allergies. The regulations also require providers to maintain and post a planned weekly menu of the food and snacks to be served to the children for up to 4 weeks in case of a possible allergic reaction. Additionally, all providers and child care staff are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training and Emergency Preparedness training which includes information about the prevention of and response to emergencies related to food and allergic reactions.

Family Child Care 13A.15.03.04C(2) Child Records: During the period of a child's enrollment and for 2 years after the child's disenrollment, a provider shall maintain a file for each child that includes records of: (2) The child's health assessment, immunizations, and allergies, 13A.15.06.02A(3) & (4) Training Requirements A. Preservice Training. An individual who applies for an initial registration shall: (3) Complete approved training on emergency and disaster planning; (4) Effective January 1, 2020, complete approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of initial registration;

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.06.05E(3)(d) Child Care Home Directors: E. Except as set forth at §F of this regulation, to qualify as a director in a large family child care home, an individual shall: (3) Have successfully completed: (d) Effective January 1, 2020, approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment;

13A.18.06.06B(1)(e) Family Child Care Teachers: To qualify or continue to qualify as a family child care teacher, an individual: (1) Shall hold or have successfully completed: (e) Effective January 1, 2020, approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment; 13A.18.06.07A(3)

Aides: An aide shall: (3) Effective January 1, 2020, complete the approved basic

health and safety training within 90 days of employment; Large Family Child Care 13A.18.03.04D(2) Child Records: Unless a parent objects to a child's medical examination because of bona fide religious beliefs and practices, a health assessment of the child shall be provided by the child's parent that: (2) If applicable, includes a statement of allergies

Large Family Child Care 13A.18.10.01A Emergency and Disaster Plan. (1) The provider or a staff member shall: (a) Complete emergency preparedness training that is approved by the office; and (b) As part of the approved emergency preparedness training, prepare a written emergency and disaster plan for the child care home.

Large Family Child Care 13A.18.12.01I Food Service E. Menus. An operator shall: (1) Post in a conspicuous place a weekly planned menu of foods and beverages furnished by the center for meals and snacks; and (2) Keep a dated record of food actually served in the center, and to each child on a modified diet, on file for at least 4 weeks, correcting the planned menu if necessary.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: N/A
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: N/A
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: License-exempt providers are required to maintain each child's Emergency Care and Medication Authorization form. This form contains the child's health emergency and medical information, including known allergies, reactions, and any prescribed medications. License-exempt providers must complete and gain an annual certification from Basic Health & Safety training through our online training or approved the Maryland State Department of Education local trainer's courses.
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: Providers are required to maintain and review children's records for information pertaining to allergies and asthma including allergy action plans for children with allergies. The regulations also require providers to maintain and post a planned weekly menu of the food and snacks to be served to the children for up to 4 weeks in case of a possible allergic reaction. Additionally, all providers and child care staff are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training and Emergency Preparedness training which includes information about the prevention of and response to emergencies related to food and allergic reactions.

Child Care Center 13A.16.03.04D(2) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.03.04D(2) Child Records: Unless a parent objects to a child's medical examination because of bona fide religious beliefs and practices, a health assessment of the child shall be provided by the child's parent that: (2) If applicable, includes a statement of allergies

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.05 Staff Records C(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.05B(1) Staff Records: During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain a record for each individual that includes: (1) The individual's: (a) Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under this subtitle;

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.01A and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.01A A. Emergency and Disaster Plan. (1) At least one center employee shall: (a) Complete emergency preparedness training that is approved by the office; and (b) As part of the approved emergency preparedness training, prepare a written emergency and disaster plan for the center.

Child Care Center 13A.16.12.01E and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.12.01E Food Service: E. Menus. An operator shall: (1) Post in a conspicuous place a weekly planned menu of foods and beverages furnished by the center for meals and snacks; and (2) Keep a dated record of food actually served in the center, and to each child on a modified diet, on file for at least 4 weeks, correcting the planned menu if necessary.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the *response* to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training, Medication Administration training and Emergency Preparedness training which address the response for emergencies related to food and allergic reactions. Maryland has revised the Medication Authorization form to the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Authorization Plan which includes asthma and allergies related information specific to each child as applicable. In addition, the 2024 annual Basic Health and Safety update will highlight information from the new Asthma, Allergy and Anaphylaxis Prevention and Management resource guide.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.05 Staff Records C(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.05B(1) Staff Records: During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain a record for each individual that includes: (1) The individual's: (a) Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under the subtitle.

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.01A and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.01A A. Emergency and Disaster Plan. (1) At least one center employee shall: (a) Complete emergency preparedness training that is approved by the office; and (b) As part of

the approved emergency preparedness training, prepare a written emergency and disaster plan for the center.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training, Medication Administration training and Emergency Preparedness training which address the response for emergencies related to food and allergic reactions. Maryland has revised the Medication Authorization form to the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Authorization Plan which includes asthma and allergies related information specific to each child as applicable. In addition, the 2024 annual Basic Health and Safety update will highlight information from the new Asthma, Allergy and Anaphylaxis Prevention and Management resource guide.**

Family Child Care 13A.15.06.02A(3) & (4) Training Requirements A. Preservice Training. An individual who applies for an initial registration shall: (3) Complete approved training on emergency and disaster planning; (4) Effective January 1, 2020, complete approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of initial registration;

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.06.05E(3)(d) Child Care Home Directors: E. Except as set forth at §F of this regulation, to qualify as a director in a large family child care home, an individual shall: (3) Have successfully completed: (d) Effective January 1, 2020, approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment;

13A.18.06.06B(1)(e) Family Child Care Teachers To qualify or continue to qualify as a family child care teacher, an individual: (1) Shall hold or have successfully completed: (e) Effective January 1, 2020, approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment;

13A.18.06.07A(3) Aides: An aide shall: (3) Effective January 1, 2020, complete the approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment; Large Family Child Care 13A.18.10.01A Emergency and Disaster Plan. (1) The provider or a staff member shall: (a) Complete emergency preparedness training that is approved by the office; and (b) As part of the approved emergency preparedness training, prepare a written emergency and disaster plan for the child care home.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License-exempt providers must complete and sign the Medication Authorization form with the child's health care professional and parent, giving permission to**

administer the required medication during care hours.

- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training, Medication Administration training and Emergency Preparedness training which address the response for emergencies related to food and allergic reactions. Maryland has revised the Medication Authorization form to the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Authorization Plan which includes asthma and allergies related information specific to each child as applicable. In addition, the 2024 annual Basic Health and Safety update will highlight information from the new Asthma, Allergy and Anaphylaxis Prevention and Management resource guide.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.05 Staff Records C(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.05B(1) Staff Records: During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain a record for each individual that includes: (1) The individual's: (a) Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under the subtitle.

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.01A and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.01A A. Emergency and Disaster Plan. (1) At least one center employee shall: (a) Complete emergency preparedness training that is approved by the office; and (b) As part of the approved emergency preparedness training, prepare a written emergency and disaster plan for the center.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.5 Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the identification of and protection from building and physical premises hazards for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **All facilities must comply with all applicable state and local fire, zoning, health, safety and environmental codes, be in good repair, free of health and safety hazards including infestation by insects and rodents; have operable and safe utilities for lighting and heating; hot and cold running water; working, accessible toilet; operable refrigerator, stove, and telephone. In addition, providers are required to use child safety latches and equipment to ensure the indoor and outdoor child care space is free from all hazards including bodies of water, vehicular traffic and other potentially hazardous items.**

13A.16.05.01 Child Care Center and 13A.17.05.01 Letter of Compliance Building Safety: An operator shall provide a building for a center that is: (1) Maintained in good repair; (2) Free from health and safety hazards as identified by the office;

and (3) Clean and free from infestation of insects and rodents.

13A.15.05.12C, D & E Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.12C, D & E Outdoor Activity Area C. Usable play space may include only the area and the activity equipment approved for use by children in care. D. The activity area shall be free from potential hazards to child health or safety. E. All outdoor activity equipment shall be safe, in good repair, clean, and nontoxic.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **All facilities must comply with all applicable state and local fire, zoning, health, safety and environmental codes, be in good repair, free of health and safety hazards including infestation by insects and rodents; have operable and safe utilities for lighting and heating; hot and cold running water; working, accessible toilet; operable refrigerator, stove, and telephone. In addition, providers are required to use child safety latches and equipment to ensure the indoor and outdoor child care space is free from all hazards including bodies of water, vehicular traffic and other potentially hazardous items.**

13A.15.05.01 Family Child Care and 13A.18.05.01 Suitability of the Home The home shall: A. Comply with all applicable State and local fire, zoning, health, safety, and environmental codes; B. Be in good repair; C. Be free of health or safety hazards, including infestation by insects and rodents.

13A.15.05.05 Family Child Care and 13A.18.05.12 Large Family Child Care Outdoor Activity Area Outdoor Activity Area. A. There shall be ample, accessible space for outdoor activity that is free from conditions that may be dangerous to the health or safety of children in care. B. If required by the office, the outdoor activity area shall be enclosed to protect children in care from accessible hazards such as a heavily trafficked area, a body of water, or environmental hazards.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:

Not applicable.

- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **The vendor inspects the care location to ensure it complies with safety requirements. The specialist checks to ensure the care location is in good repair, free of health and safety hazards, including infestation by insects and rodents; has operable and safe utilities for lighting and heating, hot and cold running water; working, accessible toilet; and an operable refrigerator, stove, and telephone. In addition, providers are required to use child safety latches and equipment to ensure the indoor and outdoor child care space is free from all hazards, including bodies of water, vehicular traffic, and other potentially hazardous items.**

- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **All facilities must comply with all**

applicable state and local fire, zoning, health, safety and environmental codes, be in good repair, free of health and safety hazards including infestation by insects and rodents; have operable and safe utilities for lighting and heating; hot and cold running water; working, accessible toilet; operable refrigerator, stove, and telephone. In addition, providers are required to use child safety latches and equipment to ensure the indoor and outdoor child care space is free from all hazards including bodies of water, vehicular traffic and other potentially hazardous items.

13A.16.05.01 Child Care Center and 13A.17.05.01 Letter of Compliance Building Safety: An operator shall provide a building for a center that is: (1) Maintained in good repair; (2) Free from health and safety hazards as identified by the office; and (3) Clean and free from infestation of insects and rodents.

13A.15.05.12C, D & E Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.12C, D & E Outdoor Activity Area C. Usable play space may include only the area and the activity equipment approved for use by children in care. D. The activity area shall be free from potential hazards to child health or safety. E. All outdoor activity equipment shall be safe, in good repair, clean, and nontoxic.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the identification of and protection from bodies of water for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **13A.15.05.12C, D & E Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.12C, D & E Outdoor Activity Area: C. Usable play space** may include only the area and the activity equipment approved for use by children in care. D. The activity area shall be free from potential hazards to child health or safety. E. All outdoor activity equipment shall be safe, in good repair, clean, and nontoxic.
 - ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **13A.15.05.05 Family Child Care and 13A.18.05.12 Large Family Child Care: Outdoor Activity Area: .05 Outdoor Activity Area. A.** There shall be ample, accessible space for outdoor activity that is free from conditions that may be dangerous to the health or safety of children in care. B. If required by the office, the outdoor activity area shall be enclosed to protect children in care from accessible hazards such as a heavily trafficked area, a body of water, or environmental hazards.
 - iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 Not applicable.
 - iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 - v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Licensed-exempt providers are required to use child safety latches and equipment to ensure the indoor and outdoor child care space is free from all hazards, including bodies of water.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **13A.15.05.12C, D & E Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.12C, D & E Outdoor Activity Area: C. Usable play space may include only the area and the activity equipment approved for use by children in care. D. The activity area shall be free from potential hazards to child health or safety. E. All outdoor activity equipment shall be safe, in good repair, clean, and nontoxic.**

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- c. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the identification of and protection from vehicular traffic hazards for the following CCDF-eligible providers:

- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **13A.15.05.12C, D & E Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.12C, D & E Outdoor Activity Area: C. Usable play space may include only the area and the activity equipment approved for use by children in care. D. The activity area shall be free from potential hazards to child health or safety. E. All outdoor activity equipment shall be safe, in good repair, clean, and nontoxic.**

MSDE will be making amendments to these standards to provide additional policies and procedures when addressing the identification of and protection from vehicular traffic hazards.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **13A.15.05.05 Family Child Care and 13A.18.05.12 Large Family Child Care Outdoor Activity Area: .05 Outdoor Activity Area: A. There shall be ample, accessible space for outdoor activity that is free from conditions that may be dangerous to the health or safety of children in care. B. If required by the office, the outdoor activity area shall be enclosed to protect children in care from accessible hazards such as a heavily trafficked area, a body of water, or environmental hazards.**

MSDE will be making amendments to these standards to provide additional policies and procedures when addressing the identification of and protection from vehicular traffic hazards.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

Not applicable.

- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Licensed-**

exempt providers are required to use child safety latches and equipment to ensure the indoor and outdoor child care space is free from all hazards, including vehicular traffic.

- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **13A.15.05.12C, D & E Child Care Center and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.12C, D & E Outdoor Activity Area: C. Usable play space may include only the area and the activity equipment approved for use by children in care. D. The activity area shall be free from potential hazards to child health or safety. E. All outdoor activity equipment shall be safe, in good repair, clean, and nontoxic.**

MSDE will be making amendments to these standards to provide additional policies and procedures when addressing the identification of and protection from vehicular traffic hazards.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.6 Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and maltreatment health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma and indicate the age of children it applies to for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training which includes information about shaken baby syndrome, signs and symptoms of head trauma, and the indicators of abuse and neglect. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. Additionally, providers must submit and maintain an age appropriate discipline policy for the children they plan to serve in child care.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.05 Staff Records C(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.05B(1) Staff Records: During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain a record for each individual that includes: (1) The individual's: (a) Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under this subtitle.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training which includes information about shaken baby syndrome, signs and symptoms of head trauma, and the indicators of abuse and neglect. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. Additionally, providers must submit and maintain an age appropriate discipline policy for the**

children they plan to serve in child care.

Family Child Care: 13A.15.06.02A(4) Training Requirements A. Preservice Training. An individual who applies for an initial registration shall: (4) Effective January 1, 2020, complete approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of initial registration;

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.06.05E(3)(d) Child Care Home Directors E. Except as set forth at §F of this regulation, to qualify as a director in a large family child care home, an individual shall: (3) Have successfully completed: (d) Effective January 1, 2020, approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment;

13A.18.06.06B(1)(e)

Family Child Care Teachers: To qualify or continue to qualify as a family child care teacher, an individual: (1) Shall hold or have successfully completed: (e) Effective January 1, 2020, approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment; 13A.18.06.07A(3)

Aides: An aide shall: (3) Effective January 1, 2020, complete the approved basic health and safety training within 90 days of employment;

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Licensed-exempt providers take an annual mandatory Health & Safety training that addresses topics that include information about shaken baby syndrome and signs and symptoms of head trauma. Licensed-exempt providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect, and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. There are no variations based on the ages of children in care.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training which includes information about shaken baby syndrome, signs and symptoms of head trauma, and the indicators of abuse and neglect. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. Additionally, providers must submit and maintain an age appropriate discipline policy for the children they plan to serve in child care.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.05 Staff Records C(1)(a) and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.05B(1) Staff Records: During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain

a record for each individual that includes: (1) The individual's: (a) Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under this subtitle.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the prevention of child maltreatment and indicate the age of children it applies to for the following CCDF-eligible providers:

i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training which includes information about the indicators of abuse and neglect. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. Additionally, providers must submit and maintain an age appropriate discipline policy for the children they plan to serve in child care.**

13.16.07.01 Child Care Center and 13A.17.07.01 Letter of Compliance: Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect and Injurious Treatment: .01 Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect, and Injurious Treatment. An operator, employee, substitute, volunteer, individual residing on the premises of the center, or other individual connected with the center may not subject a child to abuse, neglect, mental injury, or injurious treatment.

15A.16.17.02 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.02 Letter of Compliance Abuse/Neglect Reporting: A. An operator, staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been: (1) Abused, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; (2) Neglected, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department as required under Maryland law. B. When a child has been subjected to injurious treatment, it shall be reported to the office. C. An operator shall: (1) Instruct the staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect; (2) Instruct staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and(3) Post, near each telephone in the facility, the telephone numbers of the Child Protective Services unit of the local department and the appropriate law enforcement agency. D. An operator may not require a staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer to report through the operator or director, rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency, when the staff member has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.

15A.16.17.03 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.03 Letter of Compliance Child Discipline: A. Child discipline shall be: (1) Appropriate to the age, maturity, and physical condition of the child; and (2) Consistent with the requirements of this

chapter. B. The operator, employee, substitute, or volunteer may not: (1) Force a child to eat or drink; (2) Punish a child for refusing to eat or drink; (3) Withhold food or beverages as punishment; or (4) Spank, hit, shake, or use any other means of physical discipline. C. The operator shall: (1) Prepare a written child discipline policy that states the: (a) Discipline methods used at the center; and (b) The circumstances under which the child discipline methods may be applied; (2) Make the child discipline policy available to: (a) The parent of each child in care; (b) A parent who is considering whether to enroll their children; and (c) The office; and (3) Ensure that the child discipline policy is followed by each employee, substitute, volunteer, and other individual connected with the center.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training which includes information about the indicators of abuse and neglect. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. Additionally, providers must submit and maintain an age appropriate discipline policy for the children they plan to serve in child care.

Family Child Care:

13A.15.07.01 Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect and Injurious Treatment: .01 Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect, and Injurious Treatment. A child in care may not be subjected to abuse, neglect, mental injury, or injurious treatment as defined in COMAR 13A.15.01.02B.

13A.15.07.02 Abuse/Neglect Reporting An individual who is responsible for providing care to a child: A. Shall monitor the child for signs and symptoms of child abuse or neglect; and B. If the individual has reason to believe that a child in care has been: (1) Abused, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department of social services or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; or (2) Neglected, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department of social services as required under Maryland law.

13A.15.07.03 Applicability to Residents .03 Applicability to Residents. The requirement set forth in Regulation .01 of this chapter also applies to a resident of the family child care home.

13A.15.07.04 Child Discipline Child discipline shall be: (1) Appropriate to the age, maturity, and physical condition of the child; and (2) Consistent with the requirements of this subtitle. B. The provider or substitute may not: (1) Force a child to eat or drink; (2) Punish a child for refusing to eat or drink; (3) Withhold food or beverages as punishment; or (4) Spank, hit, shake, or use any other means of physical discipline.

Large Family Child Care:

15A.18.07.01 Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect and Injurious Treatment A provider, employee, substitute, volunteer, individual residing on the premises of the child

care home, or other individual connected with the home may not subject a child to abuse, neglect, mental injury, or injurious treatment.

13A.18.07.02 Abuse/Neglect Reporting A. A provider, employee, substitute, or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been: (1) Abused, inside or outside of the child care home, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; or (2) Neglected, inside or outside of the child care home, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department as required under Maryland law. B. If a child has been subjected to injurious treatment, it shall be reported to the office. C. A provider shall: (1) Instruct the staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect; (2) Instruct the staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and (3) Post, near each telephone in the child care home, the telephone numbers of the Child Protective Services unit of the local department and the appropriate law enforcement agency. D. A provider may not require an employee, substitute, or volunteer to report through the provider, rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency, when the employee, substitute, or volunteer has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.

13A.18.07.03 Child Discipline A. Child discipline shall be: (1) Appropriate to the age, maturity, and physical condition of the child; and (2) Consistent with the requirements of this chapter. B. The provider, an employee, substitute, volunteer, or other individual connected to the child care home may not: (1) Force a child to eat or drink; (2) Punish a child for refusing to eat or drink; (3) Withhold food or beverages as punishment; or (4) Spank, hit, shake, or use any other means of physical discipline. C. The provider shall: (1) Prepare a written child discipline policy that states the: (a) Discipline methods used at the child care home; and (b) The circumstances under which the child discipline methods may be applied; (2) Make the child discipline policy available to: (a) The parent of each child in care; (b) A parent who is considering whether to enroll their children; and (c) The office; and (3) Ensure that the child discipline policy is followed by each employee, substitute, volunteer, and other individual connected with the child care home.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Licensed-exempt providers take an annual mandatory Health & Safety training course on maltreatment. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect, and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidents to the child protective service agency. There are no variations based on the ages of children in**

care.

- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **All providers are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training which includes information about the indicators of abuse and neglect. Providers are required to monitor children for signs of abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment and report suspected incidences to the child protective service agency. Additionally, providers must submit and maintain an age appropriate discipline policy for the children they plan to serve in child care.**

13.16.07.01 Child Care Center and 13A.17.07.01 Letter of Compliance: Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect and Injurious Treatment: .01 Prohibition of Abuse, Neglect, and Injurious Treatment. An operator, employee, substitute, volunteer, individual residing on the premises of the center, or other individual connected with the center may not subject a child to abuse, neglect, mental injury, or injurious treatment.

15A.16.17.02 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.02 Letter of Compliance Abuse/Neglect Reporting: A. An operator, staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been: (1) Abused, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; (2) Neglected, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department as required under Maryland law. B. When a child has been subjected to injurious treatment, it shall be reported to the office. C. An operator shall: (1) Instruct the staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect; (2) Instruct staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and(3) Post, near each telephone in the facility, the telephone numbers of the Child Protective Services unit of the local department and the appropriate law enforcement agency. D. An operator may not require a staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer to report through the operator or director, rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency, when the staff member has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.

15A.16.17.03 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.03 Letter of Compliance Child Discipline: A. Child discipline shall be: (1) Appropriate to the age, maturity, and physical condition of the child; and (2) Consistent with the requirements of this chapter. B. The operator, employee, substitute, or volunteer may not: (1) Force a child to eat or drink; (2) Punish a child for refusing to eat or drink; (3) Withhold food or beverages as punishment; or (4) Spank, hit, shake, or use any other means of physical discipline. C. The operator shall: (1) Prepare a written child discipline policy that states the: (a) Discipline methods used at the center; and (b) The circumstances under which the child discipline methods may be applied; (2) Make the child discipline policy available to: (a) The parent of each child in care; (b) A parent who is considering whether to enroll their children; and (c) The office; and

(3) Ensure that the child discipline policy is followed by each employee, substitute, volunteer, and other individual connected with the center.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.7 Emergency preparedness and response planning standard

Identify by checking below that the emergency preparedness and response planning due to natural disasters and human-caused events standard includes procedures in the following areas:

- i. Evacuation
- ii. Relocation
- iii. Shelter-in-place
- iv. Lock down
- v. Staff emergency preparedness
 - Training
 - Practice drills
- vi. Volunteer emergency preparedness
 - Training
 - Practice drills
- vii. Communication with families
- viii. Reunification with families
- ix. Continuity of operations
- x. Accommodation of
 - Infants
 - Toddlers
 - Children with disabilities
 - Children with chronic medical conditions
- xi. If any of the above are not checked, describe:

5.3.8 Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of biocontaminants health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the handling and storage of hazardous materials for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **The Basic Health and Safety training module for regarding the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials includes bio-contaminates. Providers must ensure the building/home is**

free from health and safety hazards and ensure that all potentially hazardous items are stored in an approved manner, as specified in the regulations.

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.04, Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.04 and Large Family Child Care 13A.18.10.04 Potentially Hazardous Items: A. An operator shall store all potentially harmful items, including but not limited to the items described in §5B-7E of this regulation, in locations which are inaccessible to children in care.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **The Basic Health and Safety training module for regarding the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials includes bio-contaminates. Providers must ensure the building/home is free from health and safety hazards and ensure that all potentially hazardous items are stored in an approved manner, as specified in the regulations.**

Family Child Care 13A.15.10.02 Potentially Hazardous Items: The provider shall properly store, and keep inaccessible to the children in care, all potentially harmful items, including, but not limited to, knives, sharp tools, firearms, matches, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, cannabis edibles, and smoking and vaping paraphernalia and byproducts, petroleum, flammable products, cleaning agents, and poisonous products.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:

Not applicable.

- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License-exempt providers must complete Basic Health & Safety training annually to maintain compliance. There are no variations in the standards by category of care or the ages of children in care.**

- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **The Basic Health and Safety training module for regarding the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials includes bio-contaminates. Providers must ensure the building/home is free from health and safety hazards and ensure that all potentially hazardous items are stored in an approved manner, as specified in the regulations.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.04, Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.04 and Large Family Child Care 13A.18.10.04 Potentially Hazardous Items: A. An operator shall store all potentially harmful items, including but not limited to the items described in §5B-7E of this regulation, in locations which are inaccessible to children in care.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not

eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the disposal of bio contaminants for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.05.11 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.11 Cleanliness and Sanitation G. Biocontaminants and biohazards shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner.**
 - ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care 13A.15.05.03G Cleanliness and Sanitation G. Biocontaminants and biohazards shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner. Large Family Child Care 13A.18.05.11 Cleanliness and Sanitation G. Biocontaminants and biohazards shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner.**
 - iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard:
[x] Not applicable.
 - iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 - v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 - vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Basic Health & Safety Training addresses the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials, including the disposal of bio-contaminants. Providers must ensure that the home is free from health and safety hazards and ensure that all potentially hazardous items are stored in an approved manner.**
 - vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center 13A.16.05.11 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.05.11 Cleanliness and Sanitation G. Biocontaminants and biohazards shall be disposed of in a clean and sanitary manner.**
- Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.**

5.3.9 Precautions in transporting children health and safety standard

Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address precautions in transporting children for the following CCDF-eligible providers:

- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **The Basic Health and Safety training module regarding transportation safety includes information including the state requirements for the appropriate height weight requirements for car seats and seat belt use and supervision while transporting children. In Family child care, when transporting child care children, the provider must follow Maryland law: Each child is separately secured in a car safety seat or belt and it is appropriate for their height and weight. In center care, unless being transported in a school bus or motor coach, children must be in a car seat or seat belt appropriate for their height and weight. Vehicles used to transport children must comply with applicable state and federal requirements.**

Child Care Center 13A.16.08.01 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.08.01 E Individualized Attention and Care: E. A child is allowed to travel to or from school or a school transportation site without adult supervision only if: (1) The child is in the first or a higher grade; and (2) The child's parent and the operator agree in writing that the child can travel safely without adult supervision.

Child Care Center 13A.16.08.06 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.08.06 Supervision During Transportation: When child transportation is conducted to or from: A. The center by the center operator, there shall be at least one adult, who has successfully passed federal and State criminal background checks and a review of child and adult abuse and neglect records pursuant to COMAR 13A.16.07.06D, other than the driver present in the vehicle if: (1) More than eight preschoolers are being transported as a group; or (2) At least one child is being transported and the driver of the vehicle is not: (a) A center employee; or (b) The parent of a child in care who is authorized by the operator to assist in transporting children in care; or B. An off-site activity by an independent contractor or a local school district and at least one child in care is being transported, the center operator shall ensure that there is at least one adult other than the driver present in the vehicle.

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.06 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.05 Transportation: A. Unless being transported in a licensed school bus or contract motor coach, each child who is transported in a vehicle while in care shall be separately secured in a child car seat or seat belt which is appropriate for the child's age and weight, as specified by Maryland law. B. A vehicle used to transport a child in care shall comply with all applicable State and federal safety requirements.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: The Basic Health and Safety training module regarding transportation safety includes information including the state requirements for the appropriate height weight requirements for car seats and seat belt use and supervision while transporting children. In Family child care, when transporting child care children, the provider must follow Maryland law: Each child is separately secured in a car safety seat or belt and it is appropriate for their height and weight. In center care, unless being transported in a school bus or motor coach, children must be in a car seat or seat belt appropriate for their height and weight. Vehicles used to transport children must comply with applicable state and federal requirements.

Family Child Care 13A.15.03.04B(3) Child Records: B. Before the provider or substitute permits a child to: (3) Be transported in a vehicle by the provider or substitute, the provider shall obtain written permission from the child's parent to transport the child; 13A.15.10.05 Transportation Safety: If children are transported in a vehicle while in care, the provider or substitute shall ensure that, as specified by Maryland law: A. Each child in care is separately secured in a child car seat or seat belt; and B. Each child car seat or seat belt is appropriate for the age and weight of the child using it. 13A.15.08.02D Off-Site Supervision: A child in care may not travel to or from school or a school transportation site without adult

supervision unless the child is in the first or a higher grade.

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.08.01 E Individualized Attention and Care E. A child is allowed to travel to or from school or a school transportation site without adult supervision only if: (1) The child is in the first or a higher grade; and (2) The child's parent and the operator agree in writing that the child can travel safely without adult supervision.

Large Family Child Care 13A.18.08.06 Supervision During Transportation: When child transportation is conducted to or from: A. The center by the center operator, there shall be at least one adult, who has successfully passed federal and State criminal background checks and a review of child and adult abuse and neglect records pursuant to COMAR 13A.16.07.06D, other than the driver present in the vehicle if: (1) More than eight preschoolers are being transported as a group; or (2) At least one child is being transported and the driver of the vehicle is not: (a) A center employee; or (b) The parent of a child in care who is authorized by the operator to assist in transporting children in care; or B. An off-site activity by an independent contractor or a local school district and at least one child in care is being transported, the center operator shall ensure that there is at least one adult other than the driver present in the vehicle.

13A.18.10.06 Transportation: A. Unless being transported in a licensed school bus or contract motor coach, each child who is transported in a vehicle while in care shall be separately secured in a child car seat or seat belt which is appropriate for the child's age and weight, as specified by Maryland law. B. A vehicle used to transport a child in care shall comply with all applicable State and federal safety requirements.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License-exempt providers must follow Maryland law: Each child should be separately secured in a car safety seat or belt, and it is appropriate for their height and weight.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **The Basic Health and Safety training module regarding transportation safety includes information including the state requirements for the appropriate height weight requirements for car seats and seat belt use and supervision while transporting children. In Family child care, when transporting child care children, the provider must follow Maryland law: Each child is separately secured in a car safety seat or belt and it is appropriate for their height and weight. In center care, unless being transported in a school bus or motor coach, children must be in a car seat or seat belt appropriate for their height and weight. Vehicles used to transport children must comply with**

applicable state and federal requirements.

Child Care Center 13A.16.08.01 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.08.01 E Individualized Attention and Care: E. A child is allowed to travel to or from school or a school transportation site without adult supervision only if: (1) The child is in the first or a higher grade; and (2) The child's parent and the operator agree in writing that the child can travel safely without adult supervision.

Child Care Center 13A.16.08.06 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.08.06 Supervision During Transportation: When child transportation is conducted to or from: A. The center by the center operator, there shall be at least one adult, who has successfully passed federal and State criminal background checks and a review of child and adult abuse and neglect records pursuant to COMAR 13A.16.07.06D, other than the driver present in the vehicle if: (1) More than eight preschoolers are being transported as a group; or (2) At least one child is being transported and the driver of the vehicle is not: (a) A center employee; or (b) The parent of a child in care who is authorized by the operator to assist in transporting children in care; or B. An off-site activity by an independent contractor or a local school district and at least one child in care is being transported, the center operator shall ensure that there is at least one adult other than the driver present in the vehicle.

Child Care Center 13A.16.10.06 and Letter of Compliance 13A.17.10.05 Transportation: A. Unless being transported in a licensed school bus or contract motor coach, each child who is transported in a vehicle while in care shall be separately secured in a child car seat or seat belt which is appropriate for the child's age and weight, as specified by Maryland law. B. A vehicle used to transport a child in care shall comply with all applicable State and federal safety requirements.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.10 Pediatric first aid and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address pediatric first aid for all staff for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
 - i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center: 13A.16.10.02 A.** At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one child care teacher or the director shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved;. B. A center with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified at §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under center auspices to or from the center, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who

is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center. D. §C of this regulation does not apply if the driver of the vehicle is a parent of a child in care who is designated by the center operator to assist in transporting children in care.

Letter of Compliance:

13A.17.10.02 First Aid and CPR At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one individual who is responsible for supervision of children shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards; and B. A facility with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified in §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under child care facility auspices to or from the facility, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care:**

13A.15.06.02A & D Training Requirements A. Preservice Training. An individual who applies for an initial registration shall: (1) Hold a current certificate indicating successful completion of training in approved: (a) Basic first-aid through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards; D. Current certification in approved basic first aid and CPR training as specified in §A(1)(a) and (b) of this regulation shall be maintained at all times by: (1) The provider; and (2) If applicable, the additional adult.

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.10.02 First Aid and CPR A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one family child care teacher or the provider shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the child care home is approved.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

Not applicable.

- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**

- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **Licensed-Exempt Providers must provide proof of successfully completing requirements for Adult/Infant CPR/AED and First Aid. (a) Basic first-aid class which covers the required Health & Safety training through our approved the Maryland State**

department of Education local trainers' courses; and (b) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards.

- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center:**
13A.16.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one child care teacher or the director shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved;. B. A center with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified at §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under center auspices to or from the center, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center. D. §C of this regulation does not apply if the driver of the vehicle is a parent of a child in care who is designated by the center operator to assist in transporting children in care.

Letter of Compliance:

13A.17.10.02 First Aid and CPR At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one individual who is responsible for supervision of children shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards; and B. A facility with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified in §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under child care facility auspices to or from the facility, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation for all staff for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **Child Care Center:**
13A.16.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one child care teacher or the director shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved; and (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart

Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved. B. A center with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified at §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under center auspices to or from the center, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center. D. §C of this regulation does not apply if the driver of the vehicle is a parent of a child in care who is designated by the center operator to assist in transporting children in care.

Letter of Compliance:

13A.17.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one individual who is responsible for supervision of children shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the facility is approved. B. A facility with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified in §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under child care facility auspices to or from the facility, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center.

- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care:**

13A.15.06.02A & D Training Requirements A. Preservice Training. An individual who applies for an initial registration shall: (1) Hold a current certificate indicating successful completion of training in approved: (b) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, appropriate for each age group approved for care in the home; D. Current certification in approved basic first aid and CPR training as specified in §A(1)(a) and (b) of this regulation shall be maintained at all times by: (1) The provider; and (2) If applicable, the additional adult.

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one family child care teacher or the provider shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the child care home is approved; and (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the child care home is approved. B. Whenever a child in care is present, there shall be at least one staff member, or the provider, present

who is currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified at §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under child care home auspices to or from the child care home, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **The Basic Health & Safety Training addresses - Basic first aid. The American Heart Association and or programs with equivalent standards cover Cardiopulmonary resuscitation.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **Child Care Center: 13A.16.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one child care teacher or the director shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved; and (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved. B. A center with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified at §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under center auspices to or from the center, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center. D. §C of this regulation does not apply if the driver of the vehicle is a parent of a child in care who is designated by the center operator to assist in transporting children in care.**

Letter of Compliance:

13A.17.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one individual who is responsible for supervision of children shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the facility is approved. B. A facility with an approved capacity of more than 20 children shall have in attendance, in a ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 children present, staff members who are currently certified in approved first aid and CPR as specified in §A of this regulation. C. Whenever a child in care is being transported under child care facility auspices to

or from the facility, there shall be at least one adult present in the vehicle who is currently certified in approved CPR and first aid. This requirement may be met by the driver of the vehicle if the driver is an employee of the center.

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

5.3.11 Identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect health and safety standard

- a. Provide the standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that address the identification of child abuse and neglect for the following CCDF-eligible providers:
- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **13A.16.17.02 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.02 Letter of Compliance: Abuse/Neglect Reporting: C. An operator shall: (1) Instruct the staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.**
 - ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care 13A.15.07.02: Abuse/Neglect Reporting: An individual who is responsible for providing care to a child: A. Shall monitor the child for signs and symptoms of child abuse or neglect.**

Large Family Child Care 13A.18.07.02: Abuse/Neglect Reporting C. A provider shall: (1) Instruct the staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect
 - iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
[x] Not applicable.
 - iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 - v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
 - vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License-exempt providers sign an agreement annually stating they would report any case of abuse or neglect directly to the Child Protective Unit at the Local Department of Social Services or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; because children in care should not be subjected to abuse, neglect, mental injury, or injurious treatment.**
 - vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **13A.16.17.02 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.02 Letter of Compliance: Abuse/Neglect Reporting: C. An operator shall: (1) Instruct the staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.**

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- b. Provide your standards, appropriate to the provider setting and age of children, that

address the reporting of child abuse and neglect for the following CCDF-eligible providers:

- i. All CCDF-eligible licensed center care. Provide the standard: **13A.16.17.02 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.02: Letter of Compliance Abuse/Neglect Reporting:** A. An operator, staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been: (1) Abused, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; (2) Neglected, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department as required under Maryland law. B. When a child has been subjected to injurious treatment, it shall be reported to the office. C. An operator shall: (2) Instruct staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and (3) Post, near each telephone in the facility, the telephone numbers of the Child Protective Services unit of the local department and the appropriate law enforcement agency. D. An operator may not require a staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer to report through the operator or director, rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency, when the staff member has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.
- ii. All CCDF-eligible licensed family child care homes. Provide the standard: **Family Child Care:**
13A.15.07.02 Abuse/Neglect Reporting An individual who is responsible for providing care to a child: B. If the individual has reason to believe that a child in care has been: (1) Abused, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department of social services or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; or (2) Neglected, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department of social services as required under Maryland law.

Large Family Child Care:
13A.18.07.02 Abuse/Neglect Reporting A. A provider, employee, substitute, or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been: (1) Abused, inside or outside of the child care home, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; or (2) Neglected, inside or outside of the child care home, shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the local department as required under Maryland law. B. If a child has been subjected to injurious treatment, it shall be reported to the office. C (2) Instruct the staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and (3) Post, near each telephone in the child care home, the telephone numbers of the Child Protective Services unit of the local department and the appropriate law enforcement agency. D. A provider may not require an employee, substitute, or volunteer to report through the provider, rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency, when the employee, substitute, or volunteer has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.

- iii. All CCDF-eligible licensed in-home care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
[x] Not applicable.
- iv. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt center care. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- v. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt family child care homes. Provide the standard: **N/A**
- vi. All CCDF-eligible license-exempt in-home care. Provide the standard: **License-exempt providers must report suspected child abuse and neglect directly to child protective services and or law enforcement as required by Maryland Law.**
- vii. All CCDF-eligible out-of-school programs (afterschool programs, summer camps, day camps, etc.). Provide the standard: **13A.16.17.02 Child Care Center and 13A.18.07.02: Letter of Compliance Abuse/Neglect Reporting: A. An operator, staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been: (1) Abused, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department or to a law enforcement agency, as required under Maryland law; (2) Neglected, in a facility or outside of the facility, shall report that belief directly to the Child Protective Services unit of the local department as required under Maryland law. B. When a child has been subjected to injurious treatment, it shall be reported to the office. C. An operator shall: (2) Instruct staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and(3) Post, near each telephone in the facility, the telephone numbers of the Child Protective Services unit of the local department and the appropriate law enforcement agency. D. An operator may not require a staff member, employee, substitute, or volunteer to report through the operator or director, rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency, when the staff member has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.**

Summer Camps are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health and are not eligible for CCDF funds.

- c. Confirm if child care providers must comply with the **Lead Agency's** procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect as required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i):

[x] Yes, confirmed.

[] No. If no, describe:

5.3.12 Additional optional standards

In addition to the required health and safety standards, does the Lead Agency require providers to comply with the following optional standards?

[] Yes.

[x] No. If no, skip to Section 5.4

If yes, describe the standard(s).

- i. Nutrition. Describe:
- ii. Access to physical activity. Describe:
- iii. Caring for children with special needs. Describe:
- iv. Any other areas determined necessary to promote child development or to protect children’s health and safety. Describe:

5.4 Pre-Service or Orientation Training on Health and Safety Standards

Lead Agencies must have requirements for all caregivers, teachers, and directors at CCDF providers to complete pre-service or orientation training (within 3 months of starting) on all CCDF health and safety standards and child development. The training must be appropriate to the setting and the age of children served. This training must address the required health and safety standards and the content area of child development. Lead Agencies have flexibility in determining the minimum number of training hours to require, and are encouraged to consult with Caring for our Children Basics for best practices.

Exemptions for relative providers’ training requirements are addressed in question 5.8.1.

5.4.1 Health and safety pre-service/orientation training requirements

Lead Agencies must certify staff have pre-service or orientation training on each standard that is appropriate to different settings and age groups. Lead Agencies may require pre-service or orientation to be completed before staff can care for children unsupervised. In the table below, check the boxes for which you have training requirements.

	Is this standard addressed in the pre-service or orientation training?	Is the pre-service or orientation training on this standard appropriate to different settings and age groups?	Does the Lead Agency require staff to complete the training before caring for children unsupervised?
a. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations)	[x]	[x]	[x]
b. SIDS prevention and use of safe sleep practices	[x]	[x]	[x]
c. Administration of medication	[x]	[x]	[x]
d. Prevention and response to food and allergic reactions	[x]	[x]	[x]

e. Building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic	[x]	[x]	[x]
f. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma and child maltreatment	[x]	[x]	[x]
g. Emergency preparedness and response planning and procedures	[x]	[x]	[x]
h. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and disposal of biocontaminants	[x]	[x]	[x]
i. Appropriate Precautions in transporting children, if applicable	[x]	[x]	[x]
j. Pediatric first aid and pediatric CPR (age-appropriate)	[x]	[x]	[x]
k. Child abuse and neglect recognition and reporting	[x]	[x]	[x]
l. Child development including major domains of cognitive, social, emotional, physical development and approaches to learning.	[x]	[x]	[x]

m. If the Lead Agency does not certify implementation of all the health and safety pre-service/orientation training requirements for staff in programs serving children receiving CCDF assistance, please describe: **N/A**

n. Are there any provider categories to whom the above pre-service or orientation training requirements do not apply?

[] No

Yes. If yes, describe: **Certificate of Approval (COAs) programs are not required to meet pre-service or orientation trainings; however, COA programs do not serve children receiving CCDF assistance.**

5.5 Monitoring and Enforcement of Licensing and Health and Safety Requirements

5.5.1 Inspections for licensed CCDF providers

Licensing inspectors must perform at least one annual, unannounced inspection of each licensed CCDF provider for compliance with all child care licensing standards, including an inspection for compliance with health and safety and fire standards. Lead Agencies must conduct at least one pre-licensure inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards of each child care provider and facility in the State/Territory.

a. Licensed CCDF center-based providers

- i. Does your pre-licensure inspection for licensed center-based providers assess compliance with health standards, safety standards, and fire standards?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

- ii. Identify the frequency of annual unannounced inspections for licensed center-based providers addressing compliance with health, safety, and fire standards:

Annually.

More than once a year. If more than once a year, describe:

Other. If other, describe:

- iii. Does the Lead Agency implement a differential monitoring approach when monitoring licensed center-based providers?

Yes. If yes, describe how the differential monitoring approach is representative of the full complement of health and safety requirements. **Currently, Maryland issues a license/registration for a two-year period and requires an annual unannounced inspection every 12 months. A mandatory review can be conducted during the first 12 months and the full review during the second 12 months of the two-year licensing cycle. A mandatory inspection includes the monitoring and review of selected regulations that have an immediate impact on the health and safety of children. Maryland is in the process of revising the inspection reports to ensure compliance with the ACF standards that are required to be monitored annually.**

No. If no, describe:

- iv. Identify which department or agency is responsible for completing the inspections for licensed center-based providers. **The Licensing Branch is responsible for inspecting the Family Child Care, Large Family Child Care, Child Care Centers and Letter of Compliance facilities.**

b. Licensed CCDF family child care providers

- i. Does your pre-licensure inspection for licensed family child care homes assess

compliance with health standards, safety standards, and fire standards?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

- ii. Identify the frequency of annual unannounced inspections for licensed family child care homes addressing compliance with health, safety, and fire standards:

Annually.

More than once a year. If more than once a year, describe:

Other. If other, describe:

- iii. Does the Lead Agency implement a differential monitoring approach when monitoring licensed family child care providers?

Yes. If yes, describe how the differential monitoring approach is representative of the full complement of health and safety requirements. **Currently, Maryland issues a license/registration for a two-year period and requires an annual unannounced inspection every 12 months. A mandatory review can be conducted during the first 12 months and the full review during the second 12 months of the two-year licensing cycle. A mandatory inspection includes the monitoring and review of selected regulations that have an immediate impact on the health and safety of children. Maryland is in the process of revising the inspection reports to ensure compliance with the ACF standards that are required to be monitored annually.**

No. If no, describe:

- iv. Identify which department or agency is responsible for completing the inspections for licensed family child care providers. **The Licensing Branch is responsible for inspecting the Family Child Care, Large Family Child Care, Child Care Centers and Letter of Compliance facilities.**

c. Licensed in-home CCDF child care providers

- i. Does your Lead Agency license CCDF in-home child care (care in the child's own home) providers?

No.

Yes. If yes, does your pre-licensure inspection for licensed in-home providers assess compliance with health, safety, and fire standards?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

- ii. Identify the frequency of annual unannounced inspections for licensed in-home child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards completed:

Annually.

More than once a year. If more than once a year, describe:

Other. If other, describe: **N/A**

- iii. Does the Lead Agency implement a differential monitoring approach when monitoring licensed in-home child care providers?
 - Yes. If yes, describe how the differential monitoring approach is representative of the full complement of health and safety requirements.
 - No.
- iv. Identify which department or agency is responsible for completing the inspections for licensed in-home providers. **N/A**

5.5.2 Inspections for license-exempt providers

Licensing inspectors must perform at least one annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards. Inspections for relative providers will be addressed in subsection 5.8.

Describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

- a. License-exempt CCDF center-based child care providers
 - i. Identify the frequency of inspections for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards for license-exempt center-based providers:
 - Annually.
 - More than once a year. If more than once a year, describe:
 - Other. If other, describe: **N/A**
 - ii. Does the Lead Agency implement a differential monitoring approach when monitoring license-exempt center-based providers?
 - Yes. If yes, describe how the differential monitoring approach is representative of the full complement of health and safety requirements.
 - No.
 - iii. Identify which department or agency is responsible for completing the inspections for license-exempt center-based CCDF providers. **N/A**
- b. License-exempt CCDF family child care providers
 - i. Identify the frequency of the inspections of license-exempt family child care providers to determine compliance with health, safety, and fire standards:
 - Annually.
 - More than once a year. If more than once a year, describe:
 - Other. If other, describe: **N/A**
 - ii. Does the Lead Agency implement a differential monitoring approach when monitoring license-exempt family child care providers?
 - Yes. If yes, describe how the differential monitoring approach is representative of the full complement of health and safety requirements.
 - No.

- iii. Identify which department or agency is responsible for completing the inspections for license-exempt family child care providers. **N/A**

5.5.3 Inspections for CCDF license-exempt in-home child care providers

Lead Agencies may develop alternate monitoring requirements for care provided in the child’s home that are appropriate to the setting. This flexibility cannot be used to bypass the monitoring requirement altogether.

- a. Describe the requirements for the annual monitoring of CCDF license-exempt in-home child care (care in the child’s own home) providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring procedures are used. **Licensed-exempt/informal providers (both relative and non-relative adhere to the same requirements in Maryland). The care location must pass an annual Health and Safety Inspection. We conduct initial and unannounced inspections annually; differential Monitoring is not conducted.**
- b. List the entity(ies) in your State/Territory responsible for conducting inspections of license-exempt CCDF in-home child care (care in the child’s own home) providers: **MSDE’s Division of Early Childhood, Office of Child Care Scholarship TO Contractor inspects care locations of all licensed- Exempt providers (Relative and Non-Relative).**

5.5.4 Posting monitoring and inspection reports

Lead Agencies must post monitoring and inspection reports on their consumer education website for each licensed and CCDF child care provider, except in cases where the provider is related to all the children in their care. These reports must include the results of required annual monitoring visits and visits due to major substantiated complaints about a provider’s failure to comply with health and safety requirements and child care policies. A full report covers everything in the monitoring visit, including areas of compliance and non-compliance. If the Lead Agency does not produce any reports that include areas of compliance, the website must include information about all areas covered by a monitoring visit.

The reports must be in plain language or provide a plain language summary Lead Agency and be timely to ensure that the results of the reports are available and easily understood by parents when they are deciding on a child care provider. Lead Agencies must post at least 3 years of monitoring and inspection reports.

- a. Does the Lead Agency post:
 - i. Pre-licensing inspection reports for licensed programs.
 - ii. Full monitoring and inspection reports that include areas of compliance and non-compliance for all non-relative providers eligible to provide CCDF services.
 - iii. Monitoring and inspection reports that include areas of non-compliance only, with information about all areas covered by a monitoring visit posted separately on the website (e.g., a blank checklist used by monitors) for all non-relative providers eligible to provide CCDF services. If checked, provide a direct URL/website link to the website where a blank checklist is posted:
 - iv. Other. Describe:
- b. Check if the monitoring and inspection reports and any related plain language summaries

include:

- i. Date of inspection.
 - ii. Health and safety violations, including those violations that resulted in fatalities or serious injuries occurring at the provider. Describe how these health and safety violations are prominently displayed: **All health and safety violations, including those violations that resulted in fatalities or serious injuries occurring at the provider are prominently displayed on checkccmd.org. Inspection reports also have a mandatory fillable field located at the top of the first page, specifically for fatalities and serious injuries, so that it stands out and is easily seen upon review.**
 - iii. Corrective action plans taken by the Lead Agency and/or child care provider. Describe: **The Summary of Corrections (SOC) form was released as a new form, to be completed as part of the electronic inspection process for the Licensing Branch. The form reflects all corrections made on site/at the time of inspection or the plan of correction discussed at the time of the inspection, by both parties (Licensing specialist and child care provider), for further implementation at a required future date. The form is then displayed on the consumer education website: checkccmd.org.**
 - iv. A minimum of 3 years of results, where available.
 - v. If any of the components above are not selected, please explain:
- c. Lead Agencies must post monitoring and inspection reports and/or any related summaries in a timely manner.
- i. Provide the direct URL/website link to where the reports are posted:
<https://www.checkccmd.org/>
 - ii. Identify the Lead Agency's established timeline for posting monitoring reports and describe how it is timely: **Inspection reports are posted within 30 days of the inspection date. Supervisors monitor reports using the Summary of Findings Not Reviewed report and ensure they are reviewed and posted in accordance within the 30 day time frame unless there is an extenuating circumstance in which the supervisor is working with the provider to assess compliance with the violation, or to make a determination as to whether the violation should be overturned.**
- d. Does the Lead Agency certify that the monitoring and inspection reports or the summaries are in plain language that is understandable to parents and other consumers?
- Yes.
- No. If no, describe:
- e. Does the Lead Agency certify that there is a process for correcting inaccuracies in the monitoring and inspection reports?
- Yes.
- No. If no, describe:
- f. Does the Lead Agency maintain monitoring and inspection reports on the consumer education website?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

5.5.5 Qualifications and training of licensing inspectors

Lead Agencies must ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) are qualified to inspect child care providers and facilities and have received health and safety training appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served.

Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) are qualified and have received training on health and safety requirements that are appropriate to the age of the children in care and the type of provider setting. **Job qualifications are established by the Maryland Department of Budget and Management and require applicants to meet standards for education and experience. Maryland has three levels for licensing inspectors - Licensing Specialist Trainee, Licensing Specialist and Licensing Specialist Lead. The trainee position is the entry level position requiring no previous experience. A trainee must complete initial, on-going training, and a full year under supervision in conducting inspections before becoming a Licensing Specialist. Requirements for the position include: Education: Possession of a bachelor's degree in child development, education, social work or psychology from an accredited college or university. Experience: Trainee - None Licensing Specialist and Licensing Specialist Lead - One year of experience inspecting, licensing and monitoring child care centers, family child care homes and non-public nursery schools. Notes: 1. Possession of an associate's degree in early childhood development, teacher education, sociology or psychology and two years' work experience inspecting, licensing and monitoring child care centers, family (day) child care homes and non-public nursery schools may be substituted for the bachelor's degree. 2. The above requirements are set by the MSDE in accordance with Education Article, Section 2-104. All licensing staff receive initial and on-going training on all aspects of the job, including comprehensive customer service training, working with diverse populations and licensing procedures and protocols. All licensing staff are required to complete the Basic Health and Safety training and the annual updates; staff are required to print the certificate of completion as part of their personnel file. Initial training includes 10-14 days of new hire training and ongoing training includes 2 full days a year, weekly and monthly regional office training sessions, state wide licensing branch training sessions and division wide training sessions. Additionally, licensing specialists both trainee and non-trainee positions are constantly learning as they perform the duties of the job and encounter new or atypical situations and incidents that occur. The initial and ongoing training includes training of policies, procedures and guidance for all types of child care and for children ages birth through 12. Licensing Specialists are hired as trainees for a one year period. OCC requires all trainees to complete new hire training as well as on-site training in the regional offices. OCC provides ongoing training through monthly staff meetings, all staff meetings and yearly professional development days. OCC is in the process of hiring a Licensing Training Coordinator who will be responsible for creating a uniform new hire training program.**

5.5.6 Ratio of licensing inspectors

Lead Agencies must ensure the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers and facilities in the State/Territory are maintained at a level sufficient to enable the Lead Agency to conduct effective inspections of child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with federal, State, and local laws.

Provide the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers (i.e., number of inspectors per number of child care providers) and facilities in the State/Territory and include how the ratio is sufficient to conduct effective inspections on a timely basis. **MSDE monitors the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers to ensure a sufficient number of inspectors are available to conduct inspections in a timely manner. Ratios vary across Maryland based on population density and travel time considerations. The ratios of licensing specialists to child care facilities (centers and family child care homes) range from 1:62 to 1:101. The current ratio of inspectors to child care providers has been sufficient for inspectors to conduct effective inspections on a timely basis. However, the agency continues to evaluate the need to increase the number of inspectors based on fluctuations in the provider and facility populations and increased needs in other areas of licensing. Currently, OCC has 102.5 Licensing Specialists for 6,788 providers. The caseload reports in CCATS provides the breakdown of cases assigned to each Licensing Specialist. This report is reviewed on a monthly basis.**

5.6 Ongoing Health and Safety Training

Lead Agencies must have ongoing training requirements for all caregivers, teachers, and directors of eligible CCDF providers for health and safety standards but have discretion on frequency and training content (e.g., pediatric CPR refresher every year and recertification every 2 years). Lead Agencies have discretion on which health and safety standards are subject to ongoing training. Lead Agencies may exempt relative providers from these requirements.

5.6.1 Required ongoing training of health and safety standards

Describe any required ongoing training of health and safety standards for caregivers, teachers, and directors of the following CCDF eligible provider types.

- a. Licensed child care centers: **Maryland requires all licensed and registered child care providers to complete an annual Basic Health and Safety training update. Licensing specialists evaluate these areas through review of records and observation to ensure the provider and/or operator maintains compliance. In addition, updates are communicated to providers through newsletters, email blasts and virtual information sessions.**

Child Care Centers 13A.16.03.05C(1)(a) During an individual's employment at the center and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain a record for each individual that includes: The individual's: Training, including initial and yearly basic health and safety training, if required under this subtitle.

Child Care Center: 13A.16.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one child care teacher or the director shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the center is approved.

Letter of Compliance: 13A.17.03.05 B Staff Records During an individual's employment at the facility and for 2 years after the date of the individual's last employment there, maintain a record for each individual that includes: Training, including basic health and safety training and yearly updates, if required under this subtitle;

- b. License-exempt child care centers: **N/A**

- c. Licensed family child care homes: **Maryland requires all licensed and registered child care providers to complete an annual Basic Health and Safety training update. Licensing specialists evaluate these areas through review of records and observation to ensure the provider and/or operator maintains compliance. In addition, updates are communicated to providers through newsletters, email blasts and virtual information sessions.**

Family Child Care: 13A.15.06.02B and D Training Requirements Continued Training. A provider shall successfully complete: The health and safety training, as required by the office, by the end of each 12-month period measured each calendar year; D. Current certification in approved basic first aid and CPR training as specified in §A(1)(a) and (b) of this regulation shall be maintained at all times by: (1) The provider; and (2) If applicable, the additional adult.

Large Family Child Care:

13A.18.03.03E Program Records Document that the health and safety training, as required by the office, was updated by the end of each 12-month period, measured from the date of initial registration. Large Family Child Care 13A.18.10.02 A. At all times, including during an off-site activity, at least one family child care teacher or the provider shall be present who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved: (1) Basic first aid training through the American Red Cross, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the child care home is approved; and (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training through the American Heart Association, or a program with equivalent standards, which is appropriate to all child age groups for which the child care home is approved.

- d. License-exempt family child care homes: **N/A**
- e. Regulated or registered in-home child care: **Complete the Basic Health and Safety Annual Update for the calendar year and attend Basic Health and Safety training each year.**
- f. Non-regulated or registered in-home child care: **N/A**

5.7 Comprehensive Background Checks

Lead Agencies must conduct comprehensive background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all child care providers that are (1) licensed, regulated, or registered under State/Territory law, regardless of whether they receive CCDF funds; or (2) all other child care providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible child care providers). Family child care home providers must also submit background check requests for all household members age 18 or older.

A comprehensive background check must include: three in-state checks, two national checks, and three interstate checks if the individual resided in another State or Territory in the preceding 5 years. The background check components must be completed at least once every five years.

All child care staff members must receive a qualifying result from either the FBI criminal background check or an in-state fingerprint criminal history check before working (under supervision) with or near children. Lead Agencies must apply a CCDF-specific list of disqualifying crimes for child care providers serving families participating in CCDF.

These background check requirements do not apply to individuals who are related to all children for whom child care services are provided. Exemptions for relative providers will be addressed in subsection 5.8.

5.7.1 In-state criminal history check with fingerprints

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct in-state criminal history background checks with fingerprints for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct in-state criminal background checks with fingerprints.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct in-state criminal history background checks with fingerprints for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all other child care providers eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers) other than relative providers?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct in-state criminal background checks with fingerprints.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the in-state criminal background check with fingerprints for all individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home who do not receive an in-state criminal background check with fingerprints.

5.7.2 National Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal history check with fingerprints

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct FBI criminal history background checks with fingerprints for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct FBI criminal background checks with fingerprints.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct FBI criminal history background checks with fingerprints for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all other child care providers eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct FBI criminal background checks.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the FBI criminal background check with fingerprints for all individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home who do not receive an FBI criminal background check with fingerprints.

5.7.3 National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) name-based check

The majority of NCIC NSOR records are fingerprint records and are automatically included in the FBI fingerprint criminal background check. But a small percentage of NCIC NSOR records are only name-based records and must be accessed through the required name-based search of the NCIC NSOR.

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct NCIC NSOR name-based background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct NCIC NSOR name-based background checks.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct NCIC NSOR name-based background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all other child care providers eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct NCIC NSOR name-based background checks.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the NCIC NSOR name-based background check for all individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home who do not receive a NCIC NSOR name-based background check.

5.7.4 In-state sex offender registry (SOR) check

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct in-state SOR checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct in-state SOR background checks.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct in-state SOR background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all other child care providers eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct in-state SOR background checks.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the in-state SOR background check for all individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home who do not receive an in-state SOR background check.

5.7.5 In-state child abuse and neglect (CAN) registry check

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct CAN registry checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct CAN registry checks.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct CAN registry checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all other child care providers eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct CAN registry checks.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the CAN registry check for all individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home who do not receive a CAN registry check.

5.7.6 Interstate criminal history check

These questions refer to requirements for a Lead Agency to conduct an interstate check for a child care staff member (including prospective child care staff members) who currently lives in their State or Territory but has lived in another State, Territory, or Tribal land within the previous 5 years.

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate criminal history background checks for any staff member (or prospective staff member) who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct interstate criminal history background checks.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate criminal history background checks for any staff

member (or prospective staff member) who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct interstate criminal history background checks. **License-Exempt/In-home Providers**

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate criminal history background checks for all individuals age 18 or older who reside in a family child care home and resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years.

Yes.

No. If no, describe why individuals age 18 or older that resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years who reside in a family child care home that do not receive an interstate criminal history background check.

5.7.7 Interstate Sex Offender Registry (SOR) check

These questions refer to requirements for a Lead Agency to conduct an interstate check for a child care staff member (including prospective child care staff members) who currently lives in their State or Territory but has lived in another State, Territory, or Tribal land within the previous 5 years.

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate SOR checks for any staff member (or prospective staff member) who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct interstate SOR checks.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate SOR checks for any staff member (or prospective staff member) who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct interstate SOR checks.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the interstate SOR checks for all individuals age 18 or older who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older that resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years who reside in a family child care home that do not receive an interstate SOR check.

5.7.8 Interstate child abuse and neglect (CAN) registry check

These questions refer to requirements for a Lead Agency to conduct an interstate check for a child care staff member (including prospective child care staff members) who currently lives in their

State or Territory but has lived in another State, Territory, or Tribal land within the previous 5 years.

- a. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate CAN registry checks for any staff member (or prospective staff member) that resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers for whom you do not conduct interstate CAN registry checks.

- b. Does the Lead Agency conduct interstate CAN registry checks for any staff member (or prospective staff member) who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years eligible for CCDF participation (i.e., license-exempt providers)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any categories of child care providers eligible for CCDF participation for whom you do not conduct interstate CAN registry checks.

- c. Does the Lead Agency conduct the interstate CAN registry checks for all individuals age 18 or older who resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years who reside in a family child care home?

Yes.

No. If no, describe individuals age 18 or older that resided in other state(s) in the past 5 years who reside in a family child care home that do not receive interstate CAN registry checks.

5.7.9 Disqualifications for child care employment

The Lead Agency must prohibit employment of individuals with child care providers receiving CCDF subsidy payment if they meet any of the following disqualifying criteria:

- Refused to consent to a background check.
- Knowingly made materially false statements in connection with the background check.
- Are registered, or are required to be registered, on the State/Territory sex offender registry or repository or the National Sex Offender Registry.
- Have been convicted of a felony consisting of murder, child abuse or neglect, crimes against children (including child pornography), spousal abuse, crimes involving rape or sexual assault, kidnapping, arson, physical assault, or battery.
- Have a violent misdemeanor committed as an adult against a child, including the following crimes: child abuse, child endangerment, sexual assault, or any misdemeanor involving child pornography.
- Convicted of a felony consisting of a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years.

- a. Does the Lead Agency disqualify the employment of child care staff members (including prospective staff members) by child care providers receiving CCDF subsidy payment for CCDF-identified disqualifying criteria?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the disqualifying criteria:

- b. Does the Lead Agency use the same criteria for licensed, regulated, and registered child care providers regardless of CCDF participation?

Yes.

No. If no, describe any disqualifying criteria used for licensed, regulated, and registered child care providers:

- c. How does the Lead Agency use results from the in-state child abuse and neglect registry check?

Does not use them to disqualify employment.

Uses them to disqualify employment. If checked, describe: Each adult associated with a child care program is required to submit a notarized Release of Information form to the OCC to allow for the child abuse and neglect clearance to be completed through the Department of Human Services data system. This information is then used to determine if the associated party is a risk to the health and safety of the children in care. The determination can result in the approval of a registration or an enforcement action including denial, suspension and/or revocation.

Family Child Care:

13A.15.02.02 B(7) Initial registration B. Except as set forth at §C of this regulation, an applicant for an initial registration shall: (7) Submit a signed and notarized release form giving the office permission to examine records of abuse and neglect of children and adults for information about: (a) The applicant; (b) Each resident in the home who is 18 years old or older; (c) Each individual designated as a substitute; (d) If applicable, an additional adult; and (e) If required by the office, any other individual with regular access to the child care area during the approved hours of operation;

13A.15.02.03A(4) Continuing Registration A. Application for Continuing Registration. To obtain a continuing registration, a provider shall submit to the office before expiration of the initial registration: (2) A completed and notarized release of information form that permits the office to examine records of abuse and neglect of children and adults for: (a) The provider; (b) Each provider substitute; (c) Each resident in the home who is 18 years old or older; (d) If applicable, the: (i) Additional adult; and (ii) Additional adult's substitute; and (e) If required by the office, any other individual with regular access to the child care area during the approved hours of operation, including volunteers.

13A.15.02.04A(2) Provisional and Conditional Status A. Provisional Status. (2) An initial registration may not be approved if the office has not yet received evidence that the applicant and, as applicable, each individual specified in Regulation .02B(5) and (6) of this chapter has successfully passed a federal and State criminal background check and a review of child and adult abuse and neglect records. 13A.15.02.06 A(5) B. Upon receiving the completed application and all required documentation, whether for an initial registration or a continuing registration, the office shall determine compliance with the requirements of this subtitle by: (3) Evaluating the information provided from records of child and adult abuse and neglect. 13A.15.02.07A(9) Denial of a Registration Application (9) An evaluation of the information provided in records of abuse and neglect of children

and adults reveals that the applicant, a coprovider, an additional adult, a substitute, a volunteer, or a resident is identified as responsible for abuse or neglect of children or adults, or is currently under investigation for alleged acts of abuse or neglect of children or adults.

Child Care Center 13A.16.06.03B, Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.03B and Large Family Child Care 13A.18.06.03B: Suitability for Employment: B. If an individual has been identified at any time as responsible for child abuse or neglect or received at any time a conviction, a probation before judgment disposition, a not criminally responsible disposition, or a pending charge for the commission or attempted commission of a crime or offense that is not included in §A of this regulation, the office: (1) Shall assess, on the basis of the following factors, the individual's suitability for employment: (a) The job position at the center for which the individual is applying or in which the individual is currently employed; (b) The nature and seriousness of the incident, crime, or offense; (c) How long ago the incident, crime, or offense occurred; (d) The age of the individual at the time the incident, crime, or offense occurred; (e) The individual's probation or parole status, if applicable; and (f) Any other information the office considers pertinent; and (2) Depending on the results of the assessment, shall permit or prohibit employment of the individual.

d. How does the Lead Agency use results from the interstate child abuse and neglect registry check?

Does not use them to disqualify employment.

Uses them to disqualify employment. If checked, describe: Each adult associated with a child care program is required to submit a notarized Release of Information form to the OCC to allow for the child abuse and neglect clearance to be completed through the Department of Human Services data system. This information is then used to determine if the associated party is a risk to the health and safety of the children in care. The determination can result in the approval of a registration or an enforcement action including denial, suspension and/or revocation.

Family Child Care:

13A.15.02.02 B(7) Initial registration B. Except as set forth at §C of this regulation, an applicant for an initial registration shall: (7) Submit a signed and notarized release form giving the office permission to examine records of abuse and neglect of children and adults for information about: (a) The applicant; (b) Each resident in the home who is 18 years old or older; (c) Each individual designated as a substitute; (d) If applicable, an additional adult; and (e) If required by the office, any other individual with regular access to the child care area during the approved hours of operation;

13A.15.02.03A(4) Continuing Registration A. Application for Continuing Registration. To obtain a continuing registration, a provider shall submit to the office before expiration of the initial registration: (4) A completed and notarized release of information form that permits the office to examine records of abuse and neglect of children and adults for: (a) The provider; (b) Each provider substitute; (c) Each resident in the home who is 18 years old or older; (d) If applicable, the: (i) Additional adult; and (ii) Additional adult's substitute; and (e) If required by the office, any other individual with regular access to the child care area during the approved hours of operation, including volunteers.

13A.15.02.04A(2) Provisional and Conditional Status A. Provisional Status. (2) An initial registration may not be approved if the office has not yet received evidence that the applicant and, as applicable, each individual specified in Regulation .02B(5) and (6) of this chapter has successfully passed a federal and State criminal background check and a review of child and adult abuse and neglect records. 13A.15.02.06 A (5) C. Upon receiving the completed application and all required documentation, whether for an initial registration or a continuing registration, the office shall determine compliance with the requirements of this subtitle by: (5) Evaluating the information provided from records of child and adult abuse and neglect. 13A.15.02.07A(9)Denial of a Registration Application (9) An evaluation of the information provided in records of abuse and neglect of children and adults reveals that the applicant, a coprovider, an additional adult, a substitute, a volunteer, or a resident is identified as responsible for abuse or neglect of children or adults, or is currently under investigation for alleged acts of abuse or neglect of children or adults.

Child Care Center:

13A.16.06.03B, Letter of Compliance 13A.17.06.03B and Large Family Child Care 13A.18.06.03B Suitability for Employment B. If an individual has been identified at any time as responsible for child abuse or neglect or received at any time a conviction, a probation before judgment disposition, a not criminally responsible disposition, or a pending charge for the commission or attempted commission of a crime or offense that is not included in §A of this regulation, the office: (1) Shall assess, on the basis of the following factors, the individual's suitability for employment: (a) The job position at the center for which the individual is applying or in which the individual is currently employed; (b) The nature and seriousness of the incident, crime, or offense; (c) How long ago the incident, crime, or offense occurred; (d) The age of the individual at the time the incident, crime, or offense occurred; (e) The individual's probation or parole status, if applicable; and (f) Any other information the office considers pertinent; and (2) Depending on the results of the assessment, shall permit or prohibit employment of the individual.

5.7.10 Privacy

Lead Agencies must ensure the privacy of a prospective staff member by notifying child care providers of the individual's eligibility or ineligibility for child care employment based on the results of the comprehensive background check without revealing any documentation of criminal history or disqualifying crimes or other related information regarding the individual.

Does the Lead Agency certify they ensure the privacy of child care staff members (including prospective child care staff member) when providing the results of the comprehensive background check?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the current process of notification:

5.7.11 Appeals processes for background checks

Lead Agencies must provide for a process that allows child care provider staff members (and prospective staff members) to appeal the results of a background check to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the individual's background check report.

Does the appeals process:

- i. Provide the affected individual with information related to each disqualifying crime in a report, along with information/notice on the opportunity to appeal.
 Yes.
 No. Describe:
- ii. Provide the affected individual with clear instructions about how to complete the appeals process for each background check component if they wish to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in such individual's background report.
 Yes.
 No. Describe:
- iii. Ensure the Lead Agency attempts to verify the accuracy of the information challenged by the individual, including making an effort to locate any missing disposition information related to the disqualifying crime.
 Yes.
 No. Describe:
- iv. Get completed in a timely manner.
 Yes.
 No. Describe:
- v. Ensure the affected individual receives written notice of the decision. In the case of a negative determination, the decision must indicate (1) the Lead Agency's efforts to verify the accuracy of information challenged by the individual, (2) any additional appeals rights available to the individual, and (3) information on how the individual can correct the federal or State records at issue in the case.
 Yes.
 No. Describe:
- vi. Facilitate coordination between the Lead Agency and other agencies in charge of background check information and results (such as the Child Welfare office and the State Identification Bureau), to ensure the appeals process is conducted in accordance with the Act.
 Yes.
 No. Describe:

5.7.12 Provisional hiring of prospective staff members

Lead Agencies must at least complete and receive a qualifying result for either the FBI criminal background check or a fingerprint-based in-state criminal background check where the individual resides before prospective staff members may provide services or be in the vicinity of children.

Until all the background check components have been completed, the prospective staff member must be supervised at all times by someone who has already received a qualifying result on a background check within the past five years.

Check all background checks for which the Lead Agency requires a qualifying result before a prospective child care staff member begins work with children.

- a. FBI criminal background check.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- b. In-state criminal background check with fingerprints.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- c. In-state Sex Offender Registry.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- d. In-state child abuse and neglect registry.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- e. Name-based national Sex Offender Registry (NCIC NSOR).
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- f. Interstate criminal background check, as applicable.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- g. Interstate Sex Offender Registry check, as applicable.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- h. Interstate child abuse and neglect registry check, as applicable.
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- i. Does the Lead Agency require provisional hires to be supervised by a staff member who received a qualifying result on the comprehensive background check while awaiting results from the provisional hire's full comprehensive background check?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:

5.7.13 Completing the criminal background check within a 45-day timeframe

The Lead Agency must carry out a request from a child care provider for a criminal background check as expeditiously as possible, and no more than 45 days after the date on which the provider submitted the request

- a. Does the Lead Agency ensure background checks are completed within 45 days (after the date on which the provider submits the request)?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the timeline for completion for categories of providers, including which background check components take more than 45 days.

- b. Does the Lead Agency ensure child care staff receive a comprehensive background check when they work in your State but reside in a different State?

Yes.

No. If no, describe the current policy:

5.7.14 Responses to interstate background check requests

Lead Agencies must respond as expeditiously as possible to requests for interstate background checks from other States/Territories/Tribes in order to meet the 45-day timeframe.

- a. Does your State participate in the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact or National Fingerprint File programs?

Yes.

No.

- b. Describe how the State/Territory responds to interstate criminal history, Sex Offender Registry, and Child Abuse and Neglect Registry background check requests from another state. **The Criminal Justice Information System responds to requests for criminal history requests from other states. The Department of Human Services responds to requests for child abuse and neglect background check requests from other states.**

- c. Does your State/Territory have a law or policy that prevents a response to CCDF interstate background check requests from other States/Territories/Tribes?

Yes. If yes, describe the current policy.

No.

5.7.15 Consumer education website links to interstate background check processes

Lead Agencies must include on their consumer education website and the website of local Lead Agencies if the CCDF program is county-run, the policies and procedures related to comprehensive background checks. This includes the process by which a child care provider or other State or Territory may submit a background check request.

- a. Provide the direct URL/website link that contains instructions on how child care providers and other States and Territories should initiate background check requests for prospective and current child care staff members:

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/fingerprinting>

Check to certify that the required elements are included on the Lead Agency's consumer and provider education website for each interstate background check component.

- b. Interstate criminal background check:
- i. Agency name
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Phone number
 - iv. Email
 - v. Website
 - vi. Instructions
 - vii. Forms
 - viii. Fees
 - ix. Is the State a National Fingerprint File (NFF) State?
 - x. Is the State a National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact State?
 - xi. If not all boxes above are checked, describe: **N/A**
- c. Interstate sex offender registry (SOR) check:
- i. Agency name
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Phone number
 - iv. Email
 - v. Website
 - vi. Instructions
 - vii. Forms
 - viii. Fees
 - ix. If not all boxes above are checked, describe: **N/A**
- d. Interstate child abuse and neglect (CAN) registry check:
- i. Agency name
 - ii. Is the CAN check conducted through a county administered registry or centralized registry?
 - iii. Address
 - iv. Phone number
 - v. Email
 - vi. Website
 - vii. Instructions
 - viii. Forms

- ix. Fees
- x. If not all boxes above are checked, describe: **N/A**

5.7.16 Background check fees

The Lead Agency must ensure that fees charged for completing the background checks do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administration.

Does the Lead Agency certify that background check fees do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administering the background checks?

Yes.

No. If no, describe what is currently in place and what elements still need to be implemented: **The fees are determined by the Criminal Justice Information System agency, which is responsible for completing the background checks.**

5.7.17 Renewal of the comprehensive background check

Does the Lead Agency conduct the background check at least every 5 years for all components?

Yes.

No. If no, what is the frequency for renewing each component?

5.8 Exemptions for Relative Providers

Lead Agencies may exempt relatives (defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles) from certain health and safety requirements. This exception applies only if the individual cares only for relative children.

5.8.1 Exemptions for relative providers

Does the Lead Agency exempt any federally defined relative providers from licensing requirements, the CCDF health and safety standards, preservice/orientation training, ongoing training, inspections, or background checks?

No.

Yes. If yes, which type of relatives do you exempt, and from what requirements (licensing requirements, CCDF health and safety standards, preservice/orientation training, ongoing training, inspections, and/or background checks) do you exempt them?

6 Support for a Skilled, Qualified, and Compensated Child Care Workforce

A skilled child care workforce with adequate wages and benefits underpins a stable high-quality child care system that is accessible and reliable for working parents and that meets their needs and promotes equal access. Positive interactions between children and caregivers provide the cornerstone of quality child care experiences. Responsive caregiving and rich interactions support healthy socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development in children. Strategies that successfully support the child care workforce address key challenges, including low wages, poor benefits, and difficult job conditions. Lead Agencies can help mitigate some of these challenges through various CCDF policies, including through ongoing professional development and supports

for all provider types and embedded in the payment policies and practices covered in Section 4. Lead Agencies must have a framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education. They must also incorporate health and safety training into their professional development. Lead Agencies should also implement policies that focus on improving wages and access to benefits for the child care workforce. When implemented as a cohesive approach, the initiatives support the recruitment and retention of a qualified and effective child care workforce, and improve opportunities for caregivers, teachers, and directors to advance on their progression of training, professional development, and postsecondary education.

This section addresses Lead Agency efforts to support the child care workforce, the components and implementation of the professional development framework, and early learning and developmental guidelines.

6.1 Supporting the Child Care Workforce

Lead Agencies have broad flexibility to implement policies and practices to support the child care workforce.

6.1.1 Strategies to improve recruitment, retention, compensation, and well-being

- a. Identify any Lead Agency activities related to strengthening workforce recruitment and retention of child care providers. Check all that apply:
 - i. Providing program-level grants to support investments in staff compensation.
 - ii. Providing bonuses or stipends paid directly to staff, like sign-on or retention bonuses.
 - iii. Connecting family child care providers and center-based child care staff to health insurance or supporting premiums in the Marketplace.
 - iv. Subsidizing family child care provider and center-based child care staff retirement benefits.
 - v. Providing paid sick, personal, and parental leave for family child care providers and center-based child care staff.
 - vi. Providing student loan debt relief or loan repayment for family child care providers and center-based child care staff.
 - vii. Providing scholarships or tuition support for center-based child care staff and family child care providers.
 - viii. Other. Describe: **MSDE has funded the implementation of the following workforce advancement programs to recruit and retain qualified teachers:**
 - Registered Apprenticeship Program
 - No cost CDA training bundle
 - CDA Credential Teacher Alternative Certification
 - Child Care Providers Registered Apprenticeship Program
- b. Describe any Lead Agency ongoing efforts and future plans to assess and improve the compensation of the child care workforce in the State or Territory, including increasing wages, bonuses, and stipends. **MSDE provided a one-time bonus to the early childhood workforce that participates in the Maryland Child Care Credential program. The purpose**

of the Child Care Providers and Employees Bonus Program is to implement the provisions of House Bill 1100 and to provide bonuses to eligible providers who participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential program and worked in a child care program that participates in the scholarship program on a first come, first serve basis (as required in the law). Approximately \$13M in one-time State funding was allocated. The Enhanced Child Care Support and Teacher Retention Award (ECSTRA) Program is to help stabilize the early childhood educator workforce by directing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds directly to educators who remain in key child care roles, in the form of additional retention bonuses. Approximately \$12.5 million in one-time ARPA funding has been allocated but not yet distributed. First half of the award (for those selected) is to be disbursed in April 2024 for participants who remained employed in the same program for at least 5 months. The second half of the award is to be disbursed in June 2024 for those who stay at least 8 months. MSDE continues to provide achievement bonuses through the Maryland Child Care Credential Program. This program establishes a professional development framework that includes incentives for completing additional training, credit for early childhood experiences and participation in professional activities (such as membership in a professional association, contributing to a newsletter, advocating for children, community events, etc.). The Maryland Child Care Credential outlines six core of knowledge domains (child development; curriculum; special needs; professionalism; community; and health, safety, and nutrition) and addresses the promotion of social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children. Bonuses range from \$200 - \$1500. Future plan recommendations: increase credential bonus award amount, placing all child care providers at level 1 and award \$200 as a sign on bonus, and make levels 2 and up yearly awards.

- c. Describe any Lead Agency ongoing efforts and future plans to expand access to benefits, including health insurance, paid sick, personal, and parental leave, and retirement benefits. MSDE does not provide benefits, but we will explore the possibility of partnering with external stakeholders to support providers in finding the aforementioned resources within the State.
- d. Describe any Lead Agency ongoing efforts and future plans to support the mental health and well-being of the child care workforce. The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Support Services (IECMHSS) improves the ability of staff, programs, and families to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of social, emotional, and other mental health problems among children birth through 5 years old. The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Support Services program started as a project in 2002 as a three-year pilot program in Baltimore City and on the Eastern Shore. Based on the Project's success, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) funded the expansion of the pilot program in 2006 to include 12 statewide child care licensing regions. In Maryland, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Support Services Program is both child/family and classroom/program focused. This hybrid model allows consultants to focus on specific child behaviors while working with teachers to improve the overall quality of the classroom environment. IECMHSS programs also offer professional development opportunities to all child care programs that provide continued education units. The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Support Services Program's goals are to: Refer children and families in need of more intensive mental health services to appropriate support and/or clinical programs. Help children remain in stable, quality childcare arrangements that support their individual needs; Increase teacher confidence and competence in

dealing with challenging behaviors through training, coaching, and mentoring, and build close partnerships with local community resources including Judy Centers, Head Start Centers, health departments, Child Find, Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program, preschool special education, and private consultation providers. The IECMH consultants build strong relationships with families, programs, and teachers to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of mental health problems among children. As long as state funding is provided, MSDE will continue to support these programs.

In addition, MSDE approved trainers provide professional development for the child care providers in the areas of self-care and preventing burnout.

- e. Describe any other strategies the Lead Agency is developing and/or implementing to support providers' recruitment and retention of the child care workforce. MSDE has funded the implementation of the following workforce advancement programs to recruit and retain qualified teachers: Registered Apprenticeship Program No cost CDA training bundle and CDA Credential Teacher Alternative Certification program Revised the Competency Framework into the Maryland Competency Standards for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals to provide the necessary resources to succeed in the classroom Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund Zero to Three Critical Competencies for Infant Toddler Educators Specialized Training for Caregivers and Child Care Providers Registered Apprenticeship Program According to an MSDE report in July of 2022 (<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf>), teacher attrition in Maryland averaged 10% per Local Education Agency. In 2022 alone, Maryland lost 5,516 teachers to voluntary resignation, education related employment, retirement, termination, leaves of absence, other employment opportunities and death. Because the Child Care Apprenticeship program is a virtual coursework option, students from across Maryland have the opportunity to participate and enter the child education workforce. And they can transfer the skills they learn from the apprenticeship program into the CCCPDF program at many community colleges in Maryland, preparing them to work in teaching. Nationally, over a ten-year period between the 2008-2009 and 2018-2019 school year, the number of people completing a teacher-education program declined by roughly a third. Additionally, according to Data USA (<https://datausa.io/profile/soc/childcare-workers?employment-of-filter=genderEOT>), the child care workforce had an average annual decrease of almost 5% between 2014 and 2020, but demand for child care has risen since 2014. Now is the time to rebuild the workforce to get students certified in child education programs. The Child Care Apprenticeship program at HCC offers gateways to higher education paths in teaching and child care should a student choose to extend their time in college. But this apprenticeship also provides enough training and certification for apprentices to branch out on their own to higher paying jobs or running their own centers, contributing to the needs of a much in demand workforce. The Council for Professional Recognition, Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Family Network have partnered to offer funding to help Maryland's early childhood professionals earn or renew their CDA®. This investment will increase the quality of Maryland's early childhood education sector and make a lasting impact on the lives of children, families, and the communities they serve. Currently 14 of the community colleges in Maryland grant at least 6 college credits after completion of the CDA credential if the student is enrolled in the early

childhood program. There are 740 participants. Since 2023, there have been 1179 CDA credentials awarded and renewed. As of February 20, 2024, there is a total of 2869 active CDA credentials. Teacher Alternative Certification program The Montgomery College Early Childhood Education Alternative Certification Program (MCECEACP) is an intensive, rigorous program leading to resident teacher status and state of Maryland certification in PreK – 3rd grade. The MC ECE Alternative Certification Program provides students with the required classes for certification, 8-to 10-week internship, and required residency at their worksite with ongoing solid support from Montgomery College faculty as teacher mentors. Assessment of teacher knowledge and skills during the internship and course work is performance-based. Evidence of critical thinking skills, notably in problem solving and self-reflection as teachers, will undergird all candidate assessments. The target audience for the MC ECE Alternative Certification Program is teachers with bachelor's degrees in approved nonpublic nursery schools or selected candidates that meet qualifications from the local school system. The goal is to expand the mixed delivery system Pre-K Expansion in Maryland in partnership and collaborative manner with local school systems. The Pre-K Expansion program supports a mixed delivery system, "meaning that private child care and preschool programs, as well as public schools, would provide publicly funded pre-K" (Schaefer, 2019). Cohort 1: On track to begin internship Three students started internships Nov. 28, 2023 Nine students will start Feb. 1-April 12, 2024 Resident Teacher Certification by May 1, 2024 Cohort 2: On track to begin internship March 1, 2024 Resident Teacher Certification by June. There are 12 students in cohort 1 and 11 students in cohort 2. Both cohorts are on track with coursework and internship. Revised the Competency Framework into the Maryland Competency Standards for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals to Provide the Necessary Resources to Succeed in the Classroom The National Association for the Education of Young Children's Workforce Designs (2008) recommends educator competencies for all early childhood professionals regardless of role or work setting and that the policies regarding standards include language that ensures alignment integrated with licensing and certification requirements across state agencies. The Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals serves several interrelated purposes. The framework: Provides coherent structure and content for the professional development of Maryland's child and youth care workforce Informs the course of study that child and youth care professionals follow as they pursue courses of study in higher education institutions Gives guidance in the definition of child care credentials and certifications, helping to enhance and stabilize the workforce Presents comprehensive descriptions of the skills, knowledge, and competencies that child and youth care professionals need to support learning and professional development across program types, ensuring that children and youth (prenatally through adolescence) and their families receive services targeted to their unique developmental needs Reflects the broad differences in racial and cultural heritage, language, health, and family situations that constitute the diversity of the State of Maryland Recognizes that all children and youth, including those with special needs, special health care needs, and/or developmental delays or disabilities, possess potential for learning Builds on developmentally appropriate teaching and assessment practices Bolsters efforts to improve family engagement Strengthens professional development and post-secondary education programs. Supports the work of community agencies and organizations to provide appropriate and effective services to children, youth, and families. The revision of the Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals was assigned to WestEd in June 2022 under an existing

grant. Between October 2018 and April 2020, a newly formed workgroup, with support from federal partners, was created and met once a month to discuss the 2015 framework and the revisions and updates needed. The workgroup discontinued meetings once all recommendations had been made and a vendor was needed to begin the recommended revisions and updates. Based on responses from trainers, child care professionals, and the Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework workgroup, recommendations were made to: Make the document user friendly and easier to navigate by having it be electronically interactive. Provide a cohesive sense of expectations. Provide accessible language. Provide objectives, goals, and examples of progression. Provide real-life examples of the competencies for each level. Decrease the skill levels from 5 to 3 that clearly provide a definition for each level. Clearly indicate how various stakeholders could benefit from using this document such as child care professionals, child care trainers, higher education professionals and policy makers. Update the resources to ensure they are current and based on best practices Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) is a tuition assistance program for child care providers to earn a college degree from a college or university serving child care providers who work in Maryland. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Early Childhood Education has been administering the program since 2008. Currently, 25 Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) participate in the program, supporting 381 child care providers pursuing a college degree. There were 317 students enrolled in FY 23 and 381 students in FY24, which shows an increase in the enrollment for the fund. Quarterly meetings were held with coordinators to network and share accomplishments and ideas with other coordinators. All 24 college coordinators were in attendance. In addition, information sessions were held for students to discuss service commitment, withdrawal without good cause and student waivers. Students have submitted success stories of their experiences in participating in the CCCPDF program. A total of 56 students graduated under the fund with an associate or bachelor's degree in FY23. The CCCPDF program then awarded Potomac University, as a new institute of higher learning offering Early Childhood Studies online and in person for enrolled students in FY24. The program is forecasting approximately 60 graduates in FY 24. Zero to Three Critical Competencies for Infant Toddler Educators Infant-toddler educators have one of the most important jobs in the world, but they often lack the practical resources to support them. The ZERO TO THREE Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators helps infant toddler educators build the essential knowledge and skills they need. This competency model defines the specific knowledge and practices required for infant-toddler educators to be successful now, to support the future of our children. The Critical Competencies: Describe the recommended teaching methods and practices with easily understood guidance and examples Feature considerations for working with high-needs populations and multi-language learners Support educators who work in group settings (center-based and family child care homes) with infants, toddlers, or both Build on professional criteria for the early childhood field Address three essential learning and development areas: Social-emotional Development Cognitive Development Language and Literacy Development MSDE provided funding for approved trainers to become certified with Zero to Three to teach the 45 hour training. There are currently 19 certified trainers. In FY 2023, funding was provided to the trainers to conduct the training for no cost to infant toddler educators. Currently, 687 educators have completed the training. Specialized Training for Caregivers and Child Care Providers The purpose of the grant is to provide specialized training and technical assistance to Early Care and Early Childhood

(ECEC) providers and families. around supporting the inclusion of children age birth to three with special needs and to support emergency preparedness in community childcare programs. Training and technical assistance are provided by professionals with knowledge, experience, and education on best practices and interventions for children with a variety of physical, developmental, and behavioral needs. Comprehensive training, resources and technical assistance will be offered statewide to families and providers of children enrolled in regulated child care, registered family child care, licensed center-based staff, and appropriate facilities. To date, the following has been completed: Emergency Preparedness Training conducted - 36 Participants trained - 825 TA provided - 267 Special Needs Training conducted - 34 Participants trained - 642 TA provided 132. The Maryland Rebuilds Grant has played a crucial role in bolstering the early care and education workforce, fostering positive outcomes. With a total funding allocation of \$14,391,195, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has strategically distributed resources to sub-recipients dedicated to enhancing and expanding the early care and education workforce. These efforts primarily revolve around innovative strategies, including Early Childhood Apprenticeship and Grow Your Own (GYO) models, aligned with the Growing a Highly Effective Child Care Workforce Strategy of the Maryland Rebuilds Grant. Recognizing the pivotal role of a well-qualified and adequately compensated workforce in ensuring positive outcomes for children in child care and early education settings, MSDE has entrusted various entities with the implementation of workforce-focused initiatives. These entities encompass non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, and private childcare providers. Their mandate is to spearhead innovative approaches aimed at nurturing the pipeline of child care providers and auxiliary support staff. As the recipients proceed through the project implementation phase, noteworthy progress has already been observed. For instance, one recipient has achieved a significant milestone by securing Maryland Department of Labor registration for the first-ever Family Child Care Apprenticeship Program in the state, launched in January 2024. Additionally, another recipient is making strides toward establishing an early childhood registered apprenticeship program, with a scheduled meeting with the Maryland Department of Labor slated for March 2024. These accomplishments hold considerable significance as programs attaining registered apprenticeship status gain access to diverse funding streams at both state and federal levels, thereby bolstering their sustainability. Moreover, these initiatives have led to tangible benefits for nearly 200 early childhood educators who have participated in Maryland Rebuilds funding workforce initiatives. These educators have availed themselves of opportunities to acquire new credentials and degrees while gaining invaluable on-the-job learning experiences, further reinforcing the child care workforce pipeline.

6.1.2 Strategies to support provider business practices

- a. Describe other strategies that the Lead Agency is developing and/or implementing to strengthen child care providers' business management and administrative practices. Providing ongoing training to strengthen business practices. Child care resource and referral agencies, child care consumer education organizations, and providers of early childhood education training and professional development.

Coordination and results of the Coordination: MSDE coordinates efforts with the Statewide Coordinating Entity for the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral

Network. The Statewide Coordinating Entity and the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network provide services, training and technical assistance to child care providers and early childhood educators. Many of these trainings focus on children and their transitions from child care to PreK/Kindergarten and transitions that occur naturally throughout the day in their child care program. The Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network also offers coaching and technical assistance to providers in developing action plans based on training they receive. The Office of Child Care's Training Approval Coordinator ensures all training and other professional learning organizations offer meets State and federal requirements. The Training Coordinator also meets with the Statewide Coordinating Entity, the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and other approved training organizations to discuss training needs and requirements. The Training Coordinator and staff conduct quarterly Trainers' Meetings to discuss any updates and to provide train-the-trainer sessions for topics that need to be available to the provider community. Maryland Child Care Boost Maryland Child Care Boost is a free 10-month Professional Development Cohort/program to grow your family child care business. The Maryland Child Care Boost program provides you with free professional development, business coaching, and childcare management business software which helps create websites, promote programs, manage/ grow enrollment, record business expenses and more.

- b. Check the topics addressed in the Lead Agency's strategies for strengthening child care providers' administrative business practices. Check all that apply:
- i. Fiscal management.
 - ii. Budgeting.
 - iii. Recordkeeping.
 - iv. Hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff.
 - v. Risk management.
 - vi. Community relationships.
 - vii. Marketing and public relations.
 - viii. Parent-provider communications.
 - ix. Use of technology in business administration.
 - x. Compliance with employment and labor laws.
 - xi. Other. Describe any other efforts to strengthen providers' administrative business:

6.1.3 Strategies to support provider participation

Lead Agencies must facilitate participation of child care providers and staff with limited English proficiency and disabilities in the child care subsidy system. Describe how the Lead Agency will facilitate this participation, including engagement with providers to identify barriers and specific strategies used to support their participation:

- a. Providers and staff with limited English proficiency: **Maryland's vendor for Child Care Scholarship provides translation services for child care providers and parents participating**

in the scholarship system. Application in other languages (application document, brochures, provider notices); informational materials in non-English languages; website in non-English languages; bilingual translators available; bilingual outreach workers; and partnerships with community-based organizations Some Licensing and Scholarship forms are translated into Spanish. Maryland State Department of Education's website also provides translation services for other languages upon request. The Scholarship Program requires every Non-relative Informal Provider to complete a 3 hour online or 6 hour in-person Basic Health & Safety training annually. These trainings are offered in Spanish from Penn State.

- b. Providers and staff who have disabilities: **Websites that are accessible (e.g., Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act); Partnerships with state and local programs and associations focused on disability-related topics and issues; partnerships with state and local IDEA Part B, Section 619, and Part C providers and agencies; and availability and/or access to specialized services (e.g., mental health, behavioral specialists, therapists) to address the needs of all children.**

6.2 Professional Development Framework

A Lead Agency must have a professional development framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers, and directors in child care programs that serve children of all ages. The framework must include these components:

(1) professional standards and competencies, (2) career pathways, (3) advisory structures, (4) articulation, (5) workforce information, and (6) financing. CCDF provides Lead Agencies flexibility on the strategies, breadth, and depth of the framework. The professional development framework must be developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or a similar coordinating body.

6.2.1 Updates and consultation

- a. Did the Lead Agency make any updates to the professional development framework since the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan was submitted?

Yes. If yes, describe the elements of the framework that were updated and describe if and how the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or similar coordinating body was consulted: **Based on responses from trainers, child care professionals, and the Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework workgroup, recommendations were made to: Make the document user friendly and easier to navigate by having it be electronically interactive. Provide a cohesive sense of expectations. Provide accessible language. Provide objectives, goals, and examples of progression. Provide real-life examples of the competencies for each level. Decrease the skill levels from 5 to 3 that clearly provide a definition for each level. Clearly indicate how various stakeholders could benefit from using this document such as child care professionals, child care trainers, higher education professionals and policy makers. Update the resources to ensure they are current and based on best practices.**

No.

- b. Did the Lead Agency consult with other key groups in the development of their professional development framework?

Yes. If yes, identify the other key groups: **This resource was developed in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, a review team of Maryland child care trainers, child care educators, higher education professionals, child care associations, and WestEd, a nonpartisan research, development, and service agency, that works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults.**

No.

6.2.2 Description of the professional development framework

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency's framework for training and professional development addresses the following required elements:
 - i. Professional standards and competencies. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about which roles in early childhood education are included (such as teachers, directors, infant and toddler specialists, mental health consultants, coaches, licensors, QIS assessors, family service workers, home visitors). **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) contracted with WestEd to revise the Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals (2015). This new version, Maryland Competency Standards for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals, aligns with the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (2019) of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and is adapted for the state of Maryland. The intended audience of the Maryland Competency Standards for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals is the Maryland early childhood and school-age workforce, the professionals who work with or on behalf of children and their families. This workforce includes: Early childhood professionals (serving children birth through age 8) School-age professionals (serving children ages 5 through 12 years) Those who train, educate and advocate for the Maryland early childhood and school-age workforce Maryland Competency Standards for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals consist of eight domains/core of knowledge: Child Development Family-Educator Partnerships and Community Connections Child Observation, Documentation and Assessment Developmentally, Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices Curriculum and Environment Professionalism Inclusion of Children with Disabilities Health, Safety and Nutrition.**
 - ii. Career pathways. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about professional development registries, career ladders, and levels. **The Maryland Child Care Credentialing program is a career pathway that recognizes and promotes a professional development lattice that emphasizes life-long learning and professional development. This model encourages an individual to build knowledge and skills in a cumulative manner from introductory training to advanced level education. It is a quality initiative program that recognizes child care providers for exceeding the requirement of State licensing and registration regulations. Training at the beginner level addresses basic understanding and practices; training for the higher levels addresses higher level thinking and problem solving. The progression of professional development reflects research and best practices to meet the needs of infants and toddlers, preschool, and**

school age children that aligns to foundational and specialized competencies to improve the quality and stability of the child care workforce. Providers are required to take training in areas that address child development in all domains and cultural competencies. The Maryland Child Care Credential outlines six core of knowledge domains (child development; curriculum; special needs; professionalism; community; and health, safety, and nutrition) and addresses the promotion of social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children. There are seven staff credential levels and four administrator levels. Each level recognizes an early childhood professional's achievement of a specified amount of training, experience, and engagement in professional activities.

- iii. Advisory structure. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about how the professional development advisory structure interacts with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. **Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils were formed under the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant in 2011, which provided funding for the local Early Childhood Advisory Councils to receive training to implement strategies to improve coordination of services to strengthen early childhood education and care in each jurisdiction. Support is maintained through Maryland State Department of Education and local jurisdiction school systems. There is an active Maryland Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), as well as local Early Childhood Advisory Council's in each jurisdiction. The ECAC is composed of early childhood educators, policy makers, and community advocates from across the state. The purpose of the ECAC is to coordinate efforts among early care and education programs, conduct needs assessments concerning early childhood education and development programs, and develop a statewide strategic report regarding early childhood education and care. There is a very robust communication loop among the state and local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECACs) and it informs the Division of Early Childhood's decision-making and planning. LECACs serve as local governance entities by leveraging resources, coordination, and collaboration to support local early childhood system development that aligns with statewide goals and priorities. The Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council helps shape and guide the goals and operations of the office by reviewing proposed regulations related to the care of children, recommending policy priorities, and identifying issues of importance to child care providers and consumers. The Council consists of at least 25 members, but no more than 30 members. The State Superintendent appoints members to the council, representing geographically diverse jurisdictions across the state.**
- iv. Articulation. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about articulation agreements, and collaborative agreements that support progress in degree acquisition. **A significant number of Maryland's public high schools have the 90 hour Early Child Care training articulation agreements with the two year colleges. The Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) is a fully articulated degree between two and four year colleges. The AAT transfers up to 64 credit hours, satisfying all lower-division teacher education program outcomes without further review by Maryland's 4-year public and independent institutions.**

Child Development Associate: The Child Development Associate does not require

an articulation agreement. The Child Development Associate is accepted by the Community Colleges for any student who has received an official Child Development Associate Certificate from the Council for Professional Recognition. Students must be either a noncredit or credit student to receive Credit for Prior Learning. Community College will accept high school student's Child Development Associate's without an articulation agreement. High school students can submit their Child Development Associate Certificates to receive the 6 college credits. As per an articulation agreement with Notre Dame of Maryland University (see 4-year articulation below), Notre Dame of Maryland University will accept the Credit for Prior Knowledge from Montgomery College Students.

Montgomery County Public Schools articulations: Montgomery County Public Schools Area Supervisors review state/federal requirements to develop proposed curriculum to MC Montgomery County Public Schools contacts Montgomery College Deans to coordinate meetings to discuss the framework of the articulated curriculum pathway Upon Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College agreement, legal counsel reviews for both organizations Once legal approves, the signature process begins and is completed (Office of Superintendent Montgomery County Public Schools; Office of the President Montgomery College) Annual form submission from Montgomery County Public Schools to Montgomery College at the end of each Montgomery County Public Schools school year is submitted to address potential changes for the next academic year.

4-year articulations: Four-year institution or Montgomery College initiates proposal to formalize an articulated partnership Representatives from each institution, meet to discuss the academic pathway for the partnership and the Montgomery College Articulation and Transfer department completes drafts of the academic pathway plan and articulation agreement, which is sent to four-year institution for final comments/edits Once academic pathway plan and articulation agreement reach departmental approval at both institutions, the documents are sent to the legal counsel for both organizations Once legal approves, the signature process begins and is completed (signatures vary per agreement) The articulation agreement and pathway are good for a term of five years. If minor changes are required during that time period, updates and addendums can be made via departmental approval at both institutions. If major changes are required, both institutions complete the original process again to create a new academic pathway and articulation Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Carroll Community College, and others are offering credit for prior learning to community students beginning a college degree program with their Child Development Associate. Crosswalks completed show the courses that most align with the Child Development Associate are Introduction to Early Childhood Education and Nutrition, Health and Safety totaling 6 semester hours. Several high schools have adopted the Child Development Associate for the Career Technology Education program, these are the courses that will articulate, when an articulation agreement has been signed by the designated authorities. Child Growth and Development and the Curriculum/Methods course will no longer articulate and will need to be taken for credit. New articulation agreements will have to be developed for all 2-year

colleges who previously articulated the 90 hours. Any courses taken at a high school level, will have to be transcribed on the Community College transcript before they could be accepted by the 4-year institution, and a new articulation agreement signed between the community college and the receiving 4 year university. The high school and community college articulation agreement may need to be made available before the 4-year college will accept any high school credits. If the Child Development Associate courses mentioned above show up for college credit on the transcript, then they can be accepted, but only a finite number of transfer courses can be accepted. For example, at Towson, the registrar stops counting at 64 transferred credits. Depending on the students' program, the student can help determine which of their courses they want to have transferred. University of Maryland Eastern Shore will take up to 70 credits from the community college if it is requested, and the advisor and student may help choose which courses to transfer. Maryland State Department of Education/High Schools must redefine the industry standard to the Child Development Associate. Currently, there is minimal movement for the Child Development Associate in places where the 90 hours is still accepted and fully entrenched as the entry level requirement. High school students must be able to fully complete their original plan of study before Child Development Associate becomes standardized. Colleges will move on this once they see high schools following the Child Development Associate program of study. Competency testing must be put in place to receive credit for Child Development Associate course work. Credit for prior learning can be developed if standardized with competency-based testing. Quality, equity, and rigor of the Child Development Associate coursework must be aligned with the courses for which students receive credit. Credit for prior learning can be given for internships if colleges can be assured of the quality of the placement and given assessment of student progress in internships. Can the Child Development Associate Council supply this? If students' experiential hours are at a licensed, accredited childcare, they can provide mentors with three Professional Activity Units (according to the current Professional Activity Units acceptance) or something commensurate to public school student teaching mentors to provide equity and fairness. The minimum requirement for Teacher's Assistants in publicly funded Pre-K is now a high school diploma. What you could say is the minimum requirement for TA in Public Pre-k will be a CDA beginning in 2027-2028. This needs to be publicized. There should be some clear communication of the Child Development Associate as the industry standard to replace the 90 hours (Locally created program) and the timeline for implementation Coppin State University has an articulation agreement with Baltimore City Community College for Elementary and Special Education.

- v. Workforce information. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about workforce demographics, educator well-being, retention/turnover surveys, actual wage scales, and/or access to benefits. MSDE recently released the Market Rate and the Cost of Care Survey will provide the agency the data on existing wages and benefits available to the workforce. The data collected will identify any disparities in the existing compensation and benefits (by geography, role, child care setting, race, ethnicity, gender, or age of children served).
- vi. Financing. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about strategies

including scholarships, apprenticeships, wage enhancements, etc. **The Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program:** The Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program provides a staff achievement bonus paid to the participating provider upon the completion of continued training, professional activity and one year of continued employment. Staff bonuses are paid one time only at levels 2, 3, and 4 and Administrator level 1. Staff Levels 4+, 5 and 6 and Administrator Levels 2, 3, and 4 are paid yearly.

Training Vouchers/Reimbursements Training Vouchers/Reimbursements are available to providers participating in the Credentialing program at Level Two or higher.

The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund: The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund is a tuition free program for child care providers to obtain a college education at participating colleges/universities in Maryland.

The Child Care Quality Incentive Grant Program: The Child Care Quality Incentive Grant Program awards funds to child care centers and family child care providers to enhance the quality of child care provided to children. Programs are encouraged to purchase approved materials, equipment, and supplies that create or enhance stimulating learning environments that help children develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Programs are eligible for an Incentive Grant award once every 3 years.

The Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant Fund Program: The Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant Fund Program provides reimbursements to family child care providers for expenses necessary to achieve or maintain compliance with the requirements of Child Care Licensing. Providers are eligible for a one-time Provider Grant award. Provider Grant funds are income based and dispersed monthly.

Child Development Associate program: Funding is available to support providers to obtain the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential from the Council for Professional Recognition. The CDA is a credential that early childhood educators can earn to demonstrate certain competencies and, in turn, can help them advance their careers. The CDA credential is carefully administered to ensure that those who earn it know how to put important ECE understandings into practice. CDA educators know how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children.

Child Care Apprenticeship: According to an MSDE report in July of 2022 (<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf>), teacher attrition in Maryland averaged 10% per Local Education Agency. In 2022 alone, Maryland lost 5,516 teachers to voluntary resignation, education related employment, retirement, termination, leaves of absence, other employment opportunities and death. Because the Child Care Apprenticeship program is a virtual coursework

option, students from across Maryland have the opportunity to participate and enter the child education workforce. And, they can transfer the skills they learn from the apprenticeship program into the CCCPDF program at many community colleges in Maryland, preparing them to work in teaching. Nationally, over a ten-year period between the 2008-2009 and 2018-2019 school year, the number of people completing a teacher-education program declined by roughly a third. Additionally, according to Data USA (<https://datausa.io/profile/soc/childcare-workers?employment-ot-filter=genderEOT>), the child care workforce had an average annual decrease of almost 5% between 2014 and 2020, but demand for child care has risen since 2014. Now is the time to rebuild the workforce to get students certified in child education programs. The Child Care Apprenticeship program at HCC offers gateways to higher education paths in teaching and child care should a student choose to extend their time in college. But this apprenticeship also provides enough training and certification for apprentices to branch out on their own to higher paying jobs or running their own centers, contributing to the needs of a much in demand workforce. The successful development and implementation of the Childcare Apprenticeship program is creating teacher apprenticeship opportunities for Harford Community College and the community it serves. Specifically, the program is creating opportunities for Harford Community College to support the childcare industry in Harford County and beyond by training apprentices and providing certificates to become a lead teacher. Within the context of success, childcare centers across the county and beyond continue reaching out to the college indicating interest in joining the apprenticeship program. Furthermore, apprentices in the program are seeking information beyond the 18-month program, especially with respect to articulating 21 credits to Harford Community College for a degree in Teacher Education or participating in CCCPDF. The increase in inquiring about the opportunities beyond the program is also related to the cohort growth from 13 (Cohort 1) to 22 (Cohort 2). Finally, we are creating collaborative opportunities across the state - opportunities that have the potential to create professional pathways for teachers statewide. Maryland EXCELS requires programs at Quality Rating 3 to submit an incremental salary scale that is based on education and experience and at levels 4 and 5 to include a description of employee benefits. This information is not analyzed for pay rates or types of benefits but rather that a salary scale and statement of benefits are in place.

b. Does the Lead Agency use additional elements?

Yes.

If yes, describe the element(s). Check all that apply.

- i. Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development. Describe: The Division of Early Childhood requires child care providers to complete a specified number of required trainings in specific domain areas to meet continuing education requirements for licensing. Providers participating in the Maryland Child Care Credentialing program are required to take a specific number of required trainings to maintain the credentialing level. Providers participating in the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund are required to complete a specific number of coursework hours yearly

toward an associate, bachelor's, and master's degree in early childhood education.

- ii. **[x]** Engagement of training and professional development providers, including higher education, in aligning training and educational opportunities with the Lead Agency's framework. Describe: **All MSDE approved trainers and training organizations are required to align training objectives and content with the competencies found in the Maryland Competency Standards for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals. Maryland higher education institutions are encouraged to utilize the Standards when developing child care coursework.**
- iii. **[x]** Other. Describe: **Major progress and accomplishments The Maryland team made progress in all key goal areas: Support an early childhood career pathway (e.g., strengthen articulation agreements and increase Child Development Associate attainment); Currently 9 of the community colleges in Maryland and 1 university grant at least 6 college credits after completion of the CDA credential if the student is enrolled in the early childhood program. 64% of respondents pursued the CDA credential to expand their skills. CDAs have the skill set to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children. The Council for Professional Recognition, Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Family Network have partnered to offer funding to help Maryland's early childhood professionals earn or renew their CDA®. This investment will increase the quality of Maryland's early childhood education sector and make a lasting impact on the lives of children, families, and the communities they serve. Evaluate current Maryland State Department of Education workforce development support programs (e.g., Maryland Child Care Credential program, Child Care Career and professional Development Fund (CCCPDF), and Training Voucher/Reimbursement program). There has been an increase in participation in the Maryland Child Care Credential program. Peer meetings are held monthly with the Vendor, CCRC and MSDE to plan and develop strategies for supporting the early childhood workforce. Between FY22 and FY23, there was a 51.08% increase in credential participants and a 90.34% increase in voucher/reimbursement participants. Between FY23 and FY24, there was a 20.19% increase in CCCPDF participants. Improve Early Childhood Education workforce compensation, including reviewing regulations to include tiered reimbursements that provide for teacher compensation. MSDE provided a one-time bonus to the early childhood workforce that participates in the Maryland Child Care Credential program. The purpose of the Child Care Providers and Employees Bonus Program is to implement the provisions of House Bill 1100 and to provide bonuses to eligible providers who participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential program and worked in a child care program that participates in the scholarship program on a first come, first serve basis (as required in the law). Approximately \$13M in one-time State funding was allocated. The Enhanced Child Care Support and Teacher Retention Award (ECSTRA) Program is to help stabilize the early childhood educator workforce by directing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds directly to educators who remain in key child care roles, in the form of additional retention bonuses. Approximately \$12.5 million in one-time ARPA funding has been allocated but not yet distributed. The successful development and implementation of the of the first Child Care Apprenticeship program at**

Harford Community College is creating teacher apprenticeship opportunities for providers. This apprenticeship also provides enough training and certification for apprentices to branch out on their own to higher paying jobs or running their own centers, contributing to the needs of a much in demand workforce. Furthermore, apprentices in the program are seeking information beyond the 18-month program, especially with respect to articulating 21 credits to Harford Community College for a degree in Teacher Education or participating in CCCPDF. The increase in inquiring about the opportunities beyond the program is also related to the cohort growth from 13 (Cohort 1) to 22 (Cohort 2).

Trainer Orientation, Rubric, Monitoring Tool, Observation Tool, Proposal Writing Workshop Training Proposal Rubric: The Training Proposal Rubric is used to assess the content of the training proposal to ensure that the proposal meets all training stand New criteria and indicators have been added and or updated to provide a clear understanding of what is expected within an approved training proposal. Scoring is now 0, 3, 4, 5, with no double-weighted criteria A score of 80 out of 100 will be required for approval Addition of Homeless Insecurities.

Training Proposal Writing Workshop: The Proposal Writing Workshop provides guidance on how to write an approved training proposal. Gives Trainers technical assistance with planning, documenting, and successfully creating approved training. Prospective trainers will be required to attend a writing workshop prior to final approval. Approved trainers are also encouraged to attend. The Proposal Writing Workshop is aligned with the State of Maryland training standards, the Training Proposal Rubric, and Planning Template.

Trainer Monitoring Tool: The Trainer Monitoring Tool is used during a monitoring visit to guide the training approval staff in the monitoring process when reviewing trainer documents. The Trainer and Training monitoring tool have been revised to ensure alignment with the proposed trainer regulations.

Training Observation Tool: The Training Observation Tool is used to ensure that the content of the training is conducted as approved and to verify that quality professional development is delivered. The Training Observation Tool has been revised to ensure that training is conducted in alignment with its approval.

Trainers Orientation: Trainers Orientation has been revised to match updates of the Training Approval Program and to streamline the process for potential new trainers. Provides comprehensive training regulations. Ensures direct technical assistance.

Early Childhood Career Pathway Progress includes: The Early Childhood Teacher Alternative Certification (ECTAC) program is an intensive, rigorous program leading to resident teacher status and state of Maryland certification. The Early Childhood Teacher Alternative Certification Program provides students with the required classes for certification, 8-week internship, and required residency at their worksite with ongoing solid support from Montgomery College faculty as teacher mentors. Assessment of teacher knowledge and skills during the

internship and course work is performance-based. Evidence of critical thinking skills, notably in problem solving and self-reflection as teachers, will undergird all candidate assessments. The target audience for the Early Childhood Teacher Alternative Certification program is child care and family child care teachers to expand the mixed delivery system Pre-k Expansion in Maryland. The Prekindergarten Expansion program supports a mixed delivery system, meaning that private child care and preschool programs, as well as public schools, would provide publicly funded pre-K; (Schaefer, 2019). Child care centers and family child care providers cannot compete with public school systems for prekindergarten certified teachers. Many early childhood programs have child care teachers with bachelor's degrees and many years of experience; however, the child care teachers are not certified. An alternative certification program would allow child care teachers to complete the certification requirements, qualifying child care programs to meet the required qualification of having a certified teacher in pre-k classrooms, and support the mixed delivery system mandated in Maryland.

ECE Workforce Workgroup Recommendations: The ECE Workforce Workgroup Recommendation is the culmination of input, research, and expertise of a dedicated group of leaders from across Maryland's Early Childhood landscape. Representing providers and educators, higher education, advocates, local and state government, nonprofit organizations, and related public agencies, the Early Childhood Education Workforce Workgroup (ECWW) convened monthly for two years to develop the set of recommendations contained within this report. Led by Angeline Bishop-Oshoko, Branch Chief, Workforce Advancement, Office of Child Care in the Division of Early Childhood, Maryland State Department of Education, the Workgroup was comprised of two focal areas: Career pathways Equity and compensation ECWW members examined national and local research and data, including input from their constituencies, to drive a set of recommendations intended to strengthen Maryland's Early Childhood Workforce. This work began before the COVID-19 pandemic and served to reinforce the critical need for bold and innovative solutions for issues that have plagued the early childhood profession since its inception and have exasperated the workforce to the point of breaking with COVID's onset. While these are not Maryland-specific challenges, the State is uniquely positioned to lead in this area given the foundational reforms of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the Division of Early Childhood's strategic plan, and the strength of current initiatives and partnerships. What developed from the ECWW sessions are a set of recommendations that ask the State to not imagine what is impossible, but rather what is, approaching this work from a place of infinite opportunities to solve entrenched problems. As such, the recommendations include short-, mid-, and long-term possibilities, acknowledging when interim steps are necessary to achieve the type of systemic transformation required. These recommendations are research-based and in many instances built upon preliminary models of success. Some will require continued leadership to further define legislative or policy actions, but all are possible and targeted to address the problems faced by the early care and education workforce in Maryland and the nation.

[] No.

6.2.3 Impact of the Professional Development Framework

Describe how the framework improves the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors and identify what data are available to assess the impact.

- a. Professional standards and competencies. For example, do the professional standards and competencies reflect the diversity of providers across role, child care setting, or age of children served? **The Maryland Competency Standard for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals supports and improves the quality of the workforce by:**
- Providing coherent structure.
 - Informing the course of study.
 - Giving guidance in the definition of child care credentials and certifications, helping to enhance and stabilize the workforce.
 - Presenting comprehensive descriptions of the skills, knowledge, and competencies.
 - Reflecting on the broad differences in racial and cultural heritage, language, health, and family situations.
 - Recognizing that all children and youth, including those with special needs, special healthcare needs, and/or developmental delays or disabilities, possess potential for learning.
 - Building on developmentally appropriate teaching and assessment practices.
 - Bolstering efforts to improve family engagement.
 - Supporting the work of community agencies and organizations.
- b. Career pathways. For example, has the Lead Agency developed a wage ladder that provides progressively higher wages as early educators gain more experience and credentials? What types of child care settings and staff roles are addressed in career pathways, such as licensed centers and family child care homes? **The Maryland Child Care Credentialing program is a career pathway that recognizes and promotes a professional development lattice that emphasizes life-long learning and professional development. This model encourages an individual to build knowledge and skills in a cumulative manner from introductory training to advanced level education. It is a quality initiative program that recognizes child care providers for exceeding the requirement of State licensing and registration regulations.**

Training at the beginner level addresses basic understanding and practices; training for the higher levels addresses higher level thinking and problem solving. The progression of professional development reflects research and best practices to meet the needs of infants and toddlers, preschool, and school age children that aligns to foundational and specialized competencies to improve the quality and stability of the child care workforce. Providers are required to take training in areas that address child development in all domains and cultural competencies.

The Maryland Child Care Credential outlines six core of knowledge domains (child development; curriculum; special needs; professionalism; community; and health, safety, and nutrition) and addresses the promotion of social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children. There are seven staff credential levels and four administrator levels. Each level recognizes an early childhood professional's achievement of a specified amount of training, experience, and engagement in professional activities. The Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program provides a staff achievement bonus paid to the

participating provider upon the completion of continued training, professional activity and one year of continued employment. Staff bonuses are paid one time only at levels 2, 3, and 4 and Administrator level 1. Staff Levels 4+, 5 and 6 and Administrator Levels 2, 3, and 4 are paid yearly.

- c. Advisory structure. For example, has the advisory structure identified goals for child care workforce compensation, including types of staff and target compensation levels? Does the Lead Agency have a Preschool Development Birth-to-Five grant and is part of its scope of work child care compensation activities? Are they represented in the advisory structure? **Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils were formed under the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant in 2011, which provided funding for the local Early Childhood Advisory Councils to receive training to implement strategies to improve coordination of services to strengthen early childhood education and care in each jurisdiction. Support is maintained through Maryland State Department of Education and local jurisdiction school systems. There is an active Maryland Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), as well as local Early Childhood Advisory Council's in each jurisdiction. The ECAC is composed of early childhood educators, policy makers, and community advocates from across the state. The purpose of the ECAC is to coordinate efforts among early care and education programs, conduct needs assessments concerning early childhood education and development programs and develop a statewide strategic report regarding early childhood education and care. There is a very robust communication loop among the state and local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECACs), and it informs the Division of Early Childhood's decision-making and planning. LECACs serve as local governance entities by leveraging resources, coordination, and collaboration to support local early childhood system development that aligns with statewide goals and priorities. The Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council helps shape and guide the goals and operations of the office by reviewing proposed regulations related to the care of children, recommending policy priorities, and identifying issues of importance to child care providers and consumers. The Council consists of at least 25 members, but no more than 30 members. The State Superintendent appoints members to the council, representing geographically diverse jurisdictions across the state.**
- d. Articulation. For example, how does the advisory structure include training and professional development for providers, including higher education, to assist in aligning training and education opportunities? **A significant number of Maryland's public high schools have the 90 hour Early Child Care training articulation agreements with the two year colleges. The Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) is a fully articulated degree between two and four year colleges. The AAT transfers up to 64 credit hours, satisfying all lower-division teacher education program outcomes without further review by Maryland's 4-year public and independent institutions.**

Child Development Associate: The Child Development Associate does not require an articulation agreement. The Child Development Associate is accepted by Montgomery College for any student who has received an official Child Development Associate Certificate from the Council for Professional Recognition. Students must be either a noncredit or credit student at Montgomery College to receive Credit for Prior Learning. Montgomery College will accept high school student's Child Development Associate's without an articulation agreement. High school students can submit their Child Development Associate Certificates to receive the 6 college credits. As per an articulation

agreement with Notre Dame of Maryland University (see 4-year articulation below), Notre Dame of Maryland University will accept the Credit for Prior Knowledge from Montgomery College Students.

Montgomery County Public Schools articulations: Montgomery County Public Schools Area Supervisors review state/federal requirements to develop proposed curriculum to MC Montgomery County Public Schools contacts Montgomery College Deans to coordinate meetings to discuss the framework of the articulated curriculum pathway.

- Upon Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College agreement, legal counsel reviews for both organizations Once legal approves, the signature process begins and is completed (Office of Superintendent Montgomery County Public Schools; Office of the President Montgomery College) Annual form submission from Montgomery County Public Schools to Montgomery College at the end of each Montgomery County Public Schools school year is submitted to address potential changes for the next academic year.

4-year articulations: Four-year institution or Montgomery College initiates proposal to formalize an articulated partnership.

- Representatives from each institution, meet to discuss the academic pathway for the partnership and the Montgomery College Articulation and Transfer department completes drafts of the academic pathway plan and articulation agreement, which is sent to four-year institution for final comments/edits.

- Once academic pathway plan and articulation agreement reach departmental approval at both institutions, the documents are sent to the legal counsel for both organizations Once legal approves, the signature process begins and is completed (signatures vary per agreement) The articulation agreement and pathway are good for a term of five years. If minor changes are required during that time period, updates and addendums can be made via departmental approval at both institutions.

- If major changes are required, both institutions complete the original process again to create a new academic pathway and articulation.

- Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Carroll Community College, and others are offering credit for prior learning to community students beginning a college degree program with their Child Development Associate. Crosswalks completed show the courses that most align with the Child Development Associate are Introduction to Early Childhood Education and Nutrition, Health and Safety totaling 6 semester hours.

- Several high schools have adopted the Child Development Associate for the Career Technology Education program, these are the courses that will articulate, when an articulation agreement has been signed by the designated authorities.

Child Growth and Development and the Curriculum/Methods course will no longer articulate and will need to be taken for credit. New articulation agreements will have to be developed for all 2-year colleges who previously articulated the 90 hours. Any courses taken at a high school level, will have to be transcribed on the Community College transcript before they could be accepted by the 4-year institution, and a new articulation agreement signed between the community college and the receiving 4 year university. The high school and community college articulation agreement may need to be made available before the 4-year college will accept any high school credits.

If the Child Development Associate courses mentioned above show up for college credit

on the transcript, then they can be accepted, but only a finite number of transfer courses can be accepted. For example, at Towson, the registrar stops counting at 64 transferred credits. Depending on the students' program, the student can help determine which of their courses they want to have transferred.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore will take up to 70 credits from the community college if it is requested, and the advisor and student may help choose which courses to transfer.

Maryland State Department of Education/High Schools must redefine the industry standard to the Child Development Associate. Currently, there is minimal movement for the Child Development Associate in places where the 90 hours is still accepted and fully entrenched as the entry level requirement. High school students must be able to fully complete their original plan of study before Child Development Associate becomes standardized. Colleges will move on this once they see high schools following the Child Development Associate program of study. Competency testing must be put in place to receive credit for Child Development Associate course work.

Credit for prior learning can be developed if standardized with competency-based testing. Quality, equity, and rigor of the Child Development Associate coursework must be aligned with the courses for which students receive credit. Credit for prior learning can be given for internships if colleges can be assured of the quality of the placement and given assessment of student progress in internships. Can the Child Development Associate Council supply this? If students' experiential hours are at a licensed, accredited childcare, they can provide mentors with three Professional Activity Units (according to the current Professional Activity Units acceptance) or something commensurate to public school student teaching mentors to provide equity and fairness.

Minimum requirement for Teacher's Assistant in publicly funded Pre-K (Community-based grantees) is the Child Development Associate. This needs to be publicized. There should be some clear communication of the Child Development Associate as the industry standard to replace the 90 hours (Locally created program) and the timeline for implementation Coppin State University has an articulation agreement with Baltimore City Community College for Elementary and Special Education.

- e. Workforce information. For example, does the Lead Agency have data on the existing wages and benefits available to the child care workforce? Do any partners such as the Quality Improvement System, child care resource and referral agencies, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and universities and research organizations collect compensation and benefits data? Does the Lead Agency monitor child care workforce wages and access to benefits through ongoing data collection and evaluation? Can the data identify any disparities in the existing compensation and benefits (by geography, role, child care setting, race, ethnicity, gender, or age of children served)? MSDE recently released the Market Rate and the Cost of Care Survey will provide the agency the data on existing wages and benefits available to the workforce. The data collected will identify any disparities in the existing compensation and benefits (by geography, role, child care setting, race, ethnicity, gender, or age of children served).
- f. Financing. For example, has the Lead Agency set a minimum or living wage as a floor for

all child care staff? Do Lead Agency-provider subsidy agreements contain requirements for staff compensation levels? Do Lead Agencies provide program-level compensation grants to support staff base salaries and benefits? Does the Lead Agency administer bonuses or stipends directly to workers? **The Lead Agency has not set a minimum or living wage as a floor for all child care staff. The Agency does provide program level compensation grants to support staff base salaries and benefits. MSDE provided a one-time bonus to the early childhood workforce that participates in the Maryland Child Care Credential program. The purpose of the Child Care Providers and Employees Bonus Program is to implement the provisions of House Bill 1100 and to provide bonuses to eligible providers who participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential program and worked in a child care program that participates in the scholarship program on a first come, first serve basis (as required in the law). Approximately \$13M in one-time State funding was allocated. The Enhanced Child Care Support and Teacher Retention Award (ECSTRA) Program is to help stabilize the early childhood educator workforce by directing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds directly to educators who remain in key child care roles, in the form of additional retention bonuses. Approximately \$12.5 million in one-time ARPA funding has been allocated but not yet distributed. First half of the award (for those selected) is to be disbursed in April 2024 for participants who remained employed in the same program for at least 5 months. The second half of the award is to be disbursed in June 2024 for those who stay at least 8 months.**

6.3 Ongoing Training and Professional Development

6.3.1 Required hours of ongoing training

Provide the number of hours of ongoing training required annually for CCDF-eligible providers in the following settings:

- a. Licensed child care centers: **13A.16.06.05 Directors of All Child Care Centers- General Requirements C: A director shall:**
 1. According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 12 clock hours per full year of employment as a director, that consists of a:
 - (a) Minimum of 6 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
 - (b) Maximum of 6 clock hours of elective training.

13A.16.06.09 Child Care Teachers in Preschool Centers: C. A child care teacher in a preschool center shall:

1. According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 12 clock hours per full year of employment as a child care teacher, that consists of a:
 - (c) Minimum of 6 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
 - (d) Maximum of 6 clock hours of elective training.

13A.16.06.10 Child Care Teachers in School Age Centers: C. A child care teacher in a school age center shall:

- i. According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 12 clock hours per full year of employment as a child care teacher, that consists of a:

1. Minimum of 6 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
2. Maximum of 6 clock hours of elective training.

13A.16.06.11 Assistant Child Care Teacher: C. An assistant child care teacher in a school age center shall:

1. According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 6 clock hours per full year of employment as an assistant child care teacher, that consists of a:

1. Minimum of 3 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
2. Maximum of 3 clock hours of elective training.

13A.16.06.12 Aides: B. An aide in a child care center shall:

1. According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 6 clock hours per full year of employment as a child care aide, that consists of a:

- (a) Minimum of 3 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
- (b) Maximum of 3 clock hours of elective training.

b. License-exempt child care centers: **N/A**

c. Licensed family child care homes: **Family Child Care 13A.15.06.02 Training Requirements (B2) Continued Training.**

A provider shall successfully complete: During the first year of registration, 18 clock hours of approved training specified by the office; and by the end of each 12-month period after the first full year of registration, a

total of 12 clock hours of approved continued training that consists of:

- (a) At least 6 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
- (b) Not more than 6 clock hours of elective training.

Large Family Child Care Home, 13A.18.06.05 Child Care Home Director:

A Director shall (2) According to the professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 12 clock hours per full year of service as a director, that consists of a:

- (a) Minimum of 6 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
- (b) Maximum of 6 clock hours of elective training.

13A.18.06.06 Family Child Care Teachers (D.), A family child care teacher in a child care home shall:

According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 12 clock hours per full year of employment as a child care teacher, that consists of a:

1. Minimum of 6 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
2. Maximum of 6 clock hours of elective training.

13A.18.06.07 Aides

A. An aide shall: (4), According to the individual's professional development plan, complete approved continued training, at the rate of at least 6 clock hours per full year of

employment as a child care aide, that consists of a:

1. Minimum of 3 clock hours of core of knowledge training; and
2. Maximum of 3 clock hours of elective training;

- d. License-exempt family child care homes: **N/A**
- e. Regulated or registered in-home child care: **N/A**
- f. Non-regulated or registered in-home child care: **License-Exempt/Informal Providers are required to complete 4 hours of ongoing training annually, which includes a 1 hr update required as of June 2024.**

6.3.2 Accessibility of professional development for Tribal organizations

Describe how the Lead Agency's training and professional development are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or Tribal organizations receiving CCDF funds (as applicable). **Maryland does not have any Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations receiving CCDF Funds.**

6.3.3 Professional development appropriate for the diversity of children, families, and child care providers

Describe how the Lead Agency's training and professional development requirements reflect the diversity of children, families, and child care providers participating in CCDF. To the extent practicable, how does professional development include specialized training or credentials for providers who care for infants or school-age children; individuals with limited English proficiency; children who are bilingual; children with developmental delays or disabilities; and/or Native Americans, including Indians, as the term is defined in Section 900.6 in subpart B of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (including Alaska Natives) and Native Hawaiians?

MSDE approved trainers provide professional development that aligns with The Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals. The framework:

- Provides coherent structure and content for the professional development of Maryland's child and youth care workforce;
- Informs the course of study that child and youth care professionals follow as they pursue courses of study in higher education institutions;
- Gives guidance in the definition of child care credentials and certifications, helping to enhance and stabilize the workforce;
- Presents comprehensive descriptions of the skills, knowledge, and competencies that child and youth care professionals need to support learning and professional development across program types, ensuring that children; and youth (prenatally through adolescence) and their families receive services targeted to their unique developmental needs;
- Reflects the broad differences in racial and cultural heritage, language, health, and family situations that constitute the diversity of the State of Maryland;
- Recognizes that all children and youth, including those with special needs, special health care needs, and/or developmental delays or disabilities, possess potential for learning;
- Builds on developmentally appropriate teaching and assessment practices;
- Bolsters efforts to improve family engagement;
- Strengthens professional development and post-secondary education programs; and
- Supports the work of community agencies and organizations to provide appropriate and effective

services to children, youth, and families.

The Child Care Scholarship (CCS) branch provides trainings in English and Spanish, with visuals and very basic language to increase understanding for License-Exempt/Informal Providers.

6.3.4 Child developmental screening

Describe how all providers receive, through training and professional development, information about: (1) existing resources and services the State/Territory can make available in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services when appropriate for children who receive assistance under this part, including the coordinated use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) and developmental screening services available under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.); and (2) how child care providers may utilize these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive assistance and who may be at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays, which may include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays: **MSDE trainers conduct training on Developmental Screening, as well as training about the ASQ-3 and ASQ Online, Brigance, Best Beginning, and Speed DIAL-4. Effective July 1, 2022, all providers serving children under the age of three years old, must notify parents on an annual basis of the Maryland Infant and Toddler Program via a brochure on the Agency's website. The brochure describes the program and has contact information for all regions of the state. The brochure may be accessed at the following link: https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/infant_and_toddler_program_brochure_final.pdf.**

6.4 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

Lead Agencies must develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines appropriate for children from birth to kindergarten entry. Early learning and developmental guidelines should describe what children should know and be able to do at different ages and cover the essential domains of early childhood development, which at a minimum includes cognition, including language arts and mathematics; social, emotional, and physical development; and approaches toward learning.

6.4.1 Early learning and developmental guidelines

- a. Check the boxes below to certify the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines are:
 - i. Research-based.
 - ii. Developmentally appropriate.
 - iii. Culturally and linguistically appropriate.
 - iv. Aligned with kindergarten entry.
 - v. Appropriate for all children from birth to kindergarten entry.
 - vi. Implemented in consultation with the educational agency and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body.

- vii. If any components above are not checked, describe:
- b. Check the boxes below to certify that the required domains are included in the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines.
 - i. Cognition, including language arts and mathematics.
 - ii. Social development.
 - iii. Emotional development.
 - iv. Physical development.
 - v. Approaches toward learning.
 - vi. Other optional domains. Describe any optional domains:
 - vii. If any components above are not checked, describe:
- c. When were the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines most recently updated and for what reason? **The Early Learning standards were most recently revised 2023-2024 to align with current research, ensure they are culturally and linguistically appropriate, unbiased, and address all learners. The NEW Early Learning Standards from Birth through Age 3 were developed by an extensive workgroup of national experts, state Division of Early Childhood staff, and local community stakeholders in the field of Early Childhood. The standards beginning at Prekindergarten 4 were developed by the Maryland State Department of Education and are approved as part of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for PreK-12. The early learning standards are research-based, culturally and linguistically appropriate, begin at birth, listed on a continuum and aligned with kindergarten entry. They will be released to the public on April 9, 2024.**
- d. Provide the Web link to the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines. <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/maryland-early-learning-standards>

6.4.2 Use of early learning and developmental guidelines

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency uses its early learning and developmental guidelines. **The new Early Learning Standards aim to offer a shared set of goals and developmental indicators for children from birth through kindergarten entry. They provide clear guidance for educators, empowering them to create developmentally appropriate environments and learning experiences that foster crucial skills, concepts, and behaviors in children. The standards identify developmental milestones and benchmarks for students and the aim is to promote fluid communication between educators, providers, and parents in order to provide experiences that prepare young learners for success in both school and life.**

MSDE is in the process of developing committees to approve early childhood curriculum and high-quality instructional materials that are aligned with the Blueprint and the College and Career Readiness standards. MSDE is also creating resources to empower families to use these standards effectively. Lastly, MSDE is developing a professional learning and training rollout plan to support teachers with the implementation of these new standards.

- b. Check the boxes below to certify that CCDF funds are not used to develop or implement

an assessment for children that:

- i. Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF.
- ii. Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider.
- iii. Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness.
- iv. Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in CCDF.
- v. If any components above are not checked, describe:

7 Quality Improvement Activities

The quality of child care directly affects children’s safety and healthy development while in care settings, and high-quality child care can be foundational across the lifespan. Lead Agencies may use CCDF for quality improvement activities for all children in care, not just those receiving child care subsidies. OCC will collect the most detailed Lead Agency information about quality improvement activities in annual reports instead of this Plan.

Lead Agencies must report on CCDF child care quality improvement investments in three ways:

1. In this Plan, Lead Agencies will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the 3-year period.
2. An annual expenditure report (the ACF-696). Lead Agencies will provide data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality activities. This report will be used to determine compliance with the required quality and infant and toddler spending requirements.
3. An annual Quality Progress Report (the ACF-218). Lead Agencies will provide a description of activities funded by quality expenditures, the measures used to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the State/Territory, and progress or barriers encountered on those measures.

In this section of the Plan, Lead Agencies will describe their quality activities needs assessment and identify the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made using quality set-aside funds.

7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment

7.1.1 Needs assessment process and findings

- a. Describe the Lead Agency needs assessment process for expending CCDF funds on activities to improve the quality of child care, including the frequency of assessment, how a diverse range of parents and providers were consulted, and how their views are incorporated: **We systematically integrate parental perspectives from the Maryland State Department of Education's Child Care Scholarship customer service survey to enhance the**

program. Additionally, feedback from parents and providers gathered through interactions with the customer service line is diligently used to implement improvements. This approach promotes a consistent continuum of care and streamlines the accessibility of benefits.

- b. Describe the findings of the assessment, including any findings related to needs of different populations and types of providers, and if any overarching goals for quality improvement were identified:

7.2 Use of Quality Set-Aside Funds

Lead Agencies must use a portion of their CCDF expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care. They must use the quality set-aside funds on at least one of 10 activities described in CCDF and the quality activities must be aligned with a Statewide or Territory-wide assessment of the State's or Territory's need to carry out such services and care.

7.2.1 Quality improvement activities

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency will make its Quality Progress Report (ACF – 218) and expenditure reports, available to the public. Provide a link if available.
<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/quality-progress-report-qpr-maryland>
- b. Identify Lead Agency plans, if any, to spend CCDF funds for each of the following quality improvement activities. If an activity is checked “yes”, describe the Lead Agency’s current and/or future plans for this activity.
 - i. Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce, including birth to five and school-age providers.
 No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments. **To support training and professional development of the early childhood workforce, funding is required to develop the workforce registry; continue and develop new registered apprenticeship programs; continue alternative certification programs, the CDA Training Bundle, and the finalization of the Maryland Competency Standards and Framework; and restructure the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.**
 - ii. Developing, maintaining, or implementing early learning and developmental guidelines.
 No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments. **The new Early Learning Standards aim to offer a shared set of goals and developmental indicators for children from birth through kindergarten entry. They provide clear guidance for educators, empowering them to create developmentally appropriate environments and learning experiences that foster crucial skills, concepts, and behaviors in children. success in both school and life.**

MSDE is in the process of developing committees to approve early childhood curriculum and high-quality instructional materials that are aligned with the Blueprint and the College and Career Readiness standards. MSDE is also creating resources to empower families to use these standards effectively. Lastly, MSDE is developing a professional learning and training rollout plan to support teachers with the implementation of these new standards.

iii. Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality improvement system.

No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.

Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments. **The Maryland EXCELS standards for all four program types (child care center, family child care, school-age only, public pre-kindergarten) are being revised based on stakeholder feedback and national trends.**

iv. Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers.

No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.

Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments. **Increased Family Child Care capacity through the Go FCC grant program. It is designed to attract individuals to get registered and develop business practices thus increasing the supply of infant/toddler care. The Maryland Child Care Resource Network provides specialized training and technical assistance related to the care of infants and toddlers.**

v. Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services.

No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.

Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments. **MSDE awarded a contract to Maryland Family Network to oversee the operations of the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network has twelve sites located throughout Maryland that help provide statewide information and referral services to assist families with finding licensed child care that meets their needs. Maryland Family Network provides leadership and management of the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network including grant management, training, technical assistance, support, program and fiscal monitoring, evaluation, and development of training modules and technical assistance strategies. The primary goal of the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network is to address the needs of parents seeking quality early care and education programs and to improve capacity building among licensed child care providers. This includes strategic management support as well as leadership development for licensed child care providers that participate in Maryland EXCELS. Maryland Family Network also provides centralized LOCATE: Child Care services for the State through telephone counseling and web-based programs. LOCATE: Child Care accesses a database containing all regulated child care in the 24 jurisdictions throughout Maryland. This database includes all registered family child care providers, licensed full day child care centers, Head Start programs, private nursery schools, kindergartens, PreK programs, and school age programs. Services are provided statewide and reflect the needs of all children, including**

those from low-income families, children with disabilities and special health care needs, English Language Learners, and children with developmental or mental health concerns. Maryland Family Network and the Maryland Child Care Resource Network continued to provide training and professional development opportunities to the ECE educators both individually and collaboratively. This included hosting several conferences and symposiums, presenting at state association conferences, and expanding opportunities based on the needs and interests of the educator community. Training continued to be offered on virtual platforms, with some jurisdictions expanding in-person opportunities based on local interest and needs. During FFY23, MFN and the CCRCs conducted 1,294 training workshops, issued 19,279 certificates, across a total of 4,707 training hours.

- vi. Facilitating compliance with Lead Agency child care licensing, monitoring, inspection and health and safety standards.
 - No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 - Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments.
- vii. Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the State/Territory.
 - No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 - Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments.
- viii. Accreditation support.
 - No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 - Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments.
- ix. Supporting State/Territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.
 - No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 - Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments.
- x. Other activities determined by the Lead Agency to improve the quality of child care services and the measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry.
 - No plans to spend in this category of activities at this time.
 - Yes. If yes, describe current and future investments. **To improve the quality of child care services, MSDE is currently developing transition planning tools and resources to support early childhood transitions with an emphasis on transitioning to kindergarten. These resources will be widely available to all providers and programs.**

8 Lead Agency Coordination and Partnerships to Support Service Delivery

Coordination and partnerships help ensure that the Lead Agency's efforts accomplish CCDF goals effectively, leverage other resources, and avoid duplication of effort. Such coordination and partnerships can help families better access child care, can assist in providing consumer education to parents, and can be used to improve child care quality and the stability of child care providers. Such coordination can also be particularly helpful in the aftermath of disasters when the provision of emergency child care services and the rebuilding and restoring of child care infrastructure are an essential part of ensuring the well-being of children and families in recovering communities.

This section identifies who the Lead Agency collaborates with to implement services, how match and maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds are used, coordination with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) systems, and efforts for disaster preparedness and response plans to support continuity of operations in response to emergencies.

8.1 Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies must coordinate child care services supported by CCDF with other federal, State/Territory, and local level programs. This includes programs for the benefit of Indian children, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

8.1.1 Coordination with required and optional partners

Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates and the results of this coordination of the provision of child care services with the organizations and agencies to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services that meet the needs of working families.

The Lead Agency must coordinate with the following agencies:

- a. State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act). Describe the coordination and results of the coordination: **The State's Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Office of Child Care Advisory Council contains a broad range of state and local stakeholders, comprised of members of the early care and education communities as well as local government, including Maryland Head Start Association, Maryland State Family Child Care Association, Maryland State Child Care Association, Local Education Agencies, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, State Interagency Coordinating Council representatives and the Maryland Disabilities Council. A member of the Division of Early Childhood at MSDE, who helps set the agenda, coordinate logistics, and facilitate discussion, staffs the Early Childhood Advisory Council. Items discussed affect early care and education from prenatal to age eight and are aligned to the purpose of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, which are to (a) coordinate efforts among early childhood care and education programs, (b) Conduct needs assessment concerning early childhood education and development programs, and (c) develop a strategic report regarding early childhood education and care.**
- b. Indian Tribe(s) and/or Tribal organization(s), at the option of the Tribe or Tribal organization. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination, including which Tribe(s) was (were) involved:

[x] Not applicable. Check here if there are no Indian Tribes and/or Tribal organizations in the State/Territory.

- c. State/Territory agency(ies) responsible for programs for children with disabilities, including early intervention programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination: **The Division of Early Childhood and the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services are both located at MSDE and collaborate and establish policies and practices for all child care related services for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children with disabilities. Coordination enables provision of joint professional development to enhance providers' abilities to understand and support children's development in core concepts, skills and behaviors necessary for kindergarten entry and school success. Joint professional development also enhances the ability of providers for seamless transitions into new early childhood settings and increases the quality of care for vulnerable populations. There is a provision in the Child Care Scholarship program for providers serving children with disabilities to receive additional funds to better support the needs of children.**
- d. State/Territory office/director for Head Start State collaboration. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination: **The Director for Head Start Collaboration is in the Office of Family Support Services and Head Start Collaboration within the Division of Early Childhood. The Director is consulted and involved in all early childhood program initiatives and opportunities. The Director serves as a liaison between all Head Start and Early Head Start grant recipients, Maryland Head Start Association and the regional Head Start office. The Director works closely with the Maryland Head Start Association to conduct a statewide Head Start needs assessment and provide all Head Start grantees with current information and trends pertinent to Head Start and early childhood. The State makes \$3 million in state supplemental grant awards to support Head Start programs in meeting goals based on the needs assessment.**
- e. State/Territory agency responsible for public health, including the agency responsible for immunizations. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- f. State/Territory agency responsible for employment services/workforce development. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- g. State/Territory agency responsible for public education, including pre-Kindergarten. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination: **MSDE is the State agency responsible for public education, including prekindergarten; however, there is coordination among the various departments within the agency to support public education.**
- h. State/Territory agency responsible for child care licensing. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- i. State/Territory agency responsible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and other relevant nutrition programs. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- j. McKinney-Vento State coordinators for homeless education and other agencies providing services for children experiencing homelessness and, to the extent practicable, local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination: **Early**

Learning and Instruction:

In coordination with the McKinney-Vento State coordinators for homeless education, MSDE provides guidance to Lead Agencies and providers as to how to support children and families experiencing homelessness. For example, guidance was provided to inform the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that families experiencing homelessness do not need to provide proof of income for Pre-K enrollment. Pre-K programs must enroll all four-year-old applicants who are experiencing homelessness (COMAR §13A.06.02.03.A). Three-year-old children experiencing homelessness also are automatically eligible for Pre-K (COMAR §13A.06.02.03.C(1)). This categorical eligibility means that families experiencing homelessness do not have to provide evidence of income for Pre-K enrollment. A completed eligibility questionnaire, a note from the McKinney-Vento liaison or designated Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW), or any other record that the family has been determined to be experiencing homelessness replaces proof of income. Notarized letters from the family cannot be required, as such a requirement would create a barrier to the child's enrollment in Pre-K.

Currently, a McKinney-Vento Outreach Toolkit is under development, which will consist of videos, PSAs, brochures, fliers, and a social media campaign. In addition, MSDE is developing online courses for a variety of LEA and program staff, which will be released on a rolling basis starting by May 2024.

Child Care Scholarship:

The Child Care Scholarship Program has a McKinney Vento Liaison that coordinates with state educational agencies and local educational agencies that provide assistance to families experiencing homelessness and that need child care assistance for children ages 13 and under. By way of coordinated communications efforts, meetings, conferences, phone calls and emails, the MSDE Child Care Scholarship Program makes a continuous effort to bring awareness about the McKinney Vento Act and the emergency 90-day scholarship to the state educational agencies, local educational agencies, and various other agencies within the state of Maryland, MSDE's goal is to ensure this coordinated effort to increase equal access to quality child care is made available to customers applying for assistance with the cost of child care by embedding the McKinney Vento Act's definition of homelessness within the CCS Application.

In accordance with the federal McKinney Vento Act, MSDE offers an immediate 90-day emergency Child Care Scholarship within 5 business days, to the families experiencing homelessness and that submit a completed CCS Application along with the minimum requirements; proof of state residency and proof of activity (employment, - work, training, school). Our agency also coordinates with shelters serving families experiencing homelessness.

- k. State/Territory agency responsible for the TANF program. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination: **Child Care Scholarship:**
The Child Care Scholarship Program coordinates with the Department of Human Services, TANF division to expedite the processing of Child Care Scholarship Applications for customers that receive or have pending Temporary Cash Assistance Applications and/or are experiencing homelessness in order to expedite equal access to quality child care for

children in high-risk situations.

- l. State/Territory agency responsible for Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- m. State/Territory agency responsible for mental health services. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- n. Child care resource and referral agencies, child care consumer education organizations, and providers of early childhood education training and professional development. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- o. Statewide afterschool network or other coordinating entity for out-of-school time care (if applicable). Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- p. Agency responsible for emergency management and response. Describe the coordination and results of the coordination:
- q. The following are examples of optional partners a Lead Agency might coordinate with to provide services. Check which optional partners the Lead Agency coordinates with and describe the coordination and results of the coordination.
 - i. State/Territory/local agencies with Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grants. Describe: **The Division of Early Childhood issued grants to non-profit Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership grantees, utilizing Child Care Scholarship funding to pay for the cost of care for children enrolled in those programs. This allows the grantees to braid different funding sources to improve quality. The grantees are located in, and serve, different geographical areas of Maryland. MSDE also awarded an additional grant to these entities, using infant and toddler funding, to provide coaching services to the providers in the Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership to improve quality ratings within the Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement System. Funds may also be used to purchase learning materials and supplies to improve the quality of care.**
 - ii. State/Territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges. Describe:
 - iii. Other federal, State, local, and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth-serving developmental services. Describe:
 - iv. State/Territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs grant. Describe: **MSDE and the Maryland Department of Health partner to provide home visiting in Maryland. The Department of Health coordinates the Federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting grant and the Division of Early Childhood administers the State-funded home visiting program. Department of Health representatives serve on the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Office of Child Care Advisory Council. Representatives from the Division of Early Childhood serves on the Home Visiting Coordinating Council.**
 - v. Agency responsible for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Program. Describe:
 - vi. State/Territory agency responsible for child welfare. Describe:

- vii. Child care provider groups or associations. Describe:
- viii. Parent groups or organizations. Describe:
- ix. Title IV B 21st Century Community Learning Center Coordinators. Describe:
- x. Other. Describe:

8.2 Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching, and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds

Lead Agencies may combine CCDF funds with other Federal, State, and local child care and early childhood development programs, including those in 8.1.1. These programs include preschool programs, Tribal child care programs, and other early childhood programs, including those serving infants and toddlers with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

Combining funds may include blending multiple funding streams, pooling funds, or layering funds from multiple funding streams to expand and/or enhance services for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children and families to allow for the delivery of comprehensive quality care that meets the needs of children and families. For example, Lead Agencies may use multiple funding sources to offer grants or contracts to programs to deliver services; a Lead Agency may allow a county/local government to use coordinated funding streams; or policies may be in place that allow local programs to layer CCDF funds with additional funding sources to pay for full-day, full-year child care that meets Early Head Start/Head Start Program Performance Standards or State/Territory pre-Kindergarten requirements in addition to State/Territory child care licensing requirements.

As a reminder, CCDF funds may be used in collaborative efforts with Head Start and Early Head Start programs to provide comprehensive child care and development services for children who are eligible for both programs.

8.2.1 Combining funding for CCDF services

Does the Lead Agency combine funding for CCDF services with Title XX of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), Title IV B 21st Century Community Learning Center Funds, State-only child care funds, TANF direct funds for child care not transferred into CCDF, Title IV-B, IV-E funds, or other federal or State programs?

No. (If no, skip to question 8.2.2)

Yes.

i. If yes, describe which funds you will combine. Combined funds may include, but are not limited to:

Title XX (Social Services Block Grant, SSBG)

Title IV B 21st Century Community Learning Center Funds (Every Student Succeeds Act)

State- or Territory-only child care funds

TANF direct funds for child care not transferred into CCDF

Title IV-B funds (Social Security Act)

Title IV-E funds (Social Security Act)

Other. Describe: **Office of Head Start- Early Head Start Child Care partnership funding.**

- ii. If yes, what does the Lead Agency use combined funds to support, such as extending the day or year of services available (i.e., full-day, full-year programming for working families), smoothing transitions for children, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care, or developing the supply of child care for vulnerable populations? **The purpose of combining child care scholarship payments (from CCDF, Mandatory and Matching) with Early Head Start Child Care partnership grant fund is to extend to full working day programming, enhance and align quality of services and link comprehensive services to children in child care.**

8.2.2 Funds used to meet CCDF matching and MOE requirements

Lead Agencies may use public funds and donated funds to meet CCDF match and maintenance of effort (matching MOE) requirements.

Note: Lead Agencies that use State pre-Kindergarten funds to meet matching requirements must check State pre-Kindergarten funds and public and/or private funds.

Use of private funds for match or maintenance-of-effort: Donated funds do not need to be under the administrative control of the Lead Agency to qualify as an expenditure for federal match. However, Lead Agencies must identify and designate in the State/Territory CCDF Plan the donated funds given to public or private entities to implement the CCDF child care program.

Not applicable. The Lead Agency is a Territory (skip to 8.3.1).

- a. Does the Lead Agency use public funds to meet match requirements?

Yes. If yes, describe which funds are used: **Maryland General Funds**

No.

- b. Does the Lead Agency use donated funds to meet match requirements?

Yes. If yes, identify the entity(ies) designated to receive donated funds:

i. Donated directly to the state.

ii. Donated to a separate entity(ies) designated to receive donated funds. If checked, identify the name, address, contact, and type of entities designated to receive private donated funds:

No.

- c. Does the Lead Agency certify that, if State expenditures for pre-Kindergarten programs are used to meet the MOE requirements, the following is true:

- The Lead Agency did not reduce its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services.
- The Lead Agency ensures that pre-Kindergarten programs meet the needs of working parents.
- The estimated percentage of the MOE requirement that will be met with pre-Kindergarten

expenditures (does not to exceed 20 percent).

- If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the MOE requirement, the State will coordinate its pre-Kindergarten and child care services to expand the availability of child care.

Public pre-Kindergarten funds may also serve as MOE funds as long as the State can describe how it will coordinate pre-Kindergarten and child care services to expand the availability of child care while using public pre-Kindergarten funds as no more than 20 percent of the State's MOE or 30 percent of its matching funds in a single fiscal year.

If expenditures for pre-Kindergarten services are used to meet the MOE requirement, does the Lead Agency certify that the State or Territory has not reduced its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services?

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

8.3 Coordination with Child Care Resource and Referral Systems

Lead Agencies may use CCDF funds to establish or support a system or network of local or regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) organizations that is coordinated, to the extent determined by the Lead Agency, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based or regionally based, lead child care resource and referral organization (such as a statewide CCR&R network).

If Lead Agencies use CCDF funds for local CCR&R organizations, the local or regional CCR&R organizations supported by those funds must, at the direction of the Lead Agency:

- Provide parents in the State with consumer education information concerning the full range of child care options (including faith-based and community-based child care providers), analyzed by provider, including child care provided during non-traditional hours and through emergency child care centers, in their area.
- To the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive assistance to offer the families support and assistance to make an informed decision about which child care providers they will use to ensure that the families are enrolling their children in the most appropriate child care setting that suits their needs and one that is of high quality (as determined by the Lead Agency).
- Collect data and provide information on the coordination of services and supports, including services under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services in areas of the State and submit the information to the Lead Agency.
- Work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community-based child care providers, to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the State and, as appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the Lead Agency and local agencies that administer funds made available through CCDF.

8.3.1 Funding a system or network of CCR&R organization(s)

Does the Lead Agency fund a system or network of local or regional CCR&R organization(s)?

No. The Lead Agency does not fund a system or network of local or regional CCR&R organization(s) and has no plans to establish one.

No, but the Lead Agency has plans to develop a system or network of local or regional CCR&R organization(s).

Yes. The Lead Agency funds a system or network of local or regional CCR&R organization(s) with all the responsibilities outlined above. If yes, describe the activities outlined above carried out by the CCR&R organization(s), as directed by the Lead Agency: **MSDE awarded a contract to Maryland Family Network to oversee the operations of the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network has twelve sites located throughout Maryland that help provide statewide information and referral services to assist families with finding licensed child care that meets their needs. Maryland Family Network provides leadership and management of the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network including grant management, training, technical assistance, support, program and fiscal monitoring, evaluation, and development of training modules and technical assistance strategies. The primary goal of the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network is to address the needs of parents seeking quality early care and education programs and to improve capacity building among licensed child care providers. This includes strategic management support as well as leadership development for licensed child care providers that participate in Maryland EXCELS. Maryland Family Network also provides centralized LOCATE: Child Care services for the State through telephone counseling and web-based programs. LOCATE: Child Care accesses a database containing all regulated child care in the 24 jurisdictions throughout Maryland. This database includes all registered family child care providers, licensed full day child care centers, Head Start programs, private nursery schools, kindergartens, PreK programs, and school age programs. Services are provided statewide and reflect the needs of all children, including those from low-income families, children with disabilities and special health care needs, English Language Learners, and children with developmental or mental health concerns.**

8.4 Public-Private Partnerships

Lead Agencies must demonstrate how they encourage partnerships among other public agencies, Tribal organizations, private entities, faith-based organizations, businesses, or organizations that promote business involvement, and/or community-based organizations to leverage existing service delivery (i.e., cooperative agreement among providers to pool resources to pay for shared fixed costs and operation) to leverage existing child care and early education service delivery systems and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children younger than age 13.

8.4.1 Lead Agency public-private partnerships

Identify and describe any public-private partnerships encouraged by the Lead Agency to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of CCDF: **The collaboration between MSDE and public and private community organizations is an important aspect of furthering the goals of CCDF. MSDE collaborates with public and private community organizations to build and support capacity, support coordination between MSDE and public-private organizations, and improve**

state-to-local coordination by connecting agencies to local early childhood councils. These partnerships are designed to promote the importance of early care and education as well as develop collaboration with the business and philanthropic community to engage them in activities to identify areas of service delivery needs and additional resources to support the goals of CCDF. Leveraging these partnerships, has allowed MSDE to identify gaps in current delivery systems for children birth through five years old and develop programming to address those gaps. MSDE partners with five community organizations to provide medically based child care and early education services. These children have medical diagnoses, developmental delays, physical disabilities, and behavioral issues requiring specialized care. PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs World of Care, PACT Helping Children with Special Needs Therapeutic Nursery, The Arc of Montgomery County, The Lourie Center for Children’s Social & Emotional Wellness, and The Arc of Prince George’s County all provide specialized on-site care to support children and their families. These programs provide early intervention therapies in speech, occupational and physical therapies, mental health, social-emotional, medical/healthcare services, and family supports in an inclusive high-quality early learning environment. Ready at Five is a private organization that is committed to comprehensive school readiness for all Maryland children. MSDE partners with Ready at Five to disseminate early education and kindergarten readiness information, foster community engagement, and bolster awareness of early care and education. Partnering with higher education institutions is another way to meet the goals of CCDF. MSDE established a partnership with Johns Hopkins University to administer the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Maryland EXCELS designed to recognize child care programs for accomplishing and maintaining levels of quality and support programs towards achieving program quality. To address the needs of parents seeking quality early care and education programs and to improve capacity building for child care professionals and licensed child care programs, MSDE partner with Maryland Family Network, Inc the Statewide Coordinating Entity for Maryland’s Child Care Resource and Referral Network. This partnership provides resource and referral services for families who are seeking child care services, provides training and technical assistance to child care providers (applicants and existing providers) and works with young families to build their parenting skills through Patty Centers Family Support Services. These unique partnerships of public and private agencies and organizations work together as thought partners to advance an integrated early childhood system and leverage the existing service delivery system to improve outcomes for children and families. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Regional Economic Studies Institute (RESI) at Towson University to provide data research and technical services. The state agency-to-state academic institution relationship leverages the expertise of RESI to further the goals of CCDF by enabling MSDE to be able to provide the data required of the State Plan, Quality Progress Report, forecasting to determine current and future expenditures, fulfill legislative requests, and provide other ancillary tasks within the parameters of the MOU.

8.5 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

Lead Agencies must establish a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan and demonstrate how they will address the needs of children—including the need for safe child care before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor or a major disaster or emergency (as defined by Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5122)—through a Statewide Disaster Plan.

8.5.1 Statewide Disaster Plan updates

- a. When was the Lead Agency’s Child Care Disaster Plan most recently updated and for what reason? **There have been no updates to Maryland’s Child Care Disaster Plan; however, MSDE intends to develop a new plan which will be implemented and followed by the entire agency, not just the Division of Early Childhood.**
- b. Please certify compliance by checking the required elements the Lead Agency includes in the current State Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan.
- i. The plan was developed in collaboration with the following required entities:
- State human services agency.
 - State emergency management agency.
 - State licensing agency.
 - State health department or public health department.
 - Local and State child care resource and referral agencies.
 - State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body.
- ii. The plan includes guidelines for the continuation of child care subsidies.
- iii. The plan includes guidelines for the continuation of child care services.
- iv. The plan includes procedures for the coordination of post-disaster recovery of child care services.
- v. The plan contains requirements for all CCDF providers (both licensed and license-exempt) to have in place:
- Procedures for evacuation.
 - Procedures for relocation.
 - Procedures for shelter-in-place.
 - Procedures for communication and reunification with families.
 - Procedures for continuity of operations.
 - Procedures for accommodations of infants and toddlers.
 - Procedures for accommodations of children with disabilities.
 - Procedures for accommodations of children with chronic medical conditions.
- vi. The plan contains procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training.
- vii. The plan contains procedures for staff and volunteer practice drills.
- viii. If any of the above are not checked, describe:
- ix. If available, provide the direct URL/website link to the website where the Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan is posted:
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/relocation_of_child_care_facilities_in_the_event_of_a_disaster.pdf

9 Family Outreach and Consumer Education

CCDF consumer education requirements facilitate parental choice in child care arrangements, support parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their family's needs, and the delivery of resources that can support child development and well-being. Lead Agency consumer education activities must provide information for parents receiving CCDF assistance, the general public, and, when appropriate, child care providers. Lead Agencies should use targeted strategies for each group to ensure tailored consumer education information and take steps to ensure they are effectively reaching all individuals, including those with limited English proficiency and those with disabilities.

In this section, Lead Agencies address their consumer education practices, including details about their child care consumer education website, and the process for collecting and maintaining a record of parental complaints.

9.1 Parental Complaint Process

Lead Agencies must maintain a record of substantiated parental complaints against child care providers and make information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. Lead Agencies must also provide a detailed description of the hotline or similar reporting process for parents to submit complaints about child care providers; the process for substantiating complaints; the manner in which the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints; and ways that the Lead Agency makes information on such parental complaints available to the public on request. Lead Agencies are not required to limit the complaint process to parents.

9.1.1 Parental complaint process

- a. Describe the Lead Agency's hotline or similar reporting process through which parents can submit complaints about child care providers, including a link if it is a Web-based process: **Parents can submit a complaint by contacting the appropriate regional child care office. Complaints are accepted via telephone, website, email, or letter and may be anonymous. The contact information for the regional offices can be found on the Maryland State Department of Education website. Parents or providers that call the CCS Vendor are given the toll-free number of the Department of Human Services (1-800-917-7383) and their website (<https://dhs.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-or-neglect/>).**
- b. Describe how the parental complaint process ensures broad access to services for families that speak languages other than English: **The website has a language translator feature that offers translation in 11 different languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, French, Persian, Spanish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Yoruba, and English. The languages were chosen based on analytics of the most used languages in Maryland. Parents or providers can request translation services on the money4childcare.org website.**
- c. Describe how the parental complaint process ensures broad access to services for persons with disabilities: **The Maryland Child website has been designed to provide equal access, navigation, and an equal experience to resources for persons with diverse abilities through the simplicity of the design and development of the website. To verify (across automation and manual assurance checks), the following tools have been utilized across**

modern browsers such as Edge, Firefox, and Chrome and older browsers such as Internet Explorer: Screen Readers: NVDA and JAWS WAVE (Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool) Accessible Name & Description Inspector (ANDI) Color Contract (ColorZilla and TGPI) Monitoring tools such as SiteImprove Our overall goal is to ensure the website is perceivable, operable, understandable, robust, and conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards for accessibility and usability.

- d. For complaints about providers, including CCDF providers and non-CCDF providers, does the Lead Agency have a process and timeline for screening, substantiating, and responding to complaints, including information about whether the process includes monitoring?

Yes. If yes, describe: **Complaints are received and then screened by the applicable regional licensing office for regulatory concerns. If there is a regulatory concern, the complaint is entered into the Child Care Administration Tracking System (CCATS) immediately and assigned for investigation. Complaint investigations are initiated within 2 working days and require an on-site inspection. If a complaint is confirmed (substantiated), the provider or operator must submit a corrective action plan to the agency. The time frame for the corrections is determined by the non-compliance of the regulation and the scope of the correction needed. For example, if a provider is required to install child-proof devices, the corrections would be expected to be completed immediately or within 24-48 hours if they need to purchase hardware or materials. In the meantime, the License Specialist will document how the provider will meet the regulation until the correction is completed. The provider is required to submit proof of the corrections with photographs, and if needed, the License Specialist will conduct a follow-up to verify corrections were made.**

The Record of Complaint must be completed within 30 days of the initial report. Depending on the investigation findings, on-site follow-up inspections may occur as necessary to assess compliance with violations that require the corrective action plan. Monitoring inspections are not part of the complaint process. The initial complaint inspection may have subsequent follow-up visits but not monitoring visits. Note: CCATS is a database for all child care providers, including informal child care providers.

No.

- e. For substantiated parental complaints, who maintains the record for CCDF and non-CCDF providers? **All complaint records are maintained in the Child Care Administration Tracking System (CCATS). After supervisory review and approval, substantiated complaints are posted on the Check Child Care Maryland Website.**
- f. Describe how information about substantiated parental complaints is made available to the public; this information can include the consumer education website discussed in subsection 9.2: **All complaint records are maintained in the Child Care Administration Tracking System (CCATS). After supervisory review and approval, substantiated complaints are posted on the Check Child Care Maryland Website.**

9.2 Consumer Education Website

Lead Agencies must provide information to parents, the general public, and child care providers through a State or Territory website, which is consumer-friendly and easily accessible for families who speak languages other than English and persons with disabilities. The website must:

- Include information to assist families in understanding the Lead Agency’s policies and procedures, including licensing child care providers;
- Include monitoring and inspection reports for each provider and, if available, the quality of each provider;
- Provide the aggregate number of deaths, serious injuries, and the number of cases of substantiated child abuse that have occurred in child care settings;
- Include contact information for local CCR&R organizations to help families access additional information on finding child care; and
- Include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency and other organizations to better understand the information on the website.

9.2.1 Consumer-friendly website

Does the Lead Agency ensure that its consumer education website is consumer-friendly and easily accessible?

- Provide the URL for the Lead Agency’s consumer education website homepage:
<https://marylandchild.org/>
- Does the Lead Agency certify that the consumer education website ensures broad access to services for families who speak languages other than English?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:
- Does the Lead Agency certify that the consumer education website ensures broad access to services for persons with disabilities?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe:

9.2.2 Additional consumer education website links

Provide the direct URL/website link for the following:

- Provide the direct URL/website link to how the Lead Agency licenses child care providers: **COMAR 13A.15.02, 13A.16.02, 13A.17.02 and 13A.18.02: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations> and marylandexcels.org.**
- Provide the direct URL/website link to the processes for conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers: **COMAR 13A.15.13, 13A.16.17, 13A.17.15 and 13A.18.14: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations>**
- Provide the direct URL/website link to the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers: **COMAR 13A.15.02, 13A.15.06, 13A.16.02, 13A.16.06, 13A.17.02, 13A.17.06, 13A.18.02 and 13A.18.06: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations> and https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/informal_provider_initial_application.pdf.**

- iv. Provide the direct URL/website link to the offenses that prevent individuals from being employed by a child care provider: **COMAR 13A.15.02, 13A.15.06, 13A.16.02, 13A.16.06, 13A.17.02, 13A.17.06, 13A.18.02 and 13A.18.06:** <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations> and <http://mdrules.elaws.us/comar/13a.14.06>.

9.2.3 Searchable list of providers

- a. The consumer education website must include a list of all licensed providers searchable by ZIP code.
 - i. Does the Lead Agency certify that the consumer education website includes a list of all licensed providers searchable by ZIP code?
 - Yes.
 - No. If no, describe:
 - ii. Provide the direct URL/website link to the list of child care providers searchable by ZIP code: <https://marylandexcels.org/directory/> and <https://www.checkccmd.org/>.
 - iii. In addition to the licensed child care providers that must be included in the searchable list, are there additional providers included in the Lead Agency’s searchable list of child care providers? Check all that apply:
 - License-exempt center-based CCDF providers.
 - License-exempt family child care CCDF providers.
 - License-exempt non-CCDF providers.
 - Relative CCDF child care providers.
 - Other (e.g., summer camps, public pre-Kindergarten). Describe: **MSDE does not regulate summer camps or day camps. The afterschool programs are licensed under the category of Child Care Center and/or Letter of Compliance.**
- b. Identify what additional (optional) information, if any, is available in the searchable results by ZIP code. Check the box when information is provided.

Provider Information Available in Searchable Results					
	All licensed providers	License-exempt CCDF center-based providers	License-exempt CCDF family child care home providers	License-exempt non-CCDF providers	Relative CCDF providers
Contact information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enrollment capacity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hours, days, and months of operation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider education and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Languages spoken by the caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to accept CCDF certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages of children served	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialization or training for certain populations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care provided during nontraditional hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- c. Identify any other information searchable on the consumer education website for the child care provider type listed below and then, if checked, describe the searchable information included on the website.
- i. All licensed providers. Describe:
 - ii. License-exempt CCDF center-based providers. Describe:
 - iii. License-exempt CCDF family child care providers. Describe:
 - iv. License-exempt, non-CCDF providers. Describe:
 - v. Relative CCDF providers. Describe:
 - vi. Other. Describe:

9.2.4 Provider-specific quality information

Lead Agencies must identify specific quality information on each child care provider for whom they have this information. Provider-specific quality information must only be posted on the consumer education website if it is available for the individual child care provider.

- a. What specific quality information does the Lead Agency provide on the website?
- i. Quality improvement system.
 - ii. National accreditation.
 - iii. Enhanced licensing system.
 - iv. Meeting Head Start/Early Head Start Program Performance Standards.
 - v. Meeting pre-Kindergarten quality requirements.
 - vi. School-age standards.
 - vii. Quality framework or quality improvement system.

viii. Other. Describe: The Prekindergarten website shares a variety of information in support of high quality pre-k. For example, the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant application is currently live. This is a competitive grant program administered by the Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). It provides funding for local education agencies (LEAs) and child care providers to administer high-quality prekindergarten and school readiness services throughout the State for children and their families in alignment with The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The purpose of the grant is to broaden availability and expand access to high-quality prekindergarten educational programming and school readiness services for three- year-old and four-year-old students from families with household incomes up to 300% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL). For Fiscal Year 2025 funding only, Tier I families include Tier II children with disabilities and children who speak a home language other than English. Tier II children are between 300% and 600% of FPL. Additionally, the website outlines the definition of high-quality pre-kindergarten. This definition applies to publicly-funded prekindergarten. High-Quality Preschool Program means an early learning program that includes structural elements that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality, including at a minimum¹ (a) High staff qualifications, including a teacher holding a State certification for teaching in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field pursuing residency through a State approved alternate pathway, which includes coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood; as well as a teacher assistant with an AA in Early Childhood, CDA, or enrolled in a program to obtain these credentials (b) High-quality professional development for all staff (must be 15 hours of early childhood PD); (c) A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1; (d) A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher in each classroom with high staff qualifications as outlined in paragraph (a) of this definition; (e) A Full-Day program (6.5 hours); (f) Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities; (g) Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry; (h) Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities (i) Instructional staff salaries are commensurate with the salaries and benefits of local PreK-12 instructional staff; (j) Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement; (k) On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development; and (l) Evidence-based health and safety standards.

b. For what types of child care providers is quality information available?

i. Licensed CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: **Workforce Advancement opportunities** training and professional development, Program Accreditation, Maryland EXCELS participation, Early Learning Standards

ii. Licensed non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: **Workforce**

Advancement opportunities ☐ training and professional development, Program Accreditation, Maryland EXCELS participation, Early Learning Standards

- iii. License-exempt center-based CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- iv. License-exempt FCC CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- v. License-exempt non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- vi. Relative child care providers. Describe the quality information:
- vii. Other. Describe:

9.2.5 Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated abuse

Lead Agencies must post aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of child abuse that have occurred in child care settings each year on the consumer education website. This aggregate data must include information about any child in the care of a provider eligible to receive CCDF, not just children receiving subsidies.

This aggregate information on serious injuries and deaths must be separated by category of care (e.g., centers, family child care homes, and in-home care) and licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt) for all eligible CCDF child care providers in the State/Territory. The information on instances of substantiated child abuse does not have to be organized by category of care or licensing status. Information must also include the total number of children in care by provider type and licensing status, so that families can better understand the data presented on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of abuse.

- a. Certify by checking below that the required elements are included in the Aggregate Data Report on serious incident data that have occurred in child care settings each year.
 - i. The total number of serious injuries of children in care by provider category and licensing status.
 - ii. The total number of deaths of children in care by provider category and licensing status.
 - iii. The total number of substantiated instances of child abuse in child care settings.
 - iv. The total number of children in care by provider category and licensing status.
 - v. If any of the above elements are not included, describe:
- b. Certify by providing:
 - i. The designated entity to which child care providers must submit reports of any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care and describe how the Lead Agency obtains the aggregate data from the entity: **The informal, license exempt, child care providers must report serious injuries and deaths of children in which CCDF funds are paid to the Informal Provider Approval team. The Informal Provider Team can potentially receive data from the parent, the informal provider, the licensing specialist, Department of Human Resources or other government entities. Once data is received the information is aggregated and posted on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) website.**

Licensed child care programs also follow the same process.

- ii. The definition of “substantiated child abuse” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement: **The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) determines whether reported child abuse is indicated (Substantiated) or unsubstantiated. Per the Maryland Code of Family Law, "Indicated" means a finding that there is credible evidence, which has not been satisfactorily refuted, that abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse did occur.**
- iii. The definition of “serious injury” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement: **A serious injury is an injury that requires medical attention from a healthcare provider. Death in child care is the death of a child that occurred while the child was in care. A serious injury or death is not necessarily related to licensing violations.**
- c. Provide the direct URL/website link to the page where the aggregate number of serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated child abuse, and the total number of children in care by provider category and licensing status are posted: **https://marylandchild.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Serious-Injuries-Deaths-Child-Abuse-Report_2021-2023_final.pdf**

9.2.6 Contact information on referrals to local child care resource and referral organizations

The Lead Agency consumer education website must include contact information on referrals to local CCR&R organizations.

- a. Does the consumer education website include contact information on referrals to local CCR&R organizations?
 Yes.
 No.
 Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not have local CCR&R organizations.
- b. Provide the direct URL/website link to this information:
<https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/for-providers/find-your-child-care-resource-center>

9.2.7 Lead Agency contact information for parents

The Lead Agency consumer and provider education website must include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency or its designee and other programs that can help the parent understand information included on the website.

- a. Does the website provide directions on how parents can contact the Lead Agency or its designee and other programs to help them understand information included on the website?
 Yes.
 No.
- b. Provide the direct URL/website link to this information:
<https://marylandchild.org/contact-us/>,

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/contact-us>,
https://provider.childcareportals.org/s/?language=en_US, and
<https://family.childcareportals.org/>

9.2.8 Posting sliding fee scale, co-payment amount, and policies for waiving co-payments

The consumer education website must include the sliding fee scale for parent co-payments, including the co-payment amount a family may expect to pay and policies for waiving co-payments.

- a. Does the Lead Agency certify that their consumer education website includes the sliding fee scale for parent co-payments, including the co-payment amount a family may expect to pay and policies for waiving co-payments?

Yes.

No.

- b. Provide the direct URL/website link to the sliding fee scale.

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/copayment_agreement_en_2.pdf

9.3 Increasing Engagement and Access to Information

Lead Agencies must collect and disseminate information about the full range of child care services to promote parental choice to parents of children eligible for CCDF, the general public, and child care providers.

9.3.1 Information about CCDF availability and eligibility

Describe how the Lead Agency shares information with eligible parents, the general public, and child care providers about the availability of child care services provided through CCDF and other programs for which the family may be eligible. The description should include, at a minimum, what is provided (e.g., written materials, the website, and direct communications) and what approaches are used to tailor information to parents, the general public, and child care providers. **The Maryland State Department of Education maintains a website with information tailored to parents, the general public, and child care providers. This website includes resources such as eligibility checklists, FAQs, an application portal, interactive maps of child care providers, and links to additional support services.**

The Maryland State Department of Education uses direct communication channels, such as email newsletters, social media outreach, and phone calls, to keep child care providers and parents updated with important information, announcements, and reminders. The Maryland State Department of Education attends outreach events, workshops, and informational sessions in collaboration with community organizations, schools, and local agencies to engage directly with parents, the general public, and child care providers.

Furthermore, the Maryland State Department of Education collaborates with partner organizations, such as local government agencies, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), advocacy groups, and child care associations, to extend the reach of its messaging and connect with specific communities or demographics that may benefit from child care services.

9.3.2 Information about child care and other services available for parents

Does the Lead Agency certify that it provides information described in 9.3.1 for the following required programs?

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) program.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- Programs carried out under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C.

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

9.3.3 Consumer statement for parents receiving CCDF services

Lead Agencies must provide parents receiving CCDF services with a consumer statement in hard copy or electronically that contains general information about the CCDF program and specific information about the child care provider they select.

Please certify if the Lead Agency provides parents receiving CCDF services a consumer statement that contains the following 8 requirements:

1. Health and safety requirements met by the provider
2. Licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider
3. Date the provider was last inspected
4. Any history of violations of these requirements
5. Any voluntary quality standards met by the provider
6. How CCDF subsidies are designed to promote equal access
7. How to submit a complaint through the hotline
8. How to contact a local resource and referral agency or other community-based organization to receive assistance in finding and enrolling in quality child care

Does the Lead Agency provide to families, either in hard copy or electronically, a consumer statement that contains the required information about the provider they have selected, including the eight required elements above?

Yes.

No. If no, describe: **The consumer statement is located on the Lead Agency website but child care programs are responsible for disseminating the information, while ensuring families awareness and documentation of the information.**

9.3.4 Informing families about best practices on child development

Describe how the Lead Agency makes information available to parents, providers, and the general public on research and best practices concerning children’s development, including physical health and development, and information about successful parent and family engagement. At a minimum, the description should include what information is provided; how the information is provided; any distinct activities for sharing this information with parents, providers, the general public; and any partners in providing this information. **As a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) resource, the Maryland Families Engage website was designed to help build a community of support for those who care for and work with children. The database of resources contains links to child development, family engagement initiatives, mental health, nutrition, literacy and more. You can sort these resources by topics and share your findings with families, friends and colleagues. Additionally, on the MSDE website are numerous resources linked to provide parents, providers and the general public with information on research, best practices concerning children’s development and information about successful parent and family engagement. Specifically, the website informs families about how to access Pre-K, Family Support Centers (Patty Centers), Judy Centers, Child Care Scholarship, Finding Child Care and Family Engagement. MSDE provides information about best practices on child development using several modes of communication and dissemination. Information is provided on the Division of Early Childhood website and is updated frequently. MSDE provides a digital newsletter to parents and guardians of young children. The consumer education website includes information on child development and healthy eating. The Division of Early Childhood has a robust listserv, a bi-weekly newsletter (Tuesday Tidbits) to disseminate information, research, and best practices concerning children’s development as well as parent and family engagement activities and opportunities.**

9.3.5 Unlimited parental access to their children

Does the Lead Agency have procedures to ensure that parents have unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds:

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

9.3.6 Informing families about best practices in social and emotional health

Describe how the Lead Agency shares information with families, providers, and the general public regarding the social-emotional and behavioral and mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models based on research and best practices for those from birth to school age: **Links to information on the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health are on the Division of Early Childhood website. Written materials are available from the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health service providers and the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The Social and Emotional Foundation for Early Learning website includes resources for parents, and free Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services are available upon request.**

The provider community attends many State conferences where the Division of Early Childhood actively participates with resource tables and breakout sessions. In addition, the Division provides financial assistance for these conferences, which include training and information on social-emotional development and early childhood mental health strategies and services. Many local

counties also have conferences that address these topics, which the Division supports financially or through the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

The Division of Early Childhood has a robust listserv, a parent digital newsletter, a bi-weekly digital newsletter (Tuesday Tidbits), and a quarterly newsletter (Impact) to disseminate information on MSDE's policies regarding the social-emotional and behavioral issues and mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models based on research and best practices for those from birth to school age. The Division of Early Childhood provides information on the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program. This information is provided on the website and written materials are available from the IECMH service providers and the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network. MSDE partners with University of Maryland School of Social Work to provide Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning training and resources. Resources are available for parents and free mental health consultation services upon request. Information is also included in the bi-weekly digital newsletter Tuesday Tidbits to inform families of policies and best practices in social and emotional health. Topics include understanding your child's social and emotional health, identifying services and resources, early intervention and support models based on research and best practices.

9.3.7 Policies on the prevention of the suspension and expulsion of children

- a. The Lead Agency must have policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds. Describe those policies and how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public: **The policy statement is a short document that states suspension and expulsion are detrimental and should only be used as a last resort; programs should have a written policy describing alternatives to suspension and expulsion and, in addition, have support for training staff. The guidance document contains an introduction to the importance of eliminating suspension and expulsion, definitions of suspension and expulsion, the importance of families, the need for a well-trained workforce, and resources for further guidance. Members of the workgroup participated in a Roundtable held by the Maryland State Child Care Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children in August 2017 to share the policy with participants. The policy includes children ages birth through 13 and is written for childcare programs that serve all ages. Child care programs participating in Maryland's mixed-delivery PreK program are forbidden from suspending or expelling students, except in rare circumstances.**
- b. Describe what policies, if any, the Lead Agency has to prevent the suspension and expulsion of school-age children from child or youth care settings receiving CCDF funds: **Maryland State Department of Education policies on the prevention and suspension and expulsion of children states that early care and education programs, including child care programs for all ages, shall not expel or suspend a child from care, unless it is the last resort where there are extraordinary circumstances based on a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. Suspension and expulsion practices are banned in our child care and education programs for young learners (pre-kindergarten through second grade) passed by the Senate Bill 651/House Bill 425 (Bill), except in cases where the student would create an imminent risk of serious harm as determined by an administrator in consultation with a mental health professional. Additionally, Child Care Programs must**

ensure that discipline policies comply with Federal civil rights laws.

Child Care Programs shall also not limit the amount of services provided to a child (including denying outdoor time, withholding food, using food as a reward/punishment, or limiting the hours or days of availability of care). The Maryland Guidelines for State Code of Discipline provides several key principles for fostering supportive environments in programs for children and families.

These guidelines emphasize the importance of:

- Creating a positive, safe, and welcoming environment conducive to learning.
- Demonstrating respect and courtesy towards children, parents/guardians, and program staff.
- Being well-informed about discipline policies, regulations, and resources and ensuring the community is also informed.
- Addressing disproportionality in discipline and ensuring fair, consistent, and equitable enforcement regardless of individual characteristics.
- Maintaining open and timely communication with parents/guardians in accessible language.
- Cultivating a sense of community where parents feel involved and informed about program events and activities.
- Fostering relationships and collaboration among program staff to create a connected learning community.

9.4 Providing Information on Developmental Screenings

Lead Agencies must provide information on developmental screenings to parents as part of the intake process for families participating in CCDF and to child care providers through training and education. This information must include:

- Existing resources and services that the State can make available in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services when appropriate for children who receive child care assistance, including the coordinated use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act and developmental screening services available under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C; and,
- A description of how a family or child care provider can use these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive subsidies and who might be at risk of cognitive or other developmental delays, which can include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays.

Information on developmental screenings, as in other consumer education information, must be accessible for individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities.

9.4.1 Developmental screenings

Does the Lead Agency collect and disseminate information on the following:

- a. Existing resources and services available for obtaining developmental screening for parents receiving CCDF, the general public, and child care providers.

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

- b. Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program—carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)—and developmental screening services available under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.).

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

- c. Developmental screenings to parents receiving a subsidy as part of the intake process.

Yes. If yes, include the information provided, ways it is provided, and any partners in this work: **The Maryland State Department of Education is the lead agency for the Center for Disease Control's Learn the Signs Act Early initiative. The Division of Early Childhood partners with the Office of Early Intervention and Special Education to distribute the Center for Disease Control's Milestones Tracker information, as well as additional materials to promote awareness among parents and child care programs and providers about the critical importance of early identification, screening, and referral resources. The Maryland State Department of Education also developed, and is in the process of distributing, a document with the scholarship approval packet to parents receiving child care scholarships. Information about developmental screenings is available on the Division of Early Childhood website. Providers are strongly encouraged to conduct developmental screenings for enrolled children. Developmental screenings are not a regulatory requirement. Information is provided to providers and families regarding best practices as it relates to developmental screening and the importance of administering them. It is 'best practice' to administer and share the results with families to ensure that proper referrals are made if appropriate and to understand their child's present level of development and how to continue supporting them along the developmental continuum. Effective July 1, 2022, all providers serving children under the age of three years old, must notify parents on an annual basis of the Maryland Infant and Toddler Program via a brochure on the Agency's website. The brochure describes the program and has contact information for all regions of the state. The brochure may be accessed at the following link:**

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/infant_and_toddler_program_brochure_final.pdf

No. If no, describe:

- d. How families receiving CCDF services or child care providers receiving CCDF can use the available resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays.

Yes.

No. If no, describe:

10 Program Integrity and Accountability

Program integrity and accountability activities are integral to the effective administration of the CCDF program. As stewards of federal funds, Lead Agencies must ensure strong and effective internal controls to prevent fraud and maintain continuity of services to meet the needs of children and families. In order to operate and maintain a strong CCDF program, regular evaluation of the program's internal controls as well as comprehensive training for all entities involved in the administration of the program are imperative. In this section, Lead Agencies will describe their internal controls and how those internal controls effectively ensure integrity and accountability. These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors and should apply to all CCDF funds.

10.1 Effective Internal Controls

Lead Agencies must ensure the integrity of the use of CCDF funds through effective fiscal management and must ensure that financial practices are in place. Lead Agencies must have effective fiscal management practices in place for all CCDF expenditures.

10.1.1 Organizational structure to support integrity and internal controls

Describe how the Lead Agency's organizational structure ensures the oversight and implementation of effective internal controls that promote and support program integrity and accountability. Describe: **The Child Care Administration Tracking System (CCATS) has a security matrix system that restricts user roles, thus supporting internal controls and oversight. For example, staff who perform fiscal duties cannot determine eligibility and staff who determine eligibility cannot perform fiscal duties. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) implements effective internal controls through administrative oversight of the vendor that authorizes Child Care Scholarship (CCS) services on behalf of MSDE. Our internal control consists of the vendor completing a 100% Pre-Authorization Review and an Authorization Review before CCS benefits are authorized. MSDE requires a two-level Program Integrity Review of the work completed by the vendor. The first level and second level review require the vendor to review 25% of the cases. In addition, MSDE completes a supervisory review of a percentage of the cases reviewed by the vendor and completes an independent a 1st level review. MSDE returns any case that can be corrected to the vendor to minimize identified under or over payments and to reduce similar errors moving forward.**

Include the following elements in your description:

1. Assignment of authority and responsibilities related to program integrity.
2. Delegation of duties.
3. Coordination of activities.
4. Communication between fiscal and program staff.
5. Segregation of duties.
6. Establishment of checks and balances to identify potential fraud risks.
7. Other activities that support program integrity.

10.1.2 Fiscal management practices

Describe how the Lead Agency ensures effective fiscal management practices for all CCDF expenditures, including:

- a. Fiscal oversight of CCDF funds, including grants and contracts. Describe: **The Division of Early Childhood has grants specialists that oversee and monitors the grants and contracts. The grants specialist also completes monitoring visits throughout the year. Management, including the Office of Fiscal Operation and Accountability, reviews and signs off on all contracts and grants. In the release of any request for proposal, allowable and unallowable expenditures are listed. The grant/contract monitor then reviews invoices to ensure that any requests for payment fall within the allowable charges. Signed assurances are enforced in case of misappropriation.**
- b. Tracking systems that ensure reasonable and allowable costs and allow for tracing of funds to a level of expenditure adequate to establish that such funds have not been used in violation of the provision of this part. Describe: **During the review of a grant proposal and proposed budget. The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) ensures that the project scope is specific and is only allowed if adequate cost, historical, or unit pricing data is available to establish a fixed amount award based on a reasonable estimate of actual cost. Upon approval, the DEC creates an expenditure tracking sheet for each award that aligns with the approved budget. The sub-recipients are required to submit receipts and/or a general ledger that supports the breakdown of actual expenditures reflected on the invoice. The DEC only reimburses the payment if the sub-recipients submit all required documentation and receipt of evidence of acceptable performance within a given period of performance. Also, the DEC performs routine desk audit and routine sub recipient monitoring to ensure reasonable and allowable costs are met.**
- c. Processes and procedures to prepare and submit required state and federal fiscal reporting. Describe: **The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) has established robust processes and procedures to ensure accurate and timely preparation of required state and federal fiscal reports. Through close collaboration with the Office of Fiscal Operation and Accountability within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), DEC utilizes both the Statewide accounting tool "FMIS" and an internal reporting tool "IBM COGNOS Impromptu." These tools are employed to generate routine and impromptu reports for analysis of funding balances and other financial activities related to grants and contracts. Monitoring of these tools occurs on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis to ensure comprehensive oversight of all finance-related activities. Additionally, the DEC finance team conducts professional development sessions for internal program staff and external stakeholders, offering guidance on documentation and funding utilization in strict accordance with prescribed regulations and guidelines.**
- d. Other. Describe: **The Fiscal team of Division of Early Childhood (DEC) works very closely with the Office of Fiscal Operation and Accountability withing the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to ensure that the use of grant funds are accurately received, recorded, and managed appropriately. MSDE uses the Statewide accounting tool known as, FMIS, as well as an internal Google-based system to create, issue, and track grant award notices and contracts. These tools are monitors on a daily basis to track activities related to grants and contracts. DEC has implemented and managed uniform invoice verification processes to provide financial oversight for all grants and contracts. DEC checks the invoice to ensure that expenditures are aligned with the approved budget and are properly supported by receipt and/ or ledgers from the sub-grantees and/or vendors. Any inconsistencies are discussed with the sub-grantees and/or vendors until an acceptable solution is obtained.**

10.1.3 Effectiveness of fiscal management practices

Describe how the Lead Agency knows there are effective fiscal management practices in place for all CCDF expenditures, including:

- a. How the Lead Agency defines effective fiscal management practices. Describe: **The Division of Early Childhood has established clear guidelines and procedures for budgeting, spending, and accounting related to CCDF expenditures. This includes ensuring compliance with federal regulations and guidelines, as well as transparency and accountability in financial transactions.**
- b. How the Lead Agency measures and tracks results of their fiscal management practices. Describe: **The Division of Early Childhood measures and tracks the results of their fiscal management practices through regular audits/comprehensive desk audits, financial reports, and performance indicators. DEC utilizes tools such as budget variance analysis, expenditure tracking systems, and internal controls to monitor spending patterns, identify potential areas of improvement, and assess the overall financial health of the program.**
- c. How the results inform implementation. Describe: **The results of these fiscal management practices inform implementation by providing valuable insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of CCDF expenditures. For example, if audits reveal instances of overspending or misallocation of funds, the DEC can take corrective actions such as revising budgets, providing additional training to staff/sub-grantees, or implementing stronger internal controls to prevent future occurrences. Similarly, if financial reports indicate areas of underutilization or unmet needs, the DEC can reallocate resources to better meet the needs of eligible families and improve program outcomes.**
- d. Other. Describe: **The DEC conducts regular risk assessments to identify potential financial risks and implementing strategies to mitigate them. Also, the DEC engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with stakeholders, including child care providers, advocacy groups, and government agencies, to ensure alignment with broader goals and priorities related to early childhood education and care.**

10.1.4 Identifying risk

Describe the processes the Lead Agency uses to identify risk in the CCDF program including:

- a. Each process used by the Lead Agency to identify risk (including entities responsible for implementing each process). Describe: **The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) uses the following to identify risk in the CCDF program: the user roles in Child Care Administrative Track System (CCATS) roles and the implementation of Comprehensive Program Reporting Systems (CPRS) to identify over or underpayment. MSDE Child Care Scholarship Monitor is responsible for approving or denying CCATS access requests. MSDE Information Technology (IT) staff are responsible for implementing CCATS access with the CCATS system. MSDE Quality Assurance staff and the MSDE Child Care Scholarship (CCS) vendor are responsible for implementing the CPRS reviews, where the goal is to review 10-25% of the cases authorized. MSDE and the vendor attempt to complete CPRS reviews monthly.**
- b. The frequency of each risk assessment. Describe: **The Child Care Administrative Track System (CCATS) assignments of roles are reviewed each time CCATS access is requested and are reviewed during State of Maryland Single Audits conducted by external entities.**

Comprehensive Program Reporting Systems (CPRS) reviews are conducted monthly.

- c. How the Lead Agency uses risk assessment results to inform program improvement. Describe: **The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) uses the results of the Child Care Administrative Track System (CCATS) system denial to train the vendor on the separation of duties and to determine if there are any procedural processes that are being violated or that need to be modified. MSDE uses the results of the Comprehensive Program Reporting Systems (CPRS) reviews to inform training needs and to strengthen program integrity and authorization accuracy.**
- d. How the Lead Agency knows that the risk assessment processes utilized are effective. Describe: **The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) knows the Child Care Administrative Track System (CCATS) risk assessments processes is effective due to the implementation of a two-step approval process that identifies any violations in requests and the approval process. The completion of the CPRS review process enables MSDE to identify and address errors and repeat findings and to determine the effectiveness of implemented risk assessments.**
- e. Other. Describe: **The Lead Agency's organizational structure of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Family Portal and the Child Care Provider Portal ensures oversight and implementation of effective internal controls through a reporting mechanism that requires parents and providers to confirm attendance every two weeks. The system flags any discrepancies in attendance. As a part of establishing program integrity: the MSDE CCS vendor requests documentation from the child care provider on any discrepancies. The attendance validation process is effective due to the ability of MSDE to use technology to identify factors that support accurate payment for services rendered and/or paid for with federal/state funds.**

10.1.5 Processes to train about CCDF requirements and program integrity

Describe the processes the Lead Agency uses to train staff of the Lead Agency and other agencies engaged in the administration of CCDF, and child care providers about program requirements and integrity.

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that all staff who administer the CCDF program (including through MOUs, grants, and contracts) are informed and trained regarding program requirements and integrity.
 - i. Describe the training provided to staff members around CCDF program requirements and program integrity: **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Child Care Scholarship Branch provides technical assistance any time there is an update to Code of Maryland (COMAR), regulations impacting child care scholarship and federal policy updates. Likewise, the MSDE Credentialing staff provide training and technical assistance any time there is an update to COMAR, credentialing regulations, and policy or procedure changes.**
 - ii. Describe how staff training is evaluated for effectiveness: **The effectiveness of training is determined by consistency in policy implementation and accurate implementation of training objectives.**
 - iii. Describe how the Lead Agency uses program integrity data (e.g., error rate results, risk assessment data) to inform ongoing staff training needs: **Feedback received**

from provider trainings, listening sessions, conferences, or child care stakeholders is used to modify procedures and implement system changes that streamline processes or address identified barriers. Likewise, when program integrity issues are identified, changes in policies and/or procedures are quickly put in place to reduce similar errors from occurring in the future and to determine how the event occurred and what needs to happen to correct.

- b. Describe how the Lead Agency ensures all providers for children receiving CCDF funds are informed and trained regarding CCDF program requirements and program integrity:
 - i. Describe the training for providers around CCDF program requirements and program integrity: **The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides monthly listening sessions, open office hours, and direct communication through emails regarding program changes and requirements. MSDE works with community partners to establish broader communication regarding the training needs and concerns of child care providers. Child care providers are provided with electronic communication through the Child Care Provider Portal. The MSDE Division of Early Childhood has monthly informational sessions with child care stakeholders.**
 - ii. Describe how provider training is evaluated for effectiveness: **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides technical assistance or informational sessions on changes in policies or procedures prior to regulation promulgation or implementation**
 - iii. Describe how the Lead Agency uses program integrity data (e.g., error rate results, risk assessment data) to inform ongoing provider training needs: **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) uses program integrity data to determine if training provided was effective and to understand whether or not additional training is needed. In completing Quality Assurance Reviews, the Child Care Branch uses identified errors and any identified program integrity issues to determine what additional training is needed. Identification of errors indicate where additional training is needed to strengthen areas identified during the risk assessments or quality assurance reviews.**

10.1.6 Evaluate internal control activities

Describe how the Lead Agency uses the following to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of Lead Agency internal control activities for all CCDF expenditures.

- a. Error rate review triennial report results (if applicable). Describe who this information is shared with and how the Lead Agency uses the information to evaluate the effectiveness of its internal controls: **The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) uses the results of the triennial report to determine program weaknesses and to determine what type of training and/or what modifications need to occur with quality reviews monthly to reduce errors. The goal is always to immediately review the results, discuss the results with staff responsible for case managers that authorize child care scholarship benefits and to develop a joint plan for having reduced errors during the three years between the error rate reviews.**
- b. Audit results. Describe who this information is shared with and how the Lead Agency uses the information to evaluate the effectiveness of its internal controls: **The MSDE Child Care**

Scholarship Branch shares this information with the Quality Assurance team and the vendor and uses this information with one goal: increase the proper authorization of child care scholarship benefits.

- c. Other. Describe who this information is shared with and how the Lead Agency uses the information to evaluate the effectiveness of its internal controls: **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) shares the information with the vendor that authorizes child care scholarship benefits with the goal of strengthening training, improving internal controls, and to reduce repeat findings. The information is used to understand what resulted in the error or findings and to determine the level of effort and/or cost required to increase program integrity or to update policy/procedures and possibly automate internal controls.**

10.1.7 Identified weaknesses in internal controls

Has the Lead Agency or other entity identified any weaknesses in its internal controls?

- a. No. If no, describe when and how it was most recently determined that there were no weaknesses in the Lead Agency's internal controls. **The January 2023 Federal Monitoring visit did not determine any weaknesses with Maryland's CCDF internal controls.**
- b. Yes. If yes, what were the indicators? How did you use the information to strengthen your internal controls?

10.2 Fraud Investigation, Payment Recovery, and Sanctions

Lead Agencies must have the necessary controls to identify fraud and other program violations to ensure program integrity. Program violations can include both intentional and unintentional client and/or provider violations, as defined by the Lead Agency. These violations and errors, identified through the error-rate review process and other review processes, may result in payment or nonpayment (administrative) errors and may or may not be the result of fraud, based on the Lead Agency definition.

10.2.1 Strategies used to identify and prevent program violations

Check the activities the Lead Agency employs to ensure program integrity, and for each checked activity, identify what type of program violations the activity addresses, describe the activity and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis.

- a. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)).
- i. Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **An Intentional Program Violation (IPV) is where a parent submits fraudulent or altered documents, falsifies information on applications or records, falsifies Maryland residency, fails to report all requested information or submits other documents that enable a parent to receive benefits or monetary gains in which they are ineligible to receive. An intentional Program Violation (IPV) may also result in an Administrative Disqualification Hearing, a repayment agreement, or even criminal prosecution.**

The identification of IPVs informs Maryland of practices that may need to be modified or enforced differently to reduce similar violations moving forward.

- ii. Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **An Unintentional Program Violation (UPV) is any violation submitted based on human error and where case review eliminates intentional misconduct. UPVs can be committed by a parent or a case manager. UPVs that result in a parent obtaining benefits or monetary gain to which they are not entitled and result in an overpayment in child care scholarship benefits will be collected from the parent. The identification of UPVs informs Maryland of practices that may need to be modified or enforced differently to reduce similar violations moving forward.**
 - iii. Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Agency errors normally result from misinterpretation or mis-implementation of policy. If an agency error results in an overpayment or underpayment, a payment is made to address the underpayment and payment is collected to address the overpayment. Identification of agency errors are used to inform training or the implementation of procedures to identify or reduce similar errors more easily.**
- b. Run system reports that flag errors (include types).
- i. Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Maryland does not have a report that flags intentional, unintentional, or program errors but uses a combination of system reports from the Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Salesforce, and CCATS queries to conduct case audits, system reviews and to monitor program service level agreements, which may lead to the identification of program violations. As a result of quality assurance reviews, if any error is noted: the program violation is addressed through the appropriate over/underpayment or referred to the Child Care Scholarship investigator for review. All identified program errors inform if procedure modifications are needed and what type of guidance needs to be provided to staff or the vendor.**
 - ii. Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Maryland does not have a report that flags intentional, unintentional, or program errors but uses a combination of system reports from the Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Salesforce, and CCATS queries to conduct case audits, system reviews and to monitor program service level agreements, which may lead to the identification of program violations. As a result of the reviews, if any error is noted, the program violation is addressed through the appropriate over/underpayment or referred to the CCS Investigator for review. All identified program errors inform the Maryland State Department of Education if procedural modifications are needed and what type of guidance needs to be provided to staff or the vendor.**
 - iii. Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Maryland does not have a report that flags intentional, unintentional, or program errors but uses a combination of system**

reports from the Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Salesforce, and CCATS queries to conduct case audits, system reviews, and to monitor program service level agreements, which may lead to the identification of agency errors. As a result of the quality assurance reviews, if any error is noted: the agency error is addressed as over/underpayment or referred to the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Investigator for review. All identified program errors inform the Maryland State Department of Education if procedural modifications are needed and what type of guidance needs to be provided to staff or the vendor.

- c. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.
- i. Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Scholarship enrollment is completed using the Child Care Scholarship Family Portal and the Child Care Provider Portal. The Child Care Provider Portal will only allow the authorized scholarship to be selected by one child care provider. As a part of Maryland's two-step attendance verification: parents must approve the attendance through the Child Care Scholarship Family Portal. Any child care scholarship authorization that results in a dispute with attendance or where a parent does not respond: the invoice is selected for a Program Integrity Audit. Providers with identified violations are required to upload their sign-in and sign-out sheets to validate the child's attendance; a discrepancy will result in the collection of an overpayment from the child care provider. Having a two-step authentication process informs better practices by encouraging both parents and providers to carefully document attendance invoices submitted as part of their billing records. If it is suspected that the violation is intentional or possible fraud, the case will be referred to the Child Care Scholarship Investigator. The outcome of the case could result in the child care provider or parent being removed from participation in the Child Care Scholarship Program.**
- ii. Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Child care providers submit their invoices through the Child Care Provider Portal. Likewise Scholarship enrollment is completed through the child care family and provider portals. The system will only allow one provider to be selected for each child care scholarship enrollment. As a part of Maryland's two-step attendance verification, parents must approve the attendance through the child care family portal. Any intentional errors that result in a dispute with attendance or where a parent does not respond, the invoice is selected for a program integrity audit. Providers with identified violations are required to upload their sign-in and sign-out sheets to validate the child's attendance; any discrepancies will result in an overpayment that will need to be repaid by the childcare provider. Having a two-step authentication process informs better practices by encouraging both parents and providers to carefully document attendance invoices submitted as part of their billing records. If the case review indicates an unintentional program violation, the Child Care Scholarship Program will collect the overpayment and will determine if modifications to program procedures are needed to reduce similar errors in the future.**
- iii. Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how

they inform better practice: **The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) audits the service level**

agreement that the vendor must meet to be compliant with the contract. The review of service-level agreements enables the Maryland State Department of Education to view thousands of transactions for program accuracy. In addition, MSDE conducts Comprehensive Program Reviews (CPRS) where a random selection of cases approved for Child Care Scholarship benefits are audited. Any agency-identified errors during both reviews must be corrected, and/or the overpayment must be addressed to collect monetary damages. Any time errors are identified, technical guidance is provided to reduce errors moving forward, and conversation is had to determine if changes in policies or procedures could reduce or better identify similar errors with the goal of preventing or reducing the same mistakes in the future.

- d. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.
 - i. Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **The vendor is required to do a first-level review on all child care scholarship applications and a second-level supervisory review of the child care scholarship benefits authorized. The Maryland State Department of Education completes a supervisory review of a percentage of the cases reviewed by the vendor to ensure the accuracy of the vendor's program integrity review.**
 - ii. Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **The vendor is required to do a first-level review on all child care scholarship applications and a second-level supervisory review of the child care scholarship benefits authorized. The Maryland State Department of Education completes a supervisory review of a percentage of the cases reviewed by the vendor to ensure the accuracy of the vendor's program integrity review.**
 - iii. Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Maryland State Department of Education performs an audit of the service level agreement to ensure the vendor is providing services in compliance with policies and procedures. These service-level agreements look at thousands of transactions for program accuracy. Any agency errors are identified through a corrective action that the vendor must correct and comply including monetary damages.**
- e. Audit provider records.
 - i. Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Maryland State Department of Education preforms the program attendance audit, which selects 25% of all invoices submitted bi-weekly. The review requires providers to submit their sign-in and sign-out sheets to confirm children were in care during the attendance service period.**
 - ii. Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these

activities, and how they inform better practice: **Maryland State Department of Education performs the program attendance audit, which selects a percentage of the submitted invoices. If any discrepancies are identified, the child care provider will be required to submit sign-in and sign out sheets to confirm whether or not the the child was in attendance during the service period.**

iii. **[x] Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: Maryland State Department of Education performs an audit of the service level agreement that the vendor must meet to be compliant with the contract. These service level agreements look at thousands of transactions for program accuracy. Any identified agency errors are identified must be corrected and monetary damages collected.**

f. **[x] Train staff on policy and/or audits.**

i. **[x] Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: Staff are trained to use a combination of system reports from the Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Salesforce, and CCATS custom queries to conduct case audits, system reviews and to monitor program Service Level Agreements (SLA) to identify errors (intentional or unintentional). Identified errors are addressed through the appropriate the over/underpayment processes or referred to the Child Care Scholarship investigator for review. All identified program errors help with the draft of guidance or training to staff or the vendor. MSDE audits the service level agreement that the vendor must meet to be compliant with the contract. Staff are trained in the SLA review process to determine if the vendor delivered services in compliance with established policies and procedures. In addition, staff are trained in how to conduct the Comprehensive Program Review (CPRS) process. Errors identified during both reviews are corrected, and/or an overpayment is collected for monetary damages. Any time errors are identified, technical guidance is provided to reduce similar errors moving forward and to determine if changes in policies or procedures could improve the accuracy or the delivery of services.**

ii. **[x] Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: Staff are trained to use a combination of system reports from the Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Salesforce, and CCATS custom queries to conduct case audits, system reviews and to monitor program Service Level Agreements (SLA) to identify errors (intentional or unintentional). Identified errors are addressed through the appropriate the over/underpayment processes or referred to the Child Care Scholarship investigator for review. All identified program errors help with the draft of guidance or training to staff or the vendor. MSDE audits the service level agreement that the vendor must meet to be compliant with the contract. Staff are trained in the SLA review process to determine if the vendor delivered services in compliance with established policies and procedures. In addition, staff are trained in how to conduct the Comprehensive Program Review (CPRS) process. Errors identified during both reviews are corrected, and/or an overpayment is collected for monetary damages. Any time errors are identified, technical guidance is provided to reduce similar errors moving forward and to**

determine if changes in policies or procedures could improve the accuracy or the delivery of services.

- iii. Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice: **Staff are trained to use a combination of system reports from the Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Salesforce, and CCATS custom queries to conduct case audits, system reviews and to monitor program Service Level Agreements (SLA) to identify errors (intentional or unintentional). Identified errors are addressed through the appropriate the over/underpayment processes or referred to the Child Care Scholarship investigator for review. All identified program errors help with the draft of guidance or training to staff or the vendor. MSDE audits the service level agreement that the vendor must meet to be compliant with the contract. Staff are trained in the SLA review process to determine if the vendor delivered services in compliance with established policies and procedures. In addition, staff are trained in how to conduct the Comprehensive Program Review (CPRS) process. Errors identified during both reviews are corrected, and/or an overpayment is collected for monetary damages. Any time errors are identified, technical guidance is provided to reduce similar errors moving forward and to determine if changes in policies or procedures could improve the accuracy or the delivery of services.**

g. Other. Describe the activity(ies):

- i. Intentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice:
- ii. Unintentional program violations. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice:
- iii. Agency errors. Describe the activities, the results of these activities, and how they inform better practice:

10.2.2 Identification and recovery of misspent funds

Lead Agencies must identify and recover misspent funds that are a result of fraud, and they have the option to recover any misspent funds that are a result of unintentional program violations or agency errors.

- a. Identify which agency is responsible for pursuing fraud and overpayments (e.g., State Office of the Inspector General, State Attorney): **The Office of the Inspector General, State Attorney's Office, and the Office of Administrative Hearing.**
- b. Check and describe all activities, including the results of such activity, that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to fraud. Consider in your response potential fraud committed by providers, clients, staff, vendors, and contractors. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payment due to fraud or intentional program violations. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:

- ii. Coordinate with and refer to the other State/Territory agencies (e.g., State/Territory collection agency, law enforcement agency). Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **The lead agency coordinates with any alleged allegations received from outside agencies. The Maryland State Department of Education investigates the allegations to determine if there is reasonable suspicion and violation of our program and if so, works with the other agencies.**
 - iii. Recover through repayment plans. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **Recoveries are made as a result of the individual(s) signing a repayment agreement or through court ordered restitutions.**
 - iv. Reduce payments in subsequent months. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
 - v. Recover through State/Territory tax intercepts. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **The lead agency refers individuals for collections through the Maryland State Central Collection Unit, which recovers monies by way of tax intercepts.**
 - vi. Recover through other means. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **Maryland has a Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Investigator that reviews and investigates misspent funds identified via fraud by the provider, parent, staff or vendor and completes actions required to collect the misspent funds via restitution orders through the court, repayment agreements, or through State Collection Unit. Information is provided to the CCS Investigator because of record review, licensing inspections, parent hotline reporting or because of system or data review. The data or documentation used to approve or pay for services assists with the investigation and the recovery of funds by enabling the CCS investigator to substantiate the alleged findings.**
 - vii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **The lead agency's Program Integrity Coordinator will investigate allegations and will refer ones recommended for payment recoupment to the payment processing and recoupment unit.**
 - viii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:
- c. Does the Lead Agency investigate and recover improper payments due to unintentional program violations?
- No.
- Yes.
- If yes, check and describe below any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Include a description of the results of such activity.
- i. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and

identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:

- ii. Coordinate with and refer to the other State/Territory agencies (e.g., State/Territory collection agency, law enforcement agency). Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
 - iii. Recover through repayment plans. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **Recoveries are made because of the individual(s) signing a repayment agreement.**
 - iv. Reduce payments in subsequent months. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **Unintentional program violations can be recouped through the True-Up process.**
 - v. Recover through State/Territory tax intercepts. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **The lead agency refers individuals for collections through the Maryland State Central Collection Unit which recovers monies by way of tax intercepts.**
 - vi. Recover through other means. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
 - vii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **The lead agency's Program Integrity Coordinator will investigate allegations and will refer ones recommended for payment recoupment to the payment processing and recoupment unit.**
 - viii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:
- d. Does the Lead Agency investigate and recover improper payments due to agency errors?
- No.
- Yes.
- If yes, check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to agency errors. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payments due to administrative errors. Include a description of the results of such activity.
- i. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
 - ii. Coordinate with and refer to the other State/Territory agencies (e.g., State/Territory collection agency, law enforcement agency). Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
 - iii. Recover through repayment plans. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **If a Comprehensive Program Reporting System (CPRS) reviews or any other type of quality assurance review indicates that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program vendor committed an administrative error in which the**

child care provider was not entitled to the overpayment is collected from the provider through a repayment agreement, if the payment is not collected through the reduction of payment in a subsequent month. CPRS and quality assurance reviews assist with the recovery of improper payments made due to administrative errors. These errors are not made intentionally by the case manager and would go undetected if the error were not identified during the completion of the CPRS reviews.

- iv. Reduce payments in subsequent months. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **If a Comprehensive Program Reporting System (CPRS) or any other type of quality assurance review indicates that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program vendor committed an administrative error in which the child care provider was not entitled the overpayment is collected from the provider through the reduction of payment in a subsequent month, when the payment is caught in a timeframe in which the system will automatically deducted the amount owed. CPRS and quality assurance reviews assist with the recovery of improper payments made due to administrative errors. These errors are not made intentionally by the case manager and would go undetected if the error were not identified during the completion of the CPRS reviews.**
- v. Recover through State/Territory tax intercepts. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
- vi. Recover through other means. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
- vii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:
- viii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:
- e. What type of sanction will the Lead Agency place on clients and providers to help reduce improper payments due to intentional program violations or fraud? Check and describe all that apply:
 - i. Disqualify the client. Describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for clients who are disqualified. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **Notice of Intentional Program Violation disqualification is included on the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program Application and within the State of Understanding that is included with the issuance of the child care scholarships. If the vendor receives information that a parent or a child care provider may have committed an Intentional Program Violation. The vendor may refer the information to the CCS Investigator to conduct an investigation of the suspected program violation; prepare a report on obtained information; make the report available to MSDE; or refer the parent or the child care provider to the local State's Attorney, if the alleged facts in the case meet the guidelines established by the State's Attorney for prosecution. The vendor shall allow a parent or the child care provider to waive the parent's or the child care provider's right to an administrative**

disqualification hearing; or refer the parent or the provider, as applicable, to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for an administrative disqualification hearing. A Supervisory Review is completed before providing advanced written notification that a parent or a child care provider may waive the parent's or the child care provider's right to an Administrative Disqualification Hearing. The vendor shall ensure that a CCS supervisor reviews the evidence against the parent or the child care provider and determines whether the evidence warrants scheduling of a disqualification hearing. A Waiver Hearing is completed when the vendor decides to allow a parent or a provider to waive the parent's or the provider's right to an administrative disqualification hearing. The vendor shall notify the parent or the child care provider in writing. The notice shall include: a summary of the charge against the parent or the child care provider and the supporting evidence. Information regarding the Administrative Disqualification Hearing includes: a statement that the parent or the child care provider may waive the right to an Administrative Disqualification Hearing; the date the vendor will refer the case to the OAH for a hearing; the signed waiver; a statement that the parent or the provider has the right to remain silent and that anything the individual says or signs concerning the charge may be used in future administrative or judicial proceedings; and a statement that signing the waiver will result in disqualification and reduce or terminate services for the parent or the provider; an opportunity for the parent or the provider to admit to the facts presented by the Child Care Scholarship Branch; a statement that the disqualified parent or provider is responsible for repayment of any overpayment received; a statement that a hearing does not preclude the State or federal government from prosecuting the parent or the child care provider for the intentional program violation in a civil or criminal court; and the name and telephone number of the person to contact for additional information. If the local State's Attorney decides that a case does not warrant prosecution: the vendor shall refer the case to the OAH for an administrative disqualification hearing. If the local State's Attorney does not act on a referred case within 30-calendar days, the referral shall be withdrawn, and the case shall be referred to the OAH for an administrative disqualification hearing. The vendor may not initiate an Administrative Disqualification Hearing: against a parent or a child care provider whose case is being referred by the State's Attorney for prosecution or after the State's Attorney or a court of appropriate jurisdiction has taken any action against the parent or the child care provider in a case arising out of the same or related circumstance. Imposition of Disqualification Penalties is implemented if the vendor receives a signed waiver of the right to an Administrative Disqualification Hearing. The vendor shall apply the disqualification penalty at the beginning of the next service period. If the vendor does not receive a signed waiver of the right to an Administrative Disqualification Hearing within 20 calendar days of providing advance notification, the vendor shall refer the individual to the OAH for a hearing. The referral shall include identifying case information; a summary of the alleged intentional program violation; copies of the vendor's supporting documentation; and documentation that the parent or the provider has been previously disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation; or convicted by a court of fraud involving the Child Care Scholarship Program. A pending Disqualification Hearing does not affect the parent's or the provider's right to be

certified and participate in the program. The vendor shall terminate or reduce the services if: the parent or the provider returns the signed waiver to the vendor; the parent or the provider fails to request a hearing and continuation of benefits after notice of termination or reduction; the decision of the vendor is upheld upon disposition of an Intentional Program Violation hearing; and the State's Attorney Office's final disposition of a referred proceeding is received. A parent or a provider who has waived the right to an Administrative Disqualification Hearing or was found to have committed an intentional Child Care Scholarship Program violation is ineligible to participate in the Child Care Scholarship Program as follows: for the first violation, the parent or the provider may not receive any Child Care Scholarship Program payments for 6-months from the date payment was denied or until the parent or provider makes full restitution to the Child Care Scholarship Program, whichever is earlier. For the second Intentional Program Violation: the parent or the provider may not receive any Child Care Scholarship Program payments for 12 months from the date the payment was denied or until the parent or the provider makes full restitution to the Child Care Scholarship Program, whichever is earlier. For the third violation: the parent or the child care provider shall be permanently barred from receiving Child Care Scholarship Program payments and shall pay restitution to the Child Care Scholarship Program; and for a determination of an intentional program violation based on a parent's or a provider's conviction in a federal or state court on charges that the person misrepresented the location of his or her residence in order to obtain services from two or more states, the parent or the provider is not eligible to receive Child Care Scholarship Program services or payments for 10 years from the finding. The disqualification period begins with the service period after which the parent or the child provider is sent written notification of the disqualification: upon disposition of an intentional program violation hearing if the decision of the vendor is upheld; when a waiver is signed; or upon final disposition of any proceeding referred to the local State's Attorney Office. Once a disqualification penalty has been imposed, the period of disqualification continues uninterrupted until the earlier of full repayment of the benefit, or completion of the time period. Before imposing the sanction, the Child Care Scholarship Branch shall provide written notice to the parent or the provider of the: effective disqualification date; reason for imposing the sanction; payment that the applicant, parent, or provider was receiving; and date on which the parent may reapply, or the provider may begin offering service because the disqualification period has expired. If a parent or the provider has been disqualified, the vendor shall send the parent or the provider a demand letter for restitution, which shall include: the amount owed; the reason for the claim; and the period of time covered by the claim. A parent may request an appeal if the vendor denies, suspends, reduces, or terminates assistance; fails to act with reasonable promptness on an application for, or a request for adjustment of assistance; imposes sanctions on a recipient; or recovers an overpayment in assistance. The vendor shall send written notice of any adverse action in writing: to the parent; and to a provider who is denied payment for committing an intentional program violation. Notice of any adverse action shall include the: decision; basis for the decision; specific regulation supporting the decision; right to request an appeal; method by which an appeal may be requested; right to be represented in an appeal by a lawyer, relative,

friend, or other individual; and availability of any free legal services.

- ii. Disqualify the provider. Describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for providers who are disqualified. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: **Notice of intentional program violation disqualification are on the Child Care Services Program application form used by a customer to apply for child care subsidy and terms of agreements completed by a provider when a child is enrolled for Child Care Services Program services. If the contractor receives information that a customer or a provider may have committed an intentional program violation, the contractor may: Refer the information to the Division's fraud investigator. The investigator may conduct an investigation of the suspected intentional program violators; prepare a report on the completed investigation showing the methods used to obtain information; make the report available to the Division; or refer the customer or the provider to the local State's Attorney if the alleged facts in the case meet the guidelines established by the State's Attorney for prosecution. The contractor shall allow a customer or a provider to waive the customer's or the provider's right to an administrative disqualification hearing; or refer the customer or the provider, as applicable, to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for an administrative disqualification hearing. A Supervisory Review is completed before providing advanced written notification that a customer or a provider may waive the customer's or provider's right to an administrative disqualification hearing, the contractor shall ensure that a supervisor: reviews the evidence against the customer or the provider; and determines whether the evidence warrants scheduling of a disqualification hearing. A Waiver Hearing is completed when the contractor decides to allow a customer or a provider to waive the customer's or the provider's right to an administrative disqualification hearing, the contractor shall notify the customer or the provider in writing. The notice shall include: a summary of the charge against the customer or the provider and the evidence to support it; information regarding the administrative disqualification hearing including: a statement that the customer or the provider may waive the right to an administrative disqualification hearing; the date the contractor will refer the case to the OAH for a hearing if the contractor has not received the signed waiver, which is not later than 20 calendar days after the mailing of the notice; the requirement that the customer or the provider shall sign the waiver; a statement that the customer or the provider has the right to remain silent and that anything the individual says or signs concerning the charge may be used in future administrative or judicial proceedings; and a statement that signing the waiver will result in disqualification and reduce or terminate services for the customer or the provider; an opportunity for the customer or the provider to admit to the facts presented by the Child Care Services Branch; a statement that the disqualified customer or provider is responsible for repayment of any overpayment received; a statement that a hearing does not preclude the State or federal government from prosecuting the customer or the provider for the intentional program violation in a civil or criminal court; and the name and telephone number of the person to contact for additional information. If the local State's Attorney decides that a case does not warrant prosecution, the contractor shall refer the case to the OAH for an administrative disqualification hearing. If the**

local State's Attorney does not act on a referred case within 30 calendar days, the referral shall be withdrawn, and the case shall be referred to the OAH for an administrative disqualification hearing. The contractor may not initiate an administrative disqualification hearing: against a customer or a provider whose case is being referred by the State's Attorney for prosecution; or after the State's Attorney or a court of appropriate jurisdiction has taken any action against the customer or the provider in a case arising out of the same or related circumstance. Imposition of Disqualification Penalties is implemented if the contractor receives a signed waiver of the right to an administrative disqualification hearing. The contractor shall apply the disqualification penalty at the beginning of the next service period. If the contractor does not receive a signed waiver of the right to an administrative disqualification hearing within 20 calendar days of providing advance notification, the contractor shall refer the individual to the OAH for a hearing. The referral shall include identifying case information; a summary of the alleged intentional program violation; copies of the contractor's supporting documentation; and documentation that the customer or the provider has been previously disqualified for an intentional program violation; or convicted by a court of fraud involving the Child Care Services Program. A pending disqualification hearing does not affect the customer's or the provider's right to be certified and participate in the program. The contractor shall terminate or reduce the services if: the customer or the provider returns the signed waiver to the contractor; the customer or the provider fails to request a hearing and continuation of benefits after notice of termination or reduction; the decision of the contractor is upheld upon disposition of an intentional program violation hearing; and the State's Attorney Office's final disposition of a referred proceeding is received. A customer or a provider who has waived the right to an administrative disqualification hearing or was found to have committed an intentional Child Care Services Program violation is ineligible to participate in the Child Care Services Program as follows: for the first violation, the customer or the provider may not receive any Child Care Services Program payments for 6 months from the date payment was denied or until the customer or provider makes full restitution to the Child Care Services Program, whichever is earlier; for the second violation, the customer or the provider may not receive any Child Care Services Program payments for 12 months from the date the payment was denied or until the customer or the provider makes full restitution to the Child Care Services Program, whichever is earlier; for the third violation, the customer or the provider shall be permanently barred from receiving Child Care Services Program payments and shall pay restitution to the Child Care Services Program; and for a determination of an intentional program violation based on a customer's or a provider's conviction in a federal or state court on charges that the person misrepresented the location of his or her residence in order to obtain services from two or more states, the customer or the provider is not eligible to receive Child Care Services Program services or payments for 10 years from the finding. The disqualification period begins with the service period after which the customer or the provider is sent written notification of the disqualification: upon disposition of an intentional program violation hearing if the decision of the contractor is upheld; when a waiver is signed; or upon final disposition of any proceeding referred to the local State's Attorney Office. Once a disqualification

penalty has been imposed, the period of disqualification continues uninterrupted until the earlier of full repayment of the benefit; or completion of the time period. Before imposing the sanction, the Child Care Services Branch shall provide written notice to the customer or the provider of the: effective disqualification date; reason for imposing the sanction; payment that the applicant, customer, or provider was receiving; and date on which the customer may reapply, or the provider may begin offering service because the disqualification period has expired. If a customer or the provider has been disqualified, the contractor shall send the customer or the provider a demand letter for restitution, which shall include: the amount owed; the reason for the claim; and the period of time covered by the claim. A customer may request an appeal if the contractor denies, suspends, reduces, or terminates assistance; fails to act with reasonable promptness on an application for, or a request for adjustment of assistance; imposes sanctions on a recipient; or recovers an overpayment in assistance. The contractor shall send written notice of any adverse action in writing: to the customer; and to a provider who is denied payment for committing an intentional program violation. Notice of any adverse action shall include the: decision; basis for the decision; specific regulation supporting the decision; right to request an appeal; method by which an appeal may be requested; right to be represented in an appeal by a lawyer, relative, friend, or other individual; and availability of any free legal services.

- iii. Prosecute criminally. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis: A customer may request an appeal if the contractor: denies, suspends, reduces, or terminates assistance; fails to act with reasonable promptness on an application for, or a request for adjustment of assistance; imposes sanctions on a recipient; or recovers an overpayment in assistance. The contractor shall send written notice of any adverse action in writing: to the customer; and to a provider who is denied payment for committing an intentional program violation. Notice of any adverse action shall include the: decision; basis for the decision; specific regulation supporting the decision; right to request an appeal; method by which an appeal may be requested; right to be represented in an appeal by a lawyer, relative, friend, or other individual; and availability of any free legal services. The customer or provider may appeal within 90 calendar days of the date of the notice of adverse action. An appeal request: is made by filing a completed The Maryland State Department of Education appeal request form with the contractor; may be received by any employee of the contractor whose assignment requires contact with the public; and shall be submitted immediately by the contractor to the designated hearing coordinator. The filing date of the appeal request is the date the contractor received the completed The Maryland State Department of Education appeal request form. Contractor Assistance in the Appeal Request. The contractor shall assist the appellant in completing an appropriate appeal request form to ensure that it contains all the information required to process the request and, if necessary, shall provide an interpreter.
- iv. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities based on the most recent analysis:

Appendix 1: Lead Agency Implementation Plan

The Appendix will be available for Lead Agencies to use in CARS after the Plan approval letter is issued.

For each non-compliance, Lead Agencies must describe the following:

- **Action Steps:** List the action steps needed to correct the finding (e.g., update policy manual, legislative approval, IT system changes, etc.). For each action step list the:
 - **Responsible Entity:** Indicate the entity (e.g., agency, team, etc.) responsible for completing the action step.
 - **Expected Completion Date:** List the expected completion date for the action step.
- **Overall Target Date for Compliance:** List date Lead Agency anticipates completing implementation, achieving full compliance with all aspects of the findings. (Note: Compliance will not be determined until the FFY 2025-2027 CCDF Plan is amended and approved).

DRAFT

Appendix 1: Form

[Plan question with non-compliance and associated provision will pre-populate based on preliminary notice of non-compliance]

A. Action Steps for Implementation	B. Responsible Entity(ies)	C. Expected Completion Date
Step 1:		
Step 2 (as necessary):		
[Additional steps added as necessary]		
Overall Target Date for Compliance:		

DRAFT