



### Overview

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps low-income families pay for child care while working or attending school or training. Eligibility is based on family size, household income and how many hours the adult caregiver(s) applying for CCAP work or attend school or job training. Families can use CCAP funds at Type III early learning centers, registered family child care providers, registered in-home providers, school-based child care centers or military child care providers. The program is primarily funded by the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), with some state matching funds. As such, Louisiana must comply with federal regulations, but has the authority to determine who is eligible, within certain parameters. The Louisiana Department of Education administers the program in Louisiana.

### Eligibility

To qualify for CCAP benefits in Louisiana, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. They are responsible for paying child care costs for a child under 13 or a child under 18 with a disability.
2. The adult caregivers in the home work or attend an educational or training program for at least 20 hours a week in combination.<sup>1</sup>
3. Families must supply documentation of eligibility, including proof of children's age(s), immunization records, household income, and verification of work, school or job training.
4. Household income must be less than the following thresholds:

Household Size	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 persons	8 persons
Monthly Income	\$2,403	\$2,884	\$3,433	\$3,983	\$4,532	\$4,635	\$4,738

### Job Search Eligibility Challenges

<sup>1</sup> Families that include children with special needs have lower work/training requirements.



Louisiana has made a number of positive changes that have made more families eligible to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program over the past several years, including allowing full-time students to participate (even if they attend classes for fewer than 20 hours per week) and reducing the minimum number of hours that families need to work if they have a child with special needs.

However, many Louisianans are stuck in a vicious cycle in which they cannot get a job because they lack access to child care, and they can't access child care assistance because they don't have a job. Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) regulations, which are the primary source of CCAP funds, allow states to count "job search" as an eligible work activity. Louisiana has not taken up this option, and families must be currently employed, in training or going to school for at least 20 hours per week at the time of application in order to become eligible for CCAP. Louisiana has, however, complied with changes brought by the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization, which requires states to allow at least three months of benefits during a job search if a parent becomes unemployed (or no longer attends school or training) after they begin receiving CCAP.

Expanding CCAP to job seekers is a viable strategy for supporting low-income families in our state because:

- **Many of our peers in the region allow parents seeking work to receive CCAP at the time of initial application.** As of 2017, at least 17 other states and DC allow job search to count as a qualifying work activity for initial eligibility determinations, including Arkansas, Kentucky and Mississippi.
- **This policy would not be new to Louisiana**-we exercised this option after Hurricane Katrina and allowed families to receive benefits for up to 90 days during a job search, but eliminated it in 2009 due to budget cuts.
- **Expanding CCAP to job seekers is a win-win for the state of Louisiana.** More children would gain access to stable, quality child care, and our state's workforce productivity would improve by enabling more families to be able to participate in the workforce.



# Agenda for CHILDREN

*...a voice for Louisiana's children and families*

## The Case for Expanding Child Care Assistance in Louisiana to Job Seekers

Note that federal guidelines require that states provide at least three months of eligibility during a job search if they opt to consider job search an eligible work activity at the time of application.