



# **Child Care Connection presents...**

# New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK) Child Care Subsidy Program

## (An Overview for Applicants)

# What Is NJCK?

- The New Jersey Cares for Kids Program (NJCK) provides child care subsidies to low- and moderate-income families who meet the eligibility criteria for services.

# Eligibility for NJCK

- In all instances, the parent and/or applicant must document that there is a need for child care services in order to:
  - Accept full-time employment
  - Remain employed full-time
  - Attend a full-time training/education program
  - Participate in a combination of part-time activities equaling full-time
- Eligibility for subsidy is determined for the family. Therefore, any violation of the terms of the program will result in termination of subsidy for all members of the family.

# Income Eligibility

- Initial Eligibility
  - Annual gross income for family at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Continued Eligibility at Redetermination
  - Child care subsidy may continue until the gross annual income of the family exceeds 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
    - If a change results in the gross annual income of the family to exceed 250% FPL but does not exceed 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) regulations will allow for a 12-month phase out period during which child care subsidy will continue. At the end of this one time only phase out period the family may reapply but must meet the 200% FPL to be found eligible.

# Income Eligibility (Initial @ 200% FPL)

**(Effective 3/1/2021)**

FAMILY SIZE	NJCK INITIAL ELIGIBILITY	NJCK - KINSHIP (APPLICANTS UNDER AGE 60)	NJCK - KINSHIP (APPLICANTS OVER AGE 60)
2	34,840	60,970	87,100
3	43,920	76,860	109,800
4	53,000	92,750	132,500
5	62,080	108,640	155,200
6	71,160	124,530	177,900
7	80,240	140,420	200,600
8	89,320	156,310	223,300
9	98,400	172,200	246,000
10	107,480	188,090	268,700



# Work

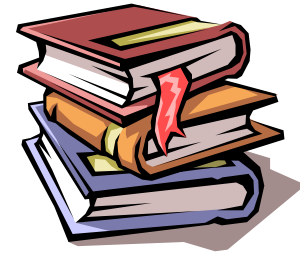


- Full-time employment
  - Employment that totals 30 or more hours per week
- Part-time employment
  - Employment that totals less than 30 hours per week (Not eligible unless combined with another part-time activity to equal full-time requirement.)



# School

(Must include some classroom credits)



- Full-time school - Must include a minimum of 6 classroom credit hours.)
  - 12 college credits - (spring and fall semesters)
  - Minimum of 9 classroom credit hours (summer)
- Part-time school
  - Anything less than the defined full-time (Not eligible unless combined with another part-time activity to equal full-time requirement.)



# Job Training



“Job training” is a vocational or occupational program that includes classroom instruction, on the job training, and/or apprenticeships

- Full-time training
  - 20 hours or more per week
- Part-time training
  - Less than 20 hours per week (Not eligible unless combined with another part-time activity to equal full-time requirement.)

# The Application

- Obtaining an application
  - Download an application from Child Care Connection's website: [www.ccc-nj.org](http://www.ccc-nj.org)
  - Pick up an application by coming in to the Child Care Connection
  - Request an application to be mailed by calling the Child Care Connection
  - Available through county agencies, DYFS District Offices, DFD, Mercer County Board of Social Services, and community child care agencies

# Application Process

- The parent/applicant (and co-applicant if applicable) completes the application following the instructions provided with the document.
- The parent/applicant (and co-applicant if applicable) may mail or hand-deliver the completed application along with the required documentation to Child Care Connection.
  - All employment/income documentation must be **original** and will be returned to the applicant if requested in writing.
- The application must be fully completed (all questions and sections must be answered). Incomplete applications will be denied.

# VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility must be verified for both the applicant and co-applicant.

# Verification of Employment & Earned Income

- Submit **original** pay stubs covering the four consecutive weeks immediately prior to the date of the application.
- In the absence of paystubs due to new employment, there are some documents that may be submitted to verify income and hours worked that may lead to an assessment of **temporary** eligibility. The applicant (and co-applicant if applicable) must follow up with **original** pay stubs within a specified time frame or risk losing the subsidy for the family. Such documents include:
  - Income Tax Return
  - IRS Form W-2
  - Award or benefit letter
  - Letter from an employer on employer's official letterhead may be used for new employment only and must be followed up with original pay stubs as they are received.

## Other Income To Be Verified (Unearned Income)

- Pensions
- Retirement
- Child Support
- Alimony
- Social Security
- Unemployment
- Worker's Compensation
- Public Assistance
- Any other income required for federal and/or state tax reporting purposes

# Verification of School or Training

- Submit a current letter of acceptance\* or an official registration form\* from the appropriate program indicating:
  - Start and ending date
  - Number of credit hours per semester or clock hours per week

**\*Signed and dated by a school official**

# Eligible Families

- If the family is determined to be eligible but funds are not available
  - The family is placed on the waiting list.
- If the family is determined to be eligible and funds are available
  - The parent/applicant will receive Preliminary Parent/Applicant/Provider Agreements (PAPAs) and Parent Handbook.

# Client Co-pay

- Co-pay
  - Based on family's gross annual income and family size
  - Assessed for a maximum of two children in one family
  - Paid directly to one provider

# Changes In Family Circumstances

- Families are required to report changes in family circumstances within 10 days of the occurrence. Reportable changes include:
  - Change in family income
  - Change in family size (including change in marital status and birth of a child)
  - Change in address
  - Change in status of employment, training, or school (including all approved leaves of absence)
  - Change in place of employment, training, or school
  - Change in child care providers (including site location)
  - Change in hours of care needed

# Re-determination of Eligibility

- Parents who are receiving a child care subsidy will be required to reapply for continued eligibility annually or as changes in the family's circumstance occur.
  - Application for Re-determination of Eligibility and new Preliminary PAPAs must be completed and returned for processing to determine the family's eligibility for continuation of subsidy.

# Termination of NJCK

- Termination of NJCK results when:
  - The parent fails to submit co-payment fees to the appropriate provider.
  - The family no longer resides in New Jersey. Families who move within New Jersey may have their cases transferred to their new county of residence.
  - The family no longer meets the eligibility criteria for income, age of child, or participation in employment, training, or school requirements.
    - Temporary changes may allow for subsidy to continue for up to 90-days from change. Examples of temporary changes include but are not limited to:
      - Approved leave of absence from work
      - Loss of employment, graduation from school or training
  - The family no longer wants/needs the subsidy.

# Termination of NJCK (cont.)

- Unexplained absence from the child care arrangement for more than 10 consecutive days.
- The child(ren) have exhibited a pattern of excessive unexcused absences.
- The family fails to supply required materials or documentation for continued eligibility.
- The family fails to return required materials or documentation within the established time frames.
- The parent fails to inform Child Care Connection of changes in family circumstances (see slide 18 for examples) within 10 days of the occurrence.
- Failure to use the ECC attendance system

# Notification of Termination

- Termination notice is issued to both the parent and provider(s).

# Parent/Applicant/Provider Agreement (PAPA)

## ***PLEASE NOTE:***

**There is no contract between Child Care Connection and any provider!** The PAPA is an agreement between the eligible parent/applicant and the provider. The Preliminary PAPA is submitted by the parent to Child Care Connection for the sole purpose of identifying to whom subsidy payments should be made on behalf of eligible families.

# Preliminary PAPA

- Parent is responsible for the completion of the Preliminary PAPA for **each** child for whom a subsidy is requested.
- Parent is responsible for returning all completed Preliminary PAPAs with the Certification Pages signed by both the parent/applicant and provider to Child Care Connection on or by the due date indicated on the upper left side of the Pre-PAPA (10 days from issue).
- Information from the Preliminary PAPA is entered onto the State's computer system and a system-generated PAPA is distributed to both the parent and provider(s).

# The PAPA – Part E

- Parent Certification – Indicates parent's responsibilities under the NJCK Subsidy Program and requires:
  - Name of Parent/Applicant
  - **Signature of Parent/Applicant (implies agreement to all information contained in the agreement)**
  - Date

# The PAPA – Part F

- Provider Certification – Indicates provider's responsibilities under the NJCK Subsidy Program and requires:
  - Name of Provider Agency
  - **Signature of Provider (implies agreement to all information contained in the agreement)**
  - Date

# The PAPA – Parent/Provider Certification Addendum

- Parent/Applicant must sign and date this form
- Co-Applicant (if applicable) must sign and date this form
- Provider must sign and date this form
- Once processed, Child Care Connection will identify the start date of subsidy and issue system-generated PAPAs to the applicant and provider.

# Payment of Subsidy - ECC

- All payments are issued through the State of New Jersey Electronic Child Care (ECC) System.
- Parents are required to electronically record attendance each day via the IVR (call-in) or POS (swipe machine).
- Parents must immediately report problems with recording attendance via the IVR or POS machine to the Child Care Connection ECC staff by calling (609) 989-9010.
- Failure to properly record attendance may result in nonpayment to the provider and termination of subsidy for the entire family.

# Parent/Applicant Overpayments

- Parent/Applicant Overpayments
  - Such overpayments occur when funds have been erroneously paid, on behalf of a family, to a provider(s) when the family and/or child(ren) were not eligible to receive benefits from the NJCK program. These types of overpayments generally occur as a result of a parent/applicant not reporting a change in family circumstance that would cause a reduction or termination of benefits.
  - All assessed overpayments must be repaid; a Repayment Agreement would be established identifying the repayment schedule.
  - Should the applicant fail to comply with the terms established in the Repayment Agreement, the amount owed would be reported to SOIL (the State's automated collection system).

Should you have any questions or require assistance in completing paperwork, please feel free to contact our NJCK Eligibility Team at (609) 989-8035.



**Thank you!**