



Onondaga County DSS-ES Child Care Assistance Program Provider Information Guide



To All Onondaga County Child Care Providers:

This Information guide has been compiled to summarize the information you may need as a provider of child care pertaining to DSS-ES billing policies and best practices. If changes occur to policies, procedures or billing processes, we will update this online guide as soon as possible. For NY State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulations for providers, please refer to NY State OCFS website, below.

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/info-for-providers.php#subsidy>

If you have question about information contained in this guide, below is a list of current unit supervisors and contacts with their phone numbers. If you have specific care-related questions, please contact the child care worker assigned to the case before contacting the supervisor of that area.

If you are unable to resolve your concerns by talking to the child care workers or their supervisors, please contact Kathleen O'Brien – Administrative Supervisor at 435-5683 (for authorization issues or general child care issues) or Jennifer Robinson – Deputy Commissioner at 435-2700 or Jessica Allen – Administrative Supervisor – Financial Operations at 435-2947 (for billing/payment issues). We are hopeful that this document will clarify our policies and procedures and make the authorization and payment process smoother for you as child care providers.

As a vendor for Onondaga County, you are responsible for knowing and complying with the rules, policies and procedures in this Guide as well as OCFS rules and regulations for CCAP providers. The County reserves the right to inspect, audit and monitor provider operations for compliance.

We appreciate the quality care you provide for our clients. Your efforts, collectively and individually, have made it possible for parents to realize their dreams in financially supporting their children and helping children remain with their families.

Sincerely,

Sarah G. Merrick
Commissioner

Contact Information:

Financial Operations- Billing

421 Montgomery St. 15th floor, Civic Center
Syracuse, NY 13202
315-435-2947
Fax: 315-435-3590
Email: foaccounting@dfa.state.ny.us

Child Care Assistance Program (DSS-ES)

421 Montgomery St. 2nd floor, Civic Center
Syracuse, NY 13202
315-435-5683
Fax: 315-435-5682
Email: Daycaredocs@dfa.State.ny.us
Katheen O'Brien: Administrative Supervisor
Bryan Dranschak and Tanya Difrancesco: Unit Supervisors

Protective and Foster Care Cases (DCFS)

421 Montgomery St. 7th floor, Civic Center
Syracuse, NY 13202
315-435-2325
Fax: 315-435-2465
Sharone Carter: DCFS clerical

ONONDAGA COUNTY

Child Care Provider Information Guide:

1. INTRODUCTION

- This document constitutes the operating policies and procedures for all child care providers who provide child care and receive payment for child care services through the Onondaga County Department of Social Services-Economic Security (OCDSS-ES).
- OCDSS-ES will have the most current *Child Care Provider Information Guide* available on OCDSS-ES website at [Child Care Policies - Social Services](#)

2. TYPES OF PROVIDERS WHO PROVIDE CHILD CARE

The following are the types of child care providers covered by this manual and a list of child care resources.

Note: for information or guidance on licensing or registration issues, contact:

NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Syracuse Regional Office
The Atrium
100 S. Salina Street, Suite 350
Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 423-1202

- **FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS/REGISTERED PROVIDERS**

Family Day Care Providers care for up to six children at a time in a residence. They may add one to two school-age children with approval of their Registrar (maximum allowable number includes the provider's own children who have not yet entered kindergarten). There must be at least one provider present for every two children under two years of age. Capacity must be approved by the provider's Registrar. Registered providers may provide overnight care if they are approved and in compliance with New York State Regulations 417.3(c), 417.7(a), and 417.8(a). The local Registrar, Child Care Solutions, works under the auspices of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

- **GROUP FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS**

Group Family Day Care Providers care for up to twelve children at a time in a residence and may add up to four school-age children with approval of their Licensor (maximum allowable number includes the provider's own children who have not yet entered kindergarten). A provider must use an assistant when more than eight children are present and there must be at least one provider present for every two children under two years of age. Capacity must be approved by the provider's Licensor. Licensed providers may provide overnight care as long as they are following New York State Regulations 416.3(c), 416.7(a) and 416.8(a). They are licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

- **DAY CARE CENTERS**

Day Care Centers are licensed facilities that provide care for more than six children. They are licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

- **SCHOOL – AGE CHILD CARE**

School-age child care programs are in registered facilities and provide care for more than six children. They generally serve school-age children from kindergarten through age 12 and care for children during non-school hours. They also provide care during school vacation periods and holidays. The local Registrar, Child Care Solutions, works under the auspices of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

Note: OCDSS-ES does not pay for universal pre-kindergarten programs.

- **LEGALLY EXEMPT (INFORMAL) CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

- **Legally exempt Family Child Care**

These providers are legally exempt from day care licensing or registration requirements but must meet minimum state and county health and safety standards. Legally exempt providers care for one or two unrelated children outside of the child's home or for up to 8 related children. They may be a relative of the child in care, except when they are legally responsible or a caretaker relative of the child(ren). Please note that while other individuals may have been listed in your application as being present at your child care location, you are the person authorized to care for the subsidized child(ren). You, as the authorized provider, must be present and provide supervision at all times. Employees, volunteers and household members CANNOT substitute for you in caring for the child(ren) and cannot be left alone with the child(ren). Any bill submitted for time during which the authorized provider is not present will be subject to administrative and health/safety review.

To receive subsidy payments these providers must be enrolled AND AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS. **No payments will be made to an**

approved LE Provider if the child needing care is not approved for ASSISTANCE with DSS-ES CCAP Unit.

- **Legally Exempt Group Child Care:**

Legally exempt group child care refers to care provided by those center-based programs, that are not required to be licensed by or registered with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, but which meet all applicable State or local requirements for such child care programs.

Caregivers of legally exempt group child care include, but are not limited to:

1. Pre-kindergarten and nursery school programs for children three years of age or older, and programs for school-age children conducted during non-school hours, operated by public school districts or by private schools or academies which provide elementary or secondary education or both in accordance with the compulsory education requirements of the NYS Education Law, provided that such pre-kindergarten, nursery school or school-age programs are located on the premises or campus where the elementary or secondary education is provided.
2. Nursery schools and programs for pre-school age children operated by non-profit agencies or organizations or private proprietary agencies which provide services for three or less hours per day.
3. Summer day camps operated by non-profit agencies or organizations or private proprietary agencies in accordance with Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code.
4. Day care centers, family day care homes and other child care programs located on federal property which are operated in compliance with the applicable federal laws and regulations for such child care programs.
5. Day care centers, family day care homes and other child care programs located on tribal property which are operated in compliance with the applicable tribal laws and regulations for such child care programs; and,
6. School-age programs caring for six or fewer children.

To receive subsidy payments these providers must be enrolled AND AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS. **No payments will be made to an approved LE Provider if the child needing care is not approved for subsidy with DSS-ES CCAP Unit.**

Child Care Solutions is the enrollment agency for Legally Exempt and Group Legally Exempt providers in Onondaga County. They are located at 1101 Erie Blvd E. Suite 100 Syracuse, NY 13210. They can be reached at: telephone 446-1220, FAX 446-2010 or e-mail CCS@childcaresolutionscny.org.

3. CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENTS:

There are TWO departments through which a family might be eligible for child care assistance from Onondaga County:

DSS-ES Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Unit:

DSS-ES Child Care Assistance Program handles all child care cases for both low-income child care and families receiving Temporary Assistance. CCAP handles applications and recertifications for the following categories:

- **Low Income Child Care** – for families earning under 300% federal poverty level and not above 85% of the State Median Income for NY State.
- **Temporary Assistance recipients** that need child care for employment or an approved activity with TA Employment. Families need to be approved and eligible for Temporary Assistance before Child Care can be approved.
- **Transitional Child Care (TCC)**- for families whose Family Assistance case has closed within the last year due to excess income, received Family Assistance three out of the last six months prior to case closing, and whose household income is under 300% of the federal poverty level and not above 85% state median income for NY State.

DCFS Protective/Preventive and Foster Care Child Care

- **Protective/Preventive Child Care Cases:** These cases involve families serviced by the Department of Children and Family Services – Child Protective or Preventive programs, whose children are not in foster care and where the child care is part of their “approved child welfare plan”. **CHILD CARE SERVICES ARE AUTHORIZED BY THIS DEPARTMENT.** For these cases, Parent Fees are not applicable.
- **Foster Care Child Care-** Child care may be available for children who have been placed in foster homes. The authorization/approval must come from Onondaga County Department of Children and Family Services. The provider will be paid, in most cases, by the County.

Please see our County Child Care Plan for details on qualifications and program requirements for families applying for or receiving Child Care Assistance using NYS CCBG Funds. [Local Social Services Districts Child Care Section of the Child and Family Services Plan for Onondaga | Division of Child Care Services | Office of Children and Family Services](#)

4. AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

PROVIDER AUTHORIZATION LETTER:

- **Providers who take children prior to receiving written authorization (except for emergency Protective cases as outlined below) are not guaranteed payment by the County. The provider must consider a child a private pay client until they receive an authorization from the County.**
- An authorization is an agreement that the County will pay the client’s child care costs up to the appropriate allowance (less parent fees/family share, if applicable) to a specific

provider within the specified periods of authorization. The agreement is between the County and the client only. The County will only pay the specific provider for the days the child(ren) is(are) in attendance. **The County will not pay two different providers for the same time period for the same child.**

- If a parent uses a child care program above and beyond the authorized days and times, the parent is responsible for payment. The County will pay only for hours the client was working or for assigned activities and will not pay more than the authorized hours that will include travel time. If a provider is aware that the care is being given for reasons not stated, such as shopping, other appointments, etc., the case worker should be contacted.
- Providers will be notified in writing when a client is authorized to receive child care assistance. No representative for either the County or the provider should at any time issue or accept an authorization that is not in writing, except in the case of an emergency regarding a Protective or Foster Care client. **In this case, the Protective/Foster Child Care Unit can verbally authorize care and written authorization will follow as soon as possible.**
- If timelines are pressing because of a parent's work or school schedule, the provider can ask the Child Care Assistance Unit to fax the authorization. However, the agency has 30 days to determine eligibility from the date of application for new clients and up to 30 days to approve a change from the date the change is reported to the district for active recipients.
- Dates on the authorization form include the first and last days of service that is authorized.
- A copy of any corrections that are made to the original authorization (reduction in hours, or increase in parent fee, for example) will be sent to the provider prior to the date that the change is to take effect.

**Authorizations may be written as follows but may vary depending on the needs for care:
Sample below**

- A total number of hours for the day and total for the week that care is needed.
- If days of care are regular it will be noted on the authorization (e.g., M-F or M, W, F).
- If a client works a rotating shift, it will be noted on the authorization.
- If nights and/or weekends are needed it will be notated on the approval.
- School-aged children needing care on school holidays/snow days will be authorized for a designated number of hours per day for school holidays/snow days.
- If child care is to be authorized to a provider for a 6th day in a week, it will be separately notated on the authorization letter to ensure correct payment. (e.g., Up to 6 days per week).

**Provider Notice of Authorization/Schedule
County of Onondaga**

Provider Name / Address		Family Fee(s)		
[REDACTED]		Fee Type	Assigned To	Effective Date
		Family Share	[REDACTED]	12/30/24
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		
Vendor #: [REDACTED] Type: Day Care - Center		Parent Name: [REDACTED] Case #: SDC [REDACTED]		
Child Information	Schedule	NH Rates	AH Rates	Scheduled Hours
Name: [REDACTED] DOB: 10/14/22 Authorization Period: 12/30/24 to 11/30/25 School District: School Track:	School	D:\$72.00, PD:\$50.00, W:\$356.00	-\$75.60, PD:\$52.50, W:\$373.80	Varying Hours Max Hours Week: 0.00 Max Hours Day: 0.00
	Non-School	D:\$72.00, PD:\$50.00, W:\$356.00	-\$75.60, PD:\$52.50, W:\$373.80	Varying Hours Max Hours Week: 30.00 Max Hours Day: 6.00
Schedule Note: DAYCARE AUTHORIZED UP TO 6 HR/DAY MON-FRI				
Provider note:				
<i>If you have any questions regarding this authorization please contact [REDACTED] at (315) 435-5683.</i>				

EXTENDING CHILD CARE AUTHORIZATIONS

If the County needs to extend child care services beyond the date indicated on the initial authorization letter, an additional authorization letter indicating a new start and end date will be sent. If a new authorization letter extending care is not received by the provider prior to the end of the original authorization letter, the provider should assume the parent is no longer eligible for child care services.

5. DISCONTINUANCE NOTICES

NOTE: This section does not apply to transfers to another child care provider – see Section 18 for information on “Transfers between Providers”.

- Discontinuance notices will be sent to providers as a mechanism to keep providers informed of child care eligibility status, and while not required by regulation, discontinuance notices are important to advise child care providers of changes in eligibility for which they may bill.
- Providers will be mailed a notice of discontinuance prior to any change in child care eligibility status that affects the child care payment. Generally, this will be ten days before the discontinuance, however **there is no guarantee**. Notices to providers will be mailed at the same time they are mailed to clients. **By regulation, a client is normally entitled to ten days’ notice, unless she or he waives her or his right, or caused the delay in determining eligibility by failing to submit documents in a timely manner.**

A provider does not have the option to request timely notice or waive the right to a timely notice on behalf of the client. Only the client can waive this right.

- When a client receives a letter of discontinuance, the provider will receive notification that the client is being discontinued. **No letters of discontinuance will be backdated.** They will reflect changes to authorization on or after the date of the letter unless there has been specific agreement between the provider and the County that the effective date of the change is prior to the date the letter is sent. In this case the date the agreement was made and the names of the people who agreed will be noted in the letter.
- Providers will not be paid beyond the date noted on the discontinuance notice.
- Participants may be discontinued from child care assistance if it is determined that funding limitations exist. Priority for continuing assistance will be outlined in the County's Child Care Plan - available on the NYS OCFS website. [Local Social Services Districts Child Care Section of the Child and Family Services Plan for Onondaga | Division of Child Care Services | Office of Children and Family Services](#)
- Ten days' notice cannot be guaranteed when a child is placed in foster care. Also, no payment can be made from the time the child is placed in foster care unless otherwise authorized for payment.

6.0 BILLING

BILLING/PAYMENT PROCESS

- All child care providers are expected to submit their billing for services after the last business day of the month. Submitting bills early (before the end of the month) does not speed up processing and will only cause delays in processing, especially if care was provided for the entire month.
- The County is committed to sending out provider payments for services in a timely manner. Bills are processed daily (business days), and checks are issued once a week on Thursdays by our partner bank. The district has 21 days from the day the bill was submitted to evaluate, approve or return to the provider for corrections. This does not mean that your payment will be received in 21 days, but your bill will be reviewed and prepared for payment within 21 days.
- The Financial Operations Department will not accept any calls regarding current payments until after the 24th day of submission date.
- Bills need to be submitted timely and no later than 90 days from the date the care was provided. Late bills will not be accepted. The only exceptions would be for Legally Exempt providers that are awaiting approval.
- **Important: Providers may only be able to bill for days a client worked or was in an assigned activity. If you believe a client does not utilize child care for the purpose authorized (e.g., not working, not participating in employment activities or service**

activities) contact the assigned worker. The worker will track if the parent is on approved leave from activity/work (90-day temporary gap in activity is allowed only if approved by the worker).

OBTAINING BILLING FORMS

Billing forms may be obtained at: A billing form is included at the end of this packet.

1. **Financial Operations Division**, 15th Floor Civic Center, 421 Montgomery St., Syracuse, NY 132002
2. **Child Care Assistance Program Unit**, 2nd Floor Civic Center, 421 Montgomery St., Syracuse, NY 13202

COMPLETING THE BILLING FORMS

- **DO NOT** submit a billing form if you do not have an authorization for a child.
- To be paid you must submit a *Child Care Attendance/Provider Reimbursement Timesheet* form no later than the end of the next calendar month from the last date of service reflected on the bill or within 90 days from the last date of service reflected on the timesheet.
- All child care billing forms should be sent to:
Financial Operations-Accounting
15th Floor, Civic Center
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, NY 13202
- Keep a record of your billing forms and a record of the expected amount owed to you by the Onondaga County Department of Social Services-Economic Security.

***Child Care Attendance/Provider Reimbursement Timesheet* should be completed as follows: See example below**

1. Print your name, address, and phone number.
2. Print vendor number (found in the upper right-hand corner of the remittance statement).
3. Print month and year of service billed (submit only one set of billings per month).
4. Case information: use only one Attendance/Provider Timesheet per child, print case number located on authorization notice to providers), case name, child's name and date of birth. Only one child can be listed on a timesheet. You will submit one timesheet per child that is receiving CCAP.
5. Licensed/registered and Legally Exempt providers fill in the actual number of hours of service provided by listing the actual times the child arrived and left care each day.

Onondaga County Department of Social Services
 Child Care Assistance Program/Financial Operations
 421 Montgomery St. Syracuse, NY 13202
 (315)435-5883/(315)435- 2947

Service Month: _____
 Year: _____
 Case No: _____

Child Care Calendar/Attendance and Provider Reimbursement Timesheet

Provider Name: _____ Provider Vendor Number: _____

Provider Address: _____
 Street City Zip Phone

Child Name: _____ Child DOB: _____

Subsidy Parent Name: _____

DATE	DAY	TIME IN	TIME OUT	TIME IN	TIME OUT	TOTAL # of Hours	Client Signature for daily attendance	Comments
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								

6. If a child is authorized for care before and after school plus school holidays and is in attendance for a full day that is not a school holiday, the provider must include an explanation as to why the child is in care and not in school (e.g., sick).
7. Compute the billing charges. (OCDSS-ES Financial Operations will complete the OCDSS-ES only section; however, you may complete the provider section for your own benefit.)
 - Using appropriate weekly, daily, or part-day rates, calculate the total charge.

Note: When a month ends in mid-week, the daily rate is used for each day at the beginning of the week, that falls in the month being paid (if the hours total 30 or more then the weekly rate would be used). The next month if in the remainder of the week the child ends up reaching 30 hours for the week then the weekly rate is applied. From the weekly amount, the amount already paid the previous month is subtracted out. A week is defined as starting on Monday and ending on Sunday.

If the hours that fall in the first month are 30 or greater, the weekly amount is paid. Any remaining days in the next month will be ignored since the provider has already received the weekly rate for that week.

- Deduct the parent fee.
- Deduct any contribution from a non-custodial parent.
- Final total is the Social Service Charge. (The expected amount from OCDSS-ES).

8. For licensed/registered providers: sign and date bill (unsigned bills will be returned for signature, thus delaying payment).

For legally exempt/informal providers the bill must be signed by the parent along with being signed and dated by the provider.

31							
<i>For Office Use Only</i>				<i>TOTALS:</i>			
<p>The timesheet must be completed DAILY with the signature of the parent or other authorized individual. A separate timesheet must be completed for EACH child. Timesheets must be COMPLETED and SIGNED by both the CLIENT AND PROVIDER at the end of each month to receive payment. Timesheets are DUE no later than 90 days from the last day child care was performed. Submitting timesheets timely allows for timely reimbursement. Incomplete timesheets will be returned to be completed and resubmitted which may delay payment.</p>							
Is the client's co-payment current?				Yes	No	If NO, balance amount: \$	
Provider's Initials:							
<p>Pursuant to State and County Law, I do hereby certify that the services charged in the within claim have actually been performed for Onondaga County on behalf of a recipient(s); that no prerequisites, commissions or allowances of any kind, other than as stated in the said claim, have been or will be paid directly or indirectly, in consideration of the procurement of said services; and that said services contained in this bill or claim have not been, either in whole or any part, paid or satisfied and that the full amount less parent fees is now justly due and that no part thereof has been heretofore been presented for audit or payment.</p>							
Parent Signature				Provider Signature			
Date				Date			

Note: Do not submit your bill until all service for the month has been completed.

Note: Incomplete, unsigned, unreadable bills and bills that are submitted before all service for the month has been provided will be returned. Example: a bill submitted on 5/27 with an entry for 5/28 would be returned.

A timesheet form is attached at the end of this manual.

PARENT FEES/FAMILY SHARE

- It is the provider's responsibility to collect the parent fee/family share, and to notify the client if the parent fee/family share is late. The parent fee/family share is paid directly to the provider.

- The provider is responsible for maintaining a ledger of parent fees collected, showing date received and amount received for each family, as well as the method by which they paid (i.e., cash or check with check number).
- The provider is responsible for notifying the County of any late parent fee/family share. In the event that the provider fails to notify the County of late family shares, and the client wishes to transfer to another provider, the client will be required to pay the family share owed before the transfer to the new provider can be authorized.
- The family share is deducted on a weekly basis (Monday – Sunday). The family share is subtracted from the amount paid each week. If the family share exceeds the payment for one child, the remainder is applied to any siblings in care. No excess family share is carried over to the next week. In split week situations any remaining family share will be applied to any additional payments that fall in the next month.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT CONTRIBUTION

- Family Court, or any court which has jurisdiction on child support issues, may order the non-custodial parent to pay toward the cost of child care. The child care provider will be informed of the non-custodial parent’s contribution in the authorization letter.

PARTIAL PAYMENTS

- The County will pay for all cases that are authorized on bills submitted by providers. If a bill contains a case(s) that initially does not have an authorization, Accounting will attempt to process further payments as quickly as possible once there is an authorization on the system for that case(s). It is anticipated that payments for cases whose authorizations have been corrected should be processed within a timely manner.

BILLING ERRORS AND OMISSIONS/RE-BILLING

- Providers are responsible for carefully reviewing bills for accuracy before submitting them. However, if a billing error is discovered, a provider may request permission to submit an amended bill within 90 days of the date the original bill was submitted. The County reserves the right to deny the request to submit an amended bill and place the billing issue into administrative review as provided in 18NYCRR 415.4.

OVERPAYMENTS

- Cases will be referred to the OCDSS-ES Investigations Unit anytime there is discrepant billing that cannot be resolved collaterally by the Financial Operations Unit and the Child Care Assistance Unit.
- If a preliminary review finds inaccurate claims, the provider will be notified in writing what claims are being deferred and that an administrative review of the claim has been completed. The provider will then be notified within 30 days whether their claim is eligible or ineligible for payment. The provider has the right to respond to the preliminary review of an inaccurate claim by presenting evidence to refute the

- review findings. The provider can also request a formal Review. After the final Review, a final Determination will be rendered, and the Provider will be notified.
- Upon finding an overpayment, the provider will be required to make full restitution to the County by means of a repayment agreement developed by either the Investigations Unit or the Financial Operations Division.
 - Failure to enter into the repayment agreement will result in discontinuance from the child care assistance program until such time as a repayment agreement is established.
 - OCDSS-ES reserves the right to seek restitution from a provider regardless of whose error caused the overpayment.

BILLING DISPUTES/APPEAL PROCESS

In the event of nonpayment for services for a client of the provider, the following procedure shall be followed until the variance is settled.

1. The provider must first review his or her work in an effort to find any error that may have caused the nonpayment.
2. The provider must notify the client's caseworker for authorization issues.
3. The provider may appeal to the supervisor of the worker.
4. The provider may appeal in writing to the Division Director of the unit that is authorizing child care or to Financial Operations if it is a payment calculation/accounting issue not an authorization issue. Contact information is listed in the cover letter to this manual.
5. The provider must provide specific dates and hours of care that they feel were inaccurately paid as well as **attendance records with both the parents' and the provider's signatures that cover the dates/times in question.**
6. **Onondaga county will not review an entire period of billing issues without receiving specific dates and hours of care and attendance records.**

If after you have submitted all required information and you are not satisfied with the outcome you may petition in writing to the Commissioner of Social Services, John H. Mulroy Civic Center, 12th Floor, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

REGISTRATION FEES/ACTIVITY FEES/OTHER FEES

- Registration fees will be paid only to Day Care Centers. The County may pay a registration fee if it is charged as a *one-time only* fee and then only once per center per child. Registration fees may only be charged to the County if they are also charged to private pay parents/caretakers.
- The County will not pay activities fees.

7.0 PROVIDER RECORDKEEPING

Licensed/Registered/Legally Exempt providers are required to maintain an attendance sheet. **The attendance sheet must indicate the actual drop-off and pick-up times for each child and be signed by the person escorting to the site.** Unless requested by the Financial Operations department, do not send these sheets with your billing forms. You are required to maintain these records for **at least 7 years from the date of service** and have them available for review by OCDSS-ES. The provider is responsible for maintaining a ledger of parent fees and family shares collected, showing date received and amount received for each child, as well as the method by which they paid (i.e., cash or check with check number).

Example of accurate Attendance Records: **DO NOT WRITE 9AM TO 5PM DAILY. USE THE ACTUAL TIME IN AND ACTUAL TIME OUT.**

Date: 6/5/26 Time In: 8:54am Time Out: 4:02pm

Date: 6/6/26 Time In: 9:02am Time Out: 4:55pm

Best Practice: Parent/caretaker signs the daily attendance record each day at drop off and pick up for accurate time keeping.

Time sheet/attendance sheet is available for your use. Located at the end of this guide.

8.0 ABSENCES AND PROGRAM CLOSURES

Effective 10/1/23: DSS can pay for up to 80 absences per child per provider for the fiscal year (4/1/26 to 3/31/27).

While the parent is responsible for reporting changes to the district, providers are only eligible for reimbursement for absence and program closure days when a child is enrolled with their program. **A provider must report to Onondaga County CCAP within 5 calendar days of a child being disenrolled from program or the provider receiving notice from the family that the child will be disenrolled, whichever is earlier.** The district will not pay for a day when a child is absent or when the program is closed if the parent has notified the provider that the child will no longer attend. If a provider fails to report to the district that the child is no longer attending care and continues to bill for absences and/or program closures for that child, it will be considered fraud and can result in an overpayment that the provider will need to repay the district. Additionally, the provider can be disqualified from receiving payment for child care services.

An absence can be paid for an enrolled child if the provider is open and operating on the day the child does not attend. Absences cannot be paid if the provider is not open and

available to provide care, if the child was not scheduled for that specific day, or if the parent notified the provider that the child would no longer attend care.

Program closures can only be claimed on a day that a provider was open and available to provide care. If normal operating hours do not fall on the recognized federal holiday than a program closure cannot be claimed.

OCDSS recognizes the 11 Federal Holidays as a qualified program closure. Licensed and Registered providers are also eligible to claim 2 professional development days for a program closure. Professional development needs to be a recognized training, and verification needs to be provided.

A provider may claim a program closure for an unforeseen event that prevents them from being able to open. This may include a natural disaster, severe weather, and other emergency closings that are due to circumstances other than a substantiated regulatory violation.

Program closures are not allowed and will not paid for vacation, medical, cleaning days, personal days.

DSS can only pay a provider for a program closure if private pay families were charged for the closure.

Legally Exempt providers are not eligible for program closures.

Regulation: 25-OCFS-ADM-17, Changes to Child Care Assistance Regulations: Part 311, 358-3,404 and 415.

9.0 FRAUD

FRAUD ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING PROVIDERS

- Investigations will be initiated any time suspected fraudulent bills have been submitted by a child care provider.
- The OCDSS-ES investigator has the right to make announced or unannounced visits to inspect a Provider's records. The investigator has the right to inspect all of the provider's payment records, including those of private pay families, to ensure that the provider is not charging more for subsidized child care than for private pay.
- Failure to fully cooperate with the investigation may result in discontinuance from the child care subsidy program
- OCDSS-ES Investigations Unit may defer or disallow payments on suspected fraudulent claims. Again, upon preliminary finding of an inaccurate claim, the

provider will be notified in writing what claims are being deferred and that an administrative review of the claim has been commenced. See Section 6.

- Upon finding fraudulent billing, the matter will be referred to the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office for review.
- A final determination that a provider has submitted false claims may be the basis to disqualify them from participating as a provider in the subsidized child care program for a period of 5 years (18 NYCRR 415.4). If an overpayment has occurred because of such false claims, the provider will be required to enter into a repayment agreement or restitution order.
- Failure of a provider to make timely and complete payment as required by the Repayment Agreement or restitution order before the end of (5) years following the date of the disqualification, will result in permanent disqualification from providing subsidized child care under this program until the balance is paid in full.

FRAUD ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING CLIENTS

- If you suspect or have a question regarding any misuse of the program or misrepresentation of documentation of eligibility on behalf of the client, please report it to the Investigations Unit by calling (315) 435-3675 or emailing Fraud.Reporting@dfa.state.ny.us.

10.0 RATES

- OCDSS-ES will not pay more than providers charge private pay clients.
- OCDSS-ES *cannot* pay more than the market rates established by New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).
- A provider may not charge OCDSS-ES more than they charge private pay clients.
- If a provider wishes to change the rate charged during the year they may contact the Financial Operations Division to request an updated "private pay" letter. OCDSS-ES reserves the right to make only one rate adjustment per year. Providers must have a private pay letter on file before they can receive a child care payment from OCDSS-ES.
- OCDSS-ES will pay providers by the type of provider and the age of the child.
- **Change in age category** –
 - If a birthday occurs which will result in a change in rate for a child, the new rate will become effective the first day of the following billing period.
 - When a child turns 13 years old, all child care will continue through the current 12-month authorization period. But when the family recertifies the

child aged 13 will no longer be eligible for care unless approved for continued care due to a special need with medical documentation. The parent/caretaker needs to apply for continued care due to special needs.

The following rate definitions apply per NYS regulations:

Weekly	These rates are applied when child care services are provided for 30 or more hours over the course of five or fewer days in a single week.
Daily	This rate is applied when the child care services are provided for at least six but fewer than 12 hours per day.
Part Day	This rate is applied when the child care services are provided for at least three but fewer than six hours per day.

- If a provider changes from one provider type to another (e.g., from Family Day Care to Group Family Day Care) it is the responsibility of the provider to notify Financial Operations Division (435-2947) of the change in provider type. The appropriate pay rate changes will then be made. The provider must submit a new private pay letter and copy of the new license. Any increase in rates will be effective for the billings of the month in which all required documents are received and accepted by OCDSS-ES, e/g. If all documents are returned and accepted in January, January’s billings received in February will be the first paid under the new rate.

11.0 ROTATING SHIFT

- Authorization letters for clients with rotating shift schedules will contain the maximum hours of care the client may need. This does not mean that you will always bill for the maximum hours of care allowed. Billing/attendance is for when the child/children are in care at the approved provider location.
- Verification that child care is provided only during hours the client is working will be accomplished through the recertification process, random checking, fraud investigations and requesting provider attendance records.
- Attendance records can be requested by OCDSS-ES Financial Operations, CCAP Unit, DCFS and Investigations at any time not just when billing is in dispute.

12.0 SEPARATE PROVIDER/CLIENT AGREEMENTS

- Providers can enter into separate agreements with OCDSS-ES clients concerning issues such as notification of withdrawal, pick up times, and lateness. OCDSS-ES does not have any involvement with separate agreements between providers and families in their child care program.

13.0 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Any provider who establishes and operates a scholarship program for private pay clients must do all of the following:

- Collect donations or conduct fundraisers for the scholarship program that have been specifically earmarked for the scholarship program.
- Designate a fund or account separate from his or her operating account for scholarship funds.
- Develop an application process for the funds that do not discriminate against OCDSS-ES clients.
- Establish clear eligibility requirements; and
- Provide OCDSS-ES with above information.

14.0 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- OCDSS-ES is authorized to pay a higher rate for children with special needs. The provider and parent/caretaker must complete a special needs application together.
- Additional funding is available:
 - For a child who meets the criteria for special needs (refer to application for special needs funding) and meets all other eligibility criteria for child care funding.
 - When a completed application with all appropriate verification is submitted and approved.
 - Only for the period of approval.
- A new application re-verifying all eligibility criteria must then be submitted prior to the end of the approval period if ongoing funding is being sought.
- Applications are available online at *Special Needs Application* or by calling either the unit worker or the CCAP main number at 315-453-5683. **Only the parent/caretaker can request a special needs application. The special needs request cannot come from the provider.** If a provider feels that the child needs the special needs rate, then the provider should discuss their concerns with the parent/caretaker. Further information about applying for Special Needs funding, including current maximum rates, is available in the *Special Needs Cover Letter*.

15.0 SECURITY DEPOSITS

ODDSS-ES does not pay security deposits.

16.0 TAX REPORTING

- All child care payments made to providers over \$600 annually must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). An IRS Form 1099 will be submitted to the IRS reporting all County child care payments. You are required to report this non-

employee compensation on your tax return, and you are allowed to take business expenses against the income. For more information, contact the IRS or your tax advisor.

- A provider cannot be paid until an IRS W-9 form is completed and returned to OCDSS-ES.
- An updated IRS W-9 form is needed if you move locations, change the business name or switch from a legally exempt provider to a licensed/registered provider.

17.0 TRANSPORTATION

- OCDSS-ES does not pay for transportation provided by a provider. No other transportation costs related to child care can be paid. Hours of care allow for travel time for the parent to go between work/activity and child care location, not for the provider to provide transportation. Including transportation time that is provided by the child care provider in the hours of care submitted for payment is not allowed and could lead to an investigation review of attendance records and possible fraud.

18.0 TRANSFERS BETWEEN PROVIDERS

Note: procedures regarding transfers are different than those for discontinuances of care (see Section 7.0)

- OCDSS-ES policy is that a client has the right to choose his or her child care provider and therefore may transfer to a new provider. **OCDSS-ES will issue a notice to the provider as required;** however, OCDSS-ES does require that a new authorization be in effect before the client may begin to use a new provider.
- Existing authorizations are only valid for the provider indicated on the authorization letter. Switching children from one site to another, even within the same day care organization, must be prior approved. **The earliest effective date for such a transfer will be the date OCDSS-ES is notified and approves of the change in provider. The start dates of these authorizations will not be backdated,** unless a verbal agreement between the child care worker and the provider has been reached and this must be written on the letter.
- Providers who choose to accept children prior to receiving written authorization or prior to the start date, or after the end date, as indicated on the authorization letter, are doing so **AT THEIR OWN RISK.**
- Before a client who is receiving child care assistance through the CCAP Unit is permitted to transfer to a new child care provider, she or he must notify the child care worker. The CCAP Unit worker will contact the former provider and check on the payment of outstanding parent fees/family share. If parent fees/family share are paid,

the worker will authorize child care with the new provider. The provider is responsible for notifying OCDSS-ES of any late parent fee/family share. In the event that the provider fails to notify OCDSS-ES of unpaid parent fees/family share, and the client wishes to transfer to another provider, the maximum the client will be required to pay prior to transferring to another provider will be the parent fee owed. Any additional fees charged by the provider are between the parent/caretaker and the provider. OCDSS-ES cannot require a family to pay additional fees beyond the parent fee owed before transferring care to another provider.

- Providers may choose to enter into an agreement with the client requiring the client to provide a certain number of days' notice before the child is moved. This would be a contract between the client and the provider, one to which OCDSS-ES is not a party. Should the client violate this agreement the resolution is between the two parties involved.

Under no circumstances will OCDSS-ES pay two providers for the same time period.

19.0 WAITING LISTS

OCDSS-ES will establish a waiting list when there are not sufficient funds to open all eligible cases – per our current Child Care Service Plan.

20.0 RESOURCES, INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS AND TRAININGS

CHILD CARE RESOURCE CONTACTS

- Child Care Solutions is a resource for providers throughout Onondaga County. They are the primary child care referral source in OCDSS-ES. Child Care Solutions also administers the USDA Food Program, provides mini grants to help providers, and holds training and meetings to benefit child care providers. For more information, contact 446-1220, CCS@childcaresolutionscny.org or visit their website at www.childcaresolutionscny.org.

CHILD CARE VENDOR INFORMATION

- **Child Care Time and Attendance (CCTA/KinderConnect)**

If you still use paper attendance sheets, consider becoming a user of the CCTA system, also known as KinderConnect. There are a number of benefits to using the CCTA system, including:

- On-line submission of attendance- no paper time sheets needed.
- Real-time information on new authorizations, changes, and discontinuances
- Accurate calculation of subsidy payments
- On-line information about pending and processed payments- No more telephone calls are needed

Participation in CCTA is not required by providers to receive subsidy payments, but OCDSS strongly encourages the use of CCTA, and *whenever possible*, will expedite payments for those who submit using this preferred method for billing submission.

INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

- OCDSS-ES will hold informational meetings throughout the year either in conjunction with Child Care Solutions or separately.
- OCDSS-ES may conduct training for providers when major changes in policy or procedures occur. If training is scheduled, providers will be notified through inserts with their payments and there will be information regarding the training posted on the website.

Note: These informational meetings are NOT training unless specified in the course description or announcement.

Onondaga County Department of Social Services
 Child Care Assistance Program/Financial Operations
 421 Montgomery St. Syracuse, NY 13202
 (315)435-5683/(315)435- 2947

Service Month: _____
 Year: _____
 Case No: _____

Child Care Calendar/Attendance and Provider Reimbursement Timesheet

Provider Name: _____ Provider Vendor Number: _____

Provider Address: _____
 Street City Zip Phone

Child Name: _____ Child DOB: _____

Subsidy Parent Name: _____

DATE	DAY	TIME IN	TIME OUT	TIME IN	TIME OUT	TOTAL # of Hours	Client Signature for daily attendance	Comments
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
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24								
25								
26								
27								
28								
29								
30								
31								

<i>For Office Use Only</i>	TOTALS:	
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The timesheet must be completed DAILY with the signature of the parent or other authorized individual. A separate timesheet must be completed for EACH child. Timesheets must be COMPLETED and SIGNED by both the CLIENT AND PROVIDER at the end of each month to receive payment. Timesheets are DUE no later than 90 days from the last day child care was performed. Submitting timesheets timely allows for timely reimbursement. Incomplete timesheets will be returned to be completed and resubmitted which may delay payment.

Is the client's co-payment current? Yes No If NO, balance amount: \$

Provider's Initials:

Pursuant to State and County Law, I do hereby certify that the services charged in the within claim have actually been performed for Onondaga County on behalf of a recipient(s); that no prerequisites, commissions or allowances of any kind, other than as stated in the said claim, have been or will be paid directly or indirectly, in consideration of the procurement of said services; and that said services contained in this bill or claim have not been, either in whole or any part, paid or satisfied and that the full amount less parent fees is now justly due and that no part thereof has been heretofore been presented for audit or payment.

Parent Signature Date	Provider Signature <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Date
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