

Managing Financial Aid Child Care Standards and Guidelines

Revised May 2024

Workforce Solutions is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. (Please request reasonable accommodations a minimum of two business days in advance.) **Relay Texas** Numbers: 1.800.735.2989 (TDD) 1.800.735.2988 (voice) or 711

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All H-GAC Workforce Solutions contractors must use these standards and guidelines in managing child care services.

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1. Overview

The purpose of this guide is to provide standards and guidelines for Workforce Solutions' child care services that:

- Establish minimum standards for delivery of child care services, and
- Ensure consistency in the provision of financial aid.

2. General Management

Workforce Solutions must make sure that child care services – as a support to parents who are working or in-school – are accessible online and through local career offices, adult education providers, community and youth projects, early education quality improvement efforts and all units of the system for interested parents and caretakers. Workforce Solutions must:

- Seek to ensure safe and stable child care/early education is available throughout the region to help families become independent from or avoid becoming dependent upon public assistance;
- Leverage private and public funds to maximize the resources available for child care services
- Make sure child care services are integrated into and fully a part of Workforce Solutions' comprehensive service to help individuals get a job, keep a job or get a better job.

3. Application

- 3.0. Customers who apply for child care services based on income (refer to Section 6) must submit a completed Workforce Solutions' Financial Aid Application and appropriate supporting documentation.
- 3.1. These customers may complete the online Financial Aid Application at a career office, at a child care provider site, at their homes, or location they choose. If the customer is unable to complete their Financial Aid Application online, they may contact the Financial Aid Support Center (Support Center) or a Workforce Solutions career office for assistance.
- 3.2. The Support Center determines a customer's eligibility for child care services.



4. Priority

Workforce Solutions gives priority for child care services to eligible families in the following order.

4.1. First

The first group has immediate access to financial aid and includes parents/children who are:

- Eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Choices child care
- Eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Applicant child care
- Eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training child care
- Eligible for at-Risk child care for former Choices child care recipients whose TANF benefits were denied or voluntarily ended within the last 12 months due to employment, timing out of benefits, or an earnings increase
- Directly referred from a recognized Pre-K or Head Start/Early Head Start partnership to receive services in a contracted partnership program

4.2. Second

The second group has access subject to the availability of funds and includes, in the following order:

- a. Parents with children who need to receive protective services child care
- b. Qualified veteran or qualified spouse's children
- c. Foster youth parents with children
- d. Parents and their children who are experiencing homelessness
- e. Parents on military deployment who are unable to enroll their children in militaryfunded child care assistance programs
- f. Teen parents with children
- g. Parents who have children with disabilities

4.3. Third

Workforce Solutions must provide financial aid to parents in the first and second priority groups before authorizing assistance to those in the third group, in the following order:

- a. Parents/Families who have siblings in families already receiving our financial aid for one or more children
- b. Parents/Families who are students at, or employees of, a match partner using Initial income levels
- c. Parents/Families participating in career, employment or education activities that require financial aid to successfully complete their service
- d. Parents with children who are receiving child care services based on eligibility for timelimited special projects
- e. Families who have lost financial aid for program violations including a child exceeding 40 unexplained absence days or failure to pay Parent Share of Cost, who have fulfilled their mandatory waiting period and have reapplied for aid
- f. All other eligible parents/families



5. Waiting List

- 5.1. When funds are available, the Support Center must determine eligibility at the time the customer applies, using the priorities described in <u>Section 4</u>.
- 5.2. If funds are not immediately available, a waiting list is implemented a waiting list. The waiting list is for parents who need and have expressed an interest in child care services, including initial job search child care. When there is a waiting list, we provide assistance and funds using the <u>priority groups</u> listed above. It also ensures that low-income parents are served in the order of application date.
- 5.3. When we implement a waiting list, we ask customers to complete a pre-qualification screening. We defer the complete eligibility determination until funds are available, but check for potential eligibility and priority categories by assuring:
 - 5.3.1. The parent resides in the 13-county Gulf Coast region;
 - 5.3.2. The parent is working, in school, or searching for work, if applicable;
 - 5.3.3. The children are between the ages of 0 and 13, or 0 and 19, if the child has a disability and are U.S. citizens or have legal immigration status;
 - 5.3.4. Identification of priority groups applicable to the applicant; and
 - 5.3.5. The parent's income based on family size is at or below the 85% State Median Income (SMI) limit.
- 5.4. If the customer does not meet the initial waiting list prescreening criteria, they must receive notification via the web application and receive general information about other resources.
- 5.5. If the customer is potentially eligible and within five (5) business days from receipt of application, Support Center staff must:
 - 5.5.1. add the parent to the waiting list based on priority status and the date of the application
 - 5.5.2. notify the parent that funds are not immediately available, and we are placing them on the waiting list
 - 5.5.3. tell the parent we will notify them when funds become available,
 - 5.5.4. advise them that we will notify them no later than the end of every calendar quarter about the status of the waiting list and request that they update their contact information (telephone number, email address, mailing/residence address) if there are any changes, and
 - 5.5.5. advise the parent that they will remain on the waiting list until they are called, they inform us they no longer want to remain on the waiting list or they do not respond to the annual letter asking if they wish to remain on the waiting list.
- 5.6. On the annual anniversary of the month in which the customer was added to the waiting list, the Support Center will send a letter asking if they want to remain on the waiting list. The customer has ten (10) business days to respond to the letter. They will be removed from the



list if they fail to respond or indicate they do not want to remain on the list. If they re-apply for child care and a waiting list is still in effect, they will be placed on the waiting list based upon the date of their new, most recent pre-qualification screening submission.

- 5.6.1. Customers who were removed from the waiting list must be notified in writing within five (5) business days from the date they are removed.
- 5.7. Customers that have not satisfied mandatory waiting times (60 days) related to failure to pay Parent Share of Cost or excessive absences, will not be placed on the waiting list.
- 5.8. Board staff will determine on a monthly basis if funds are available to serve customers from the waiting list and notify Support Center staff. When funds are available, Support Center staff must pull customers from the waiting list;
 - 5.8.1. First, in the order of their priority criteria;
 - 5.8.2. Second, in the order by the date of the application.
- 5.9. Customers pulled from the waiting list must complete a full financial aid application and submit supporting eligibility documentation.



6. Eligibility

All customers must meet eligibility criteria for Workforce Solutions child care services. Workforce Solutions must verify all eligibility requirements for child care services before authorizing financial aid.

An eligible child who relocates from another local workforce development area will remain eligible and continue to receive services for the duration of their eligibility period; eligibility must not be redetermined based on a move to our workforce area. If a transfer between workforce areas occurs, the Support Center must communicate with the originating Board area to determine the customer's eligibility period and parent share of cost and must work with the parent to locate an eligible provider. The transfer and any associated case changes, including the customer's address must be documented in TWIST Counselor Notes. Verbal attestation of residency and continued employment at an income below 85% SMI is acceptable; if employment has changed, documentation of income is required.

- 6.1. Initial Eligibility Determination or Redetermination for Child Care Financial Aid
 - To be eligible for child care financial aid, a family must be:
 - Referred by DFPS Child Protective Services or eligible for Former DFPS child care, or
 - Meet core eligibility requirements *and*
 - Income eligibility requirements <u>or</u> be
 - A TANF Applicant or
 - An individual participating in TANF/Choices or
 - An individual participating in SNAP E&T or
 - A family experiencing homelessness

"Transitional" is no longer an eligibility category for child care services.

6.2. Core Eligibility Requirements

The Support Center must determine that every customer applying for child care services meets each of the core eligibility requirements:

- Family Composition and Residency
- Age and Citizenship or Legal Immigration status of the child(ren)
- Activity Hours of the parent(s)
- 6.2.1. Core Eligibility: Family Composition & Residency

For a parent to be eligible, the children must:

• Be living with and physically present with the parent during the time for which the aid is requested and received (see essential definitions of *parent* and *in loco parentis*)



• Reside with a family* within the 13-county Gulf Coast region (includes Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties)

*See definitions of family and household dependent

Primary verification documents for residency:

- Copy of current utility bill
- Pay stub (if address is printed on stub)
- Rent receipt (showing current address)
- Mortgage or Lease Agreement
- School record showing address
- Section 8 Award Letter
- Public assistance/social service records
- <u>Residency Information Form</u> for homelessness determination Discussion documented in TWIST
- Financial aid application to document address and one of the above documentation sources from the owner/lessee.

Managers and Supervisors may review and accept alternative documentation, including self-attestation when the preponderance of evidence points to the customer meeting the eligibility criterion. A counselor note must be entered in TWIST by the Supervisor or Manager approving the alternative documentation.

Exceptions

> Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

A child whose family is experiencing homelessness might not have a stable residence to report. Therefore, the family's primary sleeping location at the time of eligibility determination should be used to determine county of residence. Families experiencing homelessness have three months to provide documentation of eligibility for age, citizenship or legal immigration status, activity hours, and primary nighttime residence. Support Center staff should use the customer's attestation on the financial aid application *and contact the customer to ensure they meet the homeless definition as defined by the McKinney-Vento. The phone call screening must be documented in TWIST Counselor Notes.*

If Support Center staff are unable to make a homelessness determination from the customer's application *and phone call screening, the application will be updated accordingly, and the child will be placed on the waiting list and processed in the order received.*

If the parent can provide all documentation at the time of the initial eligibility, the Support Center staff will provide the customer with 12 months of care under the



Homeless characteristic and complete page two (2) of the Residency Information Form.

If the parent cannot provide all documentation, the Support Center staff will authorize care for twelve months while allowing families time to provide required documentation. The staff will provide the parent with the Residency Information Form. Page one (1) of the Residency Information Form and additional documentation, including proof of the child's age, citizenship/legal immigration status, and parent's activity hours, must be within three months. The Support Center staff will complete page two (2) of the Residency Information Form and authorize care for the remaining 12 months of the eligibility period. If the parent does not provide requested documentation by the end of the three months, the parent will have an activity interruption report and services will be terminated.

> Child of Parents Attending an Educational Program

The child of parent(s) attending a program that leads to an undergraduate degree from an institution of higher education may be exempt from residing with the parent(s).

> Child of Parents on Military Deployment

The child of a deployed military parent(s) meets the residency requirement if the child resides in the Gulf Coast area with a person standing in loco parentis for the child while the child's parent or parents are on military deployment. Refer to the VEQ for the definition of in loco parentis.

Income eligibility for children of deployed military parents may be determined based on the deployed person's income or the income and work/school activities of the person standing in loco parentis for the child.

All deployed military parents automatically meet the work requirements.

Support Center staff must make every effort to accommodate deployed military parents in situations where the deployment does not allow the parents to provide information in the required time frames.

> Residency During Custody and Visitation Arrangements

A child who is temporarily living with a non-custodial parent on court-ordered visitation is considered to be residing with the non-custodial parent during the visitation arrangement. Depending on the family and child care arrangements for custody arrangements of short duration, child care may continue or be suspended at the agreement of the custodial parent.

6.2.2. Core Eligibility: Age and Citizenship or Legal Immigration Status of the Child(ren) The children for which a parent is requesting financial aid must be:



- Between the ages of 0 and 13 years, or 0 and 19 years, if the child has a disability.
 - A child must be under 13 years of age at the time of eligibility determination or redetermination. A child who is 12 years of age at time of eligibility determination or redetermination remains eligible for the entire 12-month eligibility period.
 - A child with a disability must be under 19 years of age at the time of eligibility determination or redetermination. A child who is 18 years of age at time of eligibility determination or redetermination remains eligible for the entire 12-month eligibility period.
 - U.S. citizens or a legal immigrant in the United States.
 - We document only the child's citizenship or immigration status.

Exceptions

Individuals experiencing homelessness

Families experiencing homelessness are not required to demonstrate citizenship and age of the child(ren) during the initial three months of child care services.

Following the initial three-month period, verification of the child(ren)'s citizenship and age is a requirement for child care to continue.

6.2.2.1. Age & Citizenship or Legal Immigration Status Verification

Primary verification documents for age and citizenship:

- Birth certificate (United States or its possessions)
- o Current U.S. passport
- Hospital or public health birth record (United States or its possessions)
- Church or baptismal record (United States or its possessions)
- TANF, SNAP benefits, Medicaid, or other related public assistance records

Secondary verification documents for citizenship or immigration status <u>only</u> <u>if no primary documents are available:</u>

U.S. Citizen

- Report of birth abroad of U.S. citizen (FS-240) issued by U.S. Department of State
- Certificate of Birth (FS-545) issued by a foreign service post
- Certificate of U.S. Citizenship (N-561)
- o Native American Tribal Document/Card (Form I-872)

Immigrant/Qualified Alien



- Lawful Permanent Resident Card, also known as "Green Card" (Form I-551)
- Form I-94 / I-94a (Form I-94 is an arrival/departure admission form given by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the port of entry to nonimmigrant visa holders and must be stamped with the applicable immigration rule citations)
 - <u>For Asylee</u>: Annotated with stamp showing asylum granted under §208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), a copy of grant letter from the Asylum Office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or a copy of the order of an immigration judge granting asylum
 - <u>For Refugee</u>: Annotated with stamp showing admission under INA §207 or Form I-571 (Refugee Travel Document)
 - <u>For Cuban/Haitian Entrant</u>: Annotated with stamp showing §501(e), Permanent Resident Card, also known as Green Card (Form I-551), unexpired temporary Form I-551, or stamp in foreign passport showing §501(e)
- Alien Whose Deportation or Removal Was Withheld: order from an immigration judge showing deportation or removal withheld
- Alien Granted Conditional Entry: Form I-94 identifying the bearer as "Refugee-Conditional Entry" and a citation of §203(a)(7)
- Alien Who Has Been Declared a Battered Alien or Alien Subjected to Extreme Cruelty: USCIS petition and supporting documentation
- Alien Who Is Paroled proof of parole under INA §212(d)(5) for a period of at least one year

Secondary verification documentation for age only

If no documentation listed under the primary age and citizenship category is available, the following are acceptable sources to verify a child's age:

- Adoption papers or records (United States or its possessions)
- Divorce and/or court custody decrees
- Bureau of Indian Affairs or Tribal records
- o Immigration and Naturalization Service records
- Child support paternity records
- School records/identification card
- 6.2.3. Core Eligibility: Activity Hours

Activity hours are required for all customers except for customers eligible for DFPS or Former DFPS funding.

6.2.3.1. Income Eligible/At-Risk Activity Requirements

Support Center staff must verify activity hours before authorizing child care services at initial eligibility and at the 12-month eligibility re-determination.



- Customers must be in school, or working, or in school and working an:
 - \circ Average of 25 hours or more per week for a single-parent family; or
 - \circ $\;$ Average of 50 combined hours per week for a dual-parent family.

Note: There is no minimum activity requirement for each parent in a dual-parent family.

Any permanent loss of work, training, or education by one parent in a dual-parent family is regarded as a reduction in hours—provided the other parent continues to participate in work, training, or education at any level.

- Activity hour requirements may be reduced if warranted by a parent's documented disability or the need to care for a family member with a disability (for a single-parent family, the reduction can be no lower than 15 hours; for a dual-parent family, the reduction can be no lower than 25 hours).
- Customers who are seeking employment or engaging in job search will be considered as meeting the activity requirements during the initial job search period.
- Customers who are not meeting the required activity hours, through working and/or attending an educational program, for an average of 25 hours or more per week.
- All military parents who are on deployment automatically meet the work requirements.

Note: During the 12-month eligibility period, reductions in work, training, or education participation are not grounds for terminating financial aid unless there is a permanent cessation of work, training or education and three months of continuing aid have been provided. It is considered a temporary change in the parent's ongoing status.

Exceptions

Individuals experiencing homelessness

Parents with children meeting the definition of experiencing homelessness are not required to demonstrate activity hours during the initial three months of child care services. If the parents do not meet the activity requirement at application, Support Center staff must update the Activity Interruption tab in the TWIST Program Detail.

If within the initial three months of child care services the parent provides documentation of their activity hours, child care services must continue for the duration of 12 months starting from the initial referral date.



If the parent fails to submit documentation of their activity hours by the end of the initial three months, child care services must end on the date of the Activity Interruption. If complete documentation of eligibility is provided at time of enrollment, there is no requirement to track the initial three months of care, and Support Center staff must not enter an "Activity Interruption" into TWIST.

6.2.3.2. Initial Job Search Child Care

Under federal Child Care Development Block (CCDBG) regulation 45 CFR §98.21(a)(2)(iii), states may initially qualify a family for assistance if the parent is seeking employment or engaging in job search and may end assistance after a minimum of three months if the parent has not found employment. Unemployed parents who are looking for work to receive child care subsidies under Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chapter 809 Child Care Services rule §809.41(3)(B). According to 809.56, a parent who is searching for work, including a parent in a dual-parent family, is eligible for 12 months of child care services if at initial eligibility determination the family does not meet the minimum participation requirements for At-Risk Child Care. However, retaining eligibility for the full 12 months is contingent upon the unemployed parent. finding work within three months of eligibility_determination.

A dual-parent family may qualify for initial job search child care if their combined hours do not meet the weekly activity requirement.

Support Center staff shall not collect income information or activity hours for parents that qualify for initial job search child care. However, Support Center staff must collect all other eligibility information that is normally required for income eligible child care, in addition to the <u>Initial Job Search</u> (IJS) Parent Agreement. Parents must self-attest their need for job search child care and that their family's income is below 85% SMI. See <u>Initial Job</u> <u>Search Child Care Addendum</u>. Parents must complete the Addendum and the document must be stored in the document management system.

For families enrolled in initial job search child care, staff must:

- Ensure that priority of service is followed when serving initial job search customers.
- Ensure the customer is registered in WorkInTexas.com (WIT) and refer them to a Workforce Solutions office to access appropriate services to obtain employment. If they are not registered in WIT, the customer must be referred to a career office for assistance with registering prior to the authorization for child care.



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- Provide parents 14 calendar days from the date of eligibility determination to register in WIT.
- Stamp the application 'Pending WIT Registration' for parents who have not registered.
- Enter into TWIST the special projects code value for <u>initial job</u> search (12–Job Search)
- Initially assess the parent share of cost (PSOC) at the highest amount in TWIST based on the family's size and number of children in care. See Initial Job Search Child Care Desk Aid.
- Immediately waive the initially assessed amount and no PSOC will be collected by the child care provider for the duration of the initial job search period
- Document in TWIST Counselor Notes:
 - the initially assessed PSOC and
 - o the maximum PSOC amount
- Send eligibility notification to the family informing them they are approved for Initial Job Search child care for a 12-month period comprised of the initial three-month job search period, with the remaining nine months contingent upon the parent securing employment and meeting the participation requirements defined in §809.56 (c).
- Communicate to the family the maximum PSOC amount based on family size and the number of children in care. Send 2450 to the child care provider to authorize care.

If a customer fails to register, care will not be authorized, and the customer must reapply.

The three-month eligibility period begins on the date of referral and ends three months after the referral start date.

Example:

A customer is eligible to begin receiving child care services on August 1, 2021, and the first referral is dated August 16, 2021. The end date must be November 15, 2021.



Program Summary	Eligibility Summary	Eligibility Detail	Characteristics	Employment History
Eligibility Start Date: Eligibility Characteristics:	and the second se	Eligibility End Date: 11/	/15/2021	
Terminate Eligibility Period	Termination Date	Terminati	on Reason	•
		Inactive Date: 00/00.	/0000	
Office 3: 3001 - LDI		Program Type:	Child Care	
Office 4: 119 · CC Annex		Staff :	43365 - Rhone,Melanie	
Office 5: 4113 - CCE Job Search		WDA:	WDA: 28 Gulf Coast WDA	

Note: If the end of the three months falls on a weekend or holiday, the eligibility end date must move to the next business day.

To continue receiving child care services, parents must meet participation requirements by the end of the three-month period:

- 25 hours per week with a minimum of 12 hours in employment for a single-parent family or
- 50 hours per week with a minimum of 25 hours in employment for a dual-parent family.

If participation requirements are met, the staff must not require the family to resubmit a full application. The staff must only request documentation verifying employment and hours of participation.

Parents must notify Workforce Solutions when they obtain employment and enroll into an educational program. Support Center staff must:

- Determine eligibility for continued care under income eligible child care and collect required eligibility documentation for income and activity hours
- Authorize eligibility for a total of 12 months, inclusive of the threemonth initial job search period
- End the "Job Search" program detail and open a "Low Income" program detail for the remainder of the 12-month time frame
- Reinstate either at the initially assessed PSOC or at an amount based on the actual family income, whichever is lower.

The Support Center will send parents a 60-day reminder to find employment. The reminder will inform parents to locate their nearest Workforce Solutions office if still needing to obtain employment to



continue child care services following the three-month initial job search period.

Support Center staff may extend an initial job search period for a maximum of 30 calendar days to ensure continuity of care while staff *processes* the documentation to determine *if care can be continued* for a parent who meets activity requirements. Any extensions for the initial three months of eligibility should be clearly documented in TWIST Counselor Notes and must be counted in the total 12-month eligibility time frame. PSOC must remain at zero during the extension, ensuring that when PSOC is resumed, it is based upon a full income determination. Support Center staff must send a new 2450 to the child care provider extending care and including the updated PSOC.

If parents fail to meet activity requirements (25/50 hours per week) with a minimum of 12 hours in employment for a single-parent family or a minimum of 25 hours in employment for a dual-parent family within the three-month period, Support Center staff must:

- Send a closure letter 15 days prior to the last day of care
- Terminate care at the end of the initial three months of job search child care eligibility.

See <u>Initial Job Search Child Care Desk Aid</u> for steps detailing TWIST data entry.

Note: Initial job search eligibility is limited to one three-month job search period within a 12-month period.

- 6.2.3.3. TANF Applicant Activity Requirements Customers must be <u>working</u> an average of 25 hours or more per week (50 hours per week for a two-parent/dual-parent family).
- 6.2.3.4. TANF Choices and SNAP E&T Activity Requirements Customers must be meeting TANF Choices and SNAP E&T participation requirements.

6.2.4. Core Eligibility: Calculating Activity Hours

- 6.2.4.1. Employment
 - A parent must be working sufficient hours to meet the activity hours requirement, or
 - May be hired but not yet started working
 - Parent must submit documentation of hire from employer.
 Documentation must include the hours the employer is expecting

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the parent to work. There must be sufficient work hours to meet activity hours requirement.

- Referral to care may begin up to two weeks before employment start date
- 6.2.4.2. Calculating Work Hours

In general, employers pay their workers weekly, biweekly, semi-monthly or monthly. Below is a chart to help Support Center staff determine if the customer is working 25 hours or more per week when Workforce Solutions has a paycheck or paycheck stub to verify work hours.

Pay Frequency	Minimum Hours Based on Pay Frequency	Weekly Hours Use to get the number of hours worked per week
Weekly	25	Average hours per pay period
Biweekly (every 2 weeks)	50	Average hours per pay period divided by 2
Semi-monthly (twice a month)	54	Average hours per pay period divided by 2.167
Monthly	108	Average hours per pay period divided by 4.33

Use the following steps when determining the number of hours worked in each pay period:

- If the total gross pay is reflected on the paycheck, but not the hourly rate of pay or the number of hours worked, ask the customer for their pay rate.
- Divide the gross pay for the pay period by the customer's hourly rate of pay to get the number of hours worked; round the calculated hours to the nearest whole number.
- Compare the hours worked to the standard hours in the chart above.
- Document the calculation in TWIST Counselor Notes including the information the customer provided, i.e., their pay rate.

Example: Customer is paid biweekly and provided six paycheck stubs.

Since the paycheck stubs did not list the number of hours or rate of pay, Support Center staff must contact the customer to obtain rate of pay. The customer stated they make \$10.25 per hour and is paid biweekly. To calculate the number of hours worked for each pay period, divide the total gross pay by the rate of pay.



Check	Gross	Rate of Pay	Calculated Hours Per Pay Period
1	\$582	10.25	57
2	\$616	10.25	60
3	\$571	10.25	56
4	\$535	10.25	52
5	\$594	10.25	58
6	\$626	10.25	61
Total	\$3,525/6		344/6
Average	\$587.50		57

Gross Pay/Pay Rate = Total hours worked per pay period

Sample Counselor Note:

Ms. Chile submitted six paycheck stubs from her job in shipping and receiving at Get It Done Company. Her gross pay is reflected on each paycheck stub, but not the number of hours she worked or her rate of pay. I contacted Ms. Chile to ask her pay rate; she responded \$10.25 per hour. I calculated the number of hours she worked for each pay period using her gross pay and rate of pay:

Check stub 1 - \$582/10.25 = 57 hours Check stub 2 - \$616/10.25 = 60 hours Check stub 3 - \$571/\$10.25 = 56 hours Check stub 4 - \$535/10.25 = 52 hours Check stub 5 - \$594/10.25 = 58 hours Check stub 6 - \$626/10.25 = 61 hours

Ms. Chile worked an average of 57 hours per biweekly pay period in the past three months.

To calculate the number of hours the customer worked each week, divide the average number of hours per pay period by two (2) and round the result to the nearest whole number.

57 hours per bi-weekly pay period / 2 = 28.5 or 29 hours per week

Ms. Chile worked an average of 29 hours per week.

6.2.4.3. Calculating Work Hours for Self-Employed Individuals



To verify income for established self-employment individuals, Support Center staff must require one of the following documents from the most recent tax year and/or most recent quarter:

- Federal tax returns
- Signed year-to-date profit and loss statements for each business owned
- Business ledgers, records, receipts, check receipts and business statements
- Customer contracts or work orders
- Calendar of work appointments and money earned through these appointments

When self-employed individuals are unable to provide verifiable documentation of work hours but can provide verifiable documentation of income, the federal minimum wage is applied to net self-employed income to calculate a self-employed individual's work hours.

Support Center staff must:

- 1. Determine Monthly Net Self-Employment Income by subtracting operating expenses from the gross income.
- 2. Divide Monthly Net Self-Employment Income by Minimum Wage to get the Monthly Work Hours
- 3. Divide Monthly Work Hours by 4.33 to get the Average Weekly Work Hours
- 4. Determine if the customer meets required number of eligibility hours.
- 6.2.5. Determining School Status
 - 6.2.5.1. Parents in an educational/training program may receive child care services:
 - For a cumulative total of 60 months when attending an educational or undergraduate program full-time;
 - If they demonstrate they are making progress towards successful completion of a job training or educational program.
 - 6.2.5.2. These education/training limits begin when Support Center staff determines initial eligibility and should be verified at recertification.
 - 6.2.5.3. A parent may meet the activity requirement by:
 - Attending an educational/training program for sufficient hours to meet the activity hours requirement, or
 - Being enrolled/registered but not yet started attending an educational/training program.
 - Referral to care may begin no more than two weeks before the school start date.



6.2.5.4. Calculating Education Hours

When calculating education hours:

- Each credit hour of an educational program counts as three (3) clock hours of participation per week. Ex. 12 credit hours = 12 x 3 = 36 clock hours/week.
- Each credit hour of an educational program in a condensed semester (e.g. summer or mini semesters) counts as six (6) clock hours of participation per week. Ex. 5 credit hours = 5 x 6 = 30 clock hours/week.
- Teen parents attending high school, or the equivalent are meeting the weekly activity requirements. If the parent turns 20 years of age during the 12-month eligibility period, high school attendance and work toward a Certificate of High School Equivalency are considered allowable education activities.

6.2.5.5. Online Training

A customer may enroll and participate in a <u>distance learning program</u> or <u>online courses included as part of a school's curriculum</u> for an education/training program.

A customer who needs assistance with child care expenses to participate in online education may qualify for Workforce Solutions child care services, if:

- The customer meets all general eligibility requirements (income, citizenship, and hours per week in school or in school and working); and
- The customer provides Workforce Solutions with a copy of their registrations and course syllabuses, describing the courses and the online delivery requirements.

Support Center staff must talk with the customer to determine how much time the customer will need to participate in and complete assignments for the online courses. Staff must also document the conversation in TWIST Counselor Notes.

Support Center staff must authorize child care services in TWIST for the number of days of care the customer needs.

Example: Mary Jones applies for financial aid to pay for child care needed while she attends school. She is enrolled in a distance learning training program with Way Far Away School. She provides a copy of her registration and syllabus showing the requirements of her courses



including assignment due dates. Online classes are scheduled regularly every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday for three hours each day. This semester she is taking nine credit hours or 27 clock hours – more than the required minimum 25 hours.

Support Center staff talks with the customer to discuss her child care needs. She will need child care for the three days she's attending classes. She expects to be able to complete her homework assignments during these three days. Support Center staff authorizes child care services for three days: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

6.3. Additional Eligibility Requirements

6.3.1. Income Eligible

A family that meets core eligibility criteria and income requirements is eligible for child care services. Family income requirements include:

- Financial assets do not exceed \$1 million
- Family income is at or below 85% State Median Income (SMI) Initial Eligibility income level

For a family with a child with disabilities, the cost of a child's ongoing medical expenses is deducted from the family's income when calculating eligibility.

Exception

Individuals experiencing homelessness

Families experiencing homelessness are considered income eligible based on their homeless status, regardless of actual income. Families with children meeting the definition of experiencing homelessness are not required to submit income eligibility documentation for initial eligibility or during the 12-month eligibility period.

6.3.2. TANF Applicant Eligibility

A parent is eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Applicant child care if the family meets core eligibility criteria, and the parent meets the following conditions:

- Receives a referral from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to attend an orientation at Workforce Solutions AND
- Locates employment or has increased earnings prior to TANF certification AND
- Needs child care services to accept or retain employment

✓ To be initially eligible for TANF Applicant child care, a parent must be working in, and not have voluntarily terminated, paid employment of at least 25 hours a week within 30 days prior to receiving the referral from HHSC to



attend a workforce orientation, unless the voluntary termination was for good cause connected with the parent's work.

- ✓ TANF Applicant child care is authorized by the Tracking units.
- 6.3.3. TANF Choices Eligibility

A parent is eligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Employment & Training program (or TANF Choices) financial aid if the family meets core eligibility criteria and the parent is participating in Choices at initial eligibility or at eligibility re-determination. At initial eligibility, TANF Choices child care is authorized by the Tracking units.

The parent will continue to be considered eligible and receive Choices child care services for 12 months unless the parent ceases to participate in Choices and is not engaged in any other work, training, or education activity for three months or until the end of the eligibility period, whichever is first.

- ✓ If a former Choices customer is working or participating in education or training at any level, the parent's child care services continues even when participation in Choices has ended.
- ✓ A parent applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and participating in Choices early engagement is considered to be participating in Choices and eligible for Choices child care.

A child is eligible for Choices child care if the child's parent is participating in the Choices program at initial eligibility or at eligibility redetermination. A child will continue to be considered eligible and receive Choices child care for 12 months unless the parent ceases to participate in the Choices program and is not engaged in any other work, training, or education activity for three months. If a former Choices participant is working or participating in education or training at any level, the child is considered eligible even when participation in the Choices program has ended.

6.3.4. Former Choices - At-Risk child care for former Choices child care recipients Former Choices participants who did not have child care prior to denial may apply for child care and bypass the waiting list, if the date of the financial aid application is within 12 months of the TANF denial date. The former Choices participant must be working or participating in education or training at <u>any</u> level. If the application date is greater than 12 months from the TANF denial date, the parent must be placed on the waiting list. Support Center staff must determine the TANF denial date by reviewing the TANF History tab in TWIST and TWIST Counselor Notes. Former Choices customers determined eligible must be placed in At-Risk (low-income) care.



- 6.3.4.1. Former Choices participants who have been denied TANF may continue their Choices child care services 12-month eligibility period if the customer is working or participating in education or training at <u>any</u> level.
- 6.3.4.2. Once a parent's 12-month eligibility under Choices Child Care has ended, the parent's eligibility is determined for At-Risk child care at the Sustaining income levels.

6.3.5. SNAP E&T Eligibility

A parent who is participating in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment & Training (also known as SNAP E&T) and who meets core requirements at initial eligibility determination or redetermination is eligible for child care financial aid. The parent continues to be eligible for financial aid for 12 months from the initial or redetermination date, even if they do not continue in SNAP E&T. SNAP E&T child care is authorized by the Tracking units.

- For customers who experience a permanent cessation of work, training, or education activity, child care scholarships must continue for a minimum of three months or until the scheduled redetermination, whichever is sooner. If the customer enters an activity at <u>any</u> level within those three months, then financial aid must continue for the duration of the 12-month eligibility period.
- 6.3.6. DFPS Child Protective Services Eligibility

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services provides information to us about children in protective services on whose behalf we provide child care services. Workforce Solutions continues the financial aid on behalf of children in protective services for as long as DFPS authorizes the assistance.

Workforce Solutions must have a properly authorized DFPS Form 2054 (Service Authorization) to process any financial aid payments on behalf of a child with an open DFPS case. Within three business days from receipt of the child care authorization form, the Support Center must:

- Complete the authorization request
- Contact the DFPS Regional Day Care Coordinator (RDCC) with information regarding any delays in completing the authorization request, including requests for assistance with the authorization request.

If Support Center staff are unable to meet the three-business-day deadline, they must enter a TWIST Counselor Note explaining any delays preventing child care authorizations.

Note: Form 2054 is approved electronically through the DFPS IMPACT system and is valid without a signature.



Support Center staff must make sure that authorizations for DFPS child care services entered into TWIST reflect exactly the following child care authorization form information:

- Authorization Begin, End, or Termination dates
- DFPS Referral Type Code as follows:
 - > 1 for DFPS General Protective
 - ➢ 2 for DFPS Foster Care IV-E
 - ➢ 3 for DFPS Foster Care Not IV-E
 - ➤ 4 for DFPS Relative/Other Caregiver
- Child's First Name and Last Name (do not include a suffix, for example, Jr. or II)
- Child's Date of Birth
- Child's SSN, if available
- Child's Personal Identification Number
- Case Owner's First Name and Last Name
- Case Owner's SSN, if available

DFPS RDCCs must assist with correcting authorization information that is missing or incorrect.

- Form 2054 is prefilled by the DFPS system, which may prevent some corrections or updates from being completed by an RDCC. If information in TWIST does not exactly match information on Form 2054, Support Center staff must email the RDCC with the discrepancies, fully explain the issue in TWIST Counselor Notes, and proceed with child care services.
- If the RDCC provides updated authorization information via email, Support Center staff may use the updated information to complete the authorization request without receiving an updated Form 2054. Email notices are sufficient.
- Any updated information provided by the RDCC via email that does not match the original Form 2054 must be clearly documented in TWIST Counselor Notes. If the updated Form 2054 is received, Support Center staff must also document that they received the updated Form 2054 in TWIST Counselor Notes.
- If a caregiver states that information provided by DFPS is incorrect, Support Center staff should inform the caregiver to contact DFPS for any changes or updates and advise the caregiver they cannot change information provided by DFPS until DFPS notifies them.
- If there are any delays in processing DFPS authorizations that cannot be corrected by the RDCC, Support Center staff should contact TWC for further guidance and assistance.

Support Center staff must make sure that DFPS customers receive the following child care services information:



- The parent rights listed in the Parent Rights form
- DFPS Parent Agreement to Report Attendance (signature not required for DFPS customers), which must contain, at a minimum, the following:
 - Restatement of the attendance standards that were provided to the parent by DFPS,
 - Information on the importance of a child's regular attendance and the consequences for failing to comply with attendance requirements
 - Information on attendance reporting, including information indicating that consequences for failure to report attendance are at the sole discretion of DFPS
- Information about quality child care
- Information about developmental screenings

Support Center staff must make sure that the 2450 authorizing care is sent to the provider via mail or email. They must also document their actions in TWIST counselor notes.

DFPS may discontinue financial aid prior to the end of the 12-month eligibility period through an Early Termination or if the referral reaches its end without DFPS issuing a new referral.

Customers with a General Protective referral discontinued by DFPS prior to the end of the 12-month eligibility period are eligible for Former DFPS financial aid through the end of the 12-month eligibility period.

- Each child served by DFPS is regarded as a "family of one" for tracking and federal reporting purposes, and the Support Center must provide a minimum of 12 months of child care financial aid.
- If a caregiver has more than one child receiving Former DFPS financial aid and the children have different eligibility dates, the Support Center will not conduct a family-based eligibility determination under Income Eligible /At-Risk rules before all Former DFPS children have received a full 12 months of financial aid.
- At the end of the 12-month eligibility period for the last child, caregivers whose children were receiving financial aid as Former DFPS cases are eligible to apply for continued financial aid under Income Eligible /At-Risk eligibility.

DFPS Care Type	Child Care Action
General Protective—care ended before	Place child in Former DFPS care for
12 months	remainder of 12-month period
General Protective—full 12 months of care received	Determine eligibility for At-Risk care
Foster Care terminated/2054 Expired	Determine eligibility for At-Risk care



Relative/Other DFPS Care terminated/2054 Expired	Determine eligibility for At-Risk care
Former DFPS—12-month eligibility period ended	Determine eligibility for At-Risk care

6.4. Calculating Income for Eligibility

- 6.4.1. Support Center staff must:
 - Determine eligibility based on the previous three months of income for each family member to determine average earnings and the family's financial situation. If a customer did not provide three full months of income documentation, staff must contact the customer and request additional paycheck stubs. If the customer is unable to obtain additional paycheck stubs or other pay documents, staff should use the paycheck stubs submitted by the customer
 - Make sure at a minimum they have the:
 - Two most recent paycheck stubs or,
 - \circ first and last paycheck stubs of the income determination period.

Note: For any other sequence of paycheck stubs, staff must have supervisors' approval.

• Document in TWIST Counselor Notes the reason the customer was unable to obtain documentation covering the full three-month period.

Example: A customer is paid weekly and submitted paycheck stubs covering the last eight of the 13-week period. A staff member contacts the customer to request additional paycheck stubs. The customer informs the staff member they lost the documents during a move and cannot obtain the missing paycheck stubs. Staff must use the paycheck stubs provided and document in TWIST Counselor Notes the customer's situation. The staff member must add the eight checks together, divide the gross income by eight to determine the average weekly income; then multiply that amount by 4.33 to get the gross monthly income. Staff must make sure case notes reflect how eligibility was determined including the number of paycheck stubs, the period covered and the calculation.

In the event one or more family members started a new job, changed the number of hours worked or received a change in pay within the most recent three months, the family's income must be calculated from the period the income or employment status changed instead of the full previous three months.

• Document in TWIST Counselor Notes the time period used to calculate the family's income and the number of paycheck stubs used to calculate income. If



the number of paycheck stubs differs from the number of paycheck stubs needed as indicated above, a clear explanation of the difference must be included in TWIST Counselor Notes and how income was calculated.

- Contact customers who have submitted less than the required documentation to assess their situation. If a staff member is unable to determine the customer's situation as acceptable for submitting less than the required documentation, the staff member should discuss the situation with a Supervisor and/or Manager.
- 6.4.2. To calculate the family's gross monthly income, Support Center staff must calculate each family member's average monthly earnings, including bonuses, lump sum payments and includable unearned monthly income; remove any ongoing medical expenses of a child with disabilities; and add the income results for all family members together. For more information on unearned income, see section 6.4.5.

In general, employers pay their workers weekly, biweekly, semi-monthly, or monthly. Table 1 is a chart to help staff determine the customer's average monthly income.

Pay Period	Calculation
Weekly	Average earnings per pay period x 4.33
Biweekly (every 2 weeks)	Average earnings per pay period x 2.167
Semi-monthly (twice a month)	Average earnings per pay period x 2
Monthly	Average earnings per pay period

Table 1 Calculating Average Gross Monthly Earned Income from Pay Stubs

6.4.2.1. Calculating income from pay stubs or employer verification: If there is more than one employer with differing pay periods, calculate an average monthly pay for each employer separately then add them together to obtain the total average gross monthly earnings.

- a. Add the gross pay (less bonuses and/or lump sums) from all paycheck stubs from the employer and divide the result by the total number of paycheck stubs to get an average pay per pay period for the employer.
- b. Multiply the average pay calculated by the pay frequency factor to get the gross monthly earnings.
- c. If a bonus or other lump sum payment was included in the paycheck stubs, either for the pay period or in the year-to-date totals:
 - i. Divide the total of the bonus or lump sum by the applicable number of months, referenced in section 6.4.2, to get the average monthly bonus amount.
 - ii. Add the average monthly bonus amount to the *gross* monthly earnings.



If using employer verification rather than paycheck stubs, use the following formula to determine monthly earnings: Multiply the hourly rate of pay by the potential weekly hours. Then multiply the result based on the pay frequency. See <u>Table 1</u> for pay period and pay frequency.

Note: Repeat for each employer and for each household member, then add all results together to compare to the Workforce Solutions Income Guidelines.

6.4.2.2. Calculating income from pay stubs using year-to-date:

If a parent provides their two most recent paycheck stubs, Support Center staff should define the average monthly income based on the number of weeks identified in the year-to-date totals on the most recent paycheck stub. In discussion with the parent, staff must determine if any additional paycheck stubs are available and identify/confirm the parent's employment start date to accurately calculate the income. Staff must include clear case notes that reflect how they determined the average gross monthly income.

If the parent provided one paycheck stub from the beginning of the threemonth period and the last paycheck stub in the three-month period, staff may use the following steps to determine eligibility.

1. Subtract the year-to-date gross total of the oldest check from the year-todate

gross total of the most recent check.

- 2. Add to the result the gross pay from the oldest check.
- 3. Subtract any bonuses or lump sum payments included in the year-to-date total.
- 4. Divide by the number of pay periods between the oldest and most recent paycheck to get the average pay per pay period.
- 5. Multiply the average pay calculated by the pay frequency factor to get the gross monthly earnings.
- 6. Divide the total of the bonus or lump sum payments by the applicable number of months to get the average monthly bonus amount.
- 7. Add the average bonus or lump sum amount to the gross monthly earnings.
- 6.4.2.3. Year to date with more than 13 weeks reflecting on check stub: When a customer can only provide their most recent check stub, Support Center staff can use it to determine the average pay. Staff must determine the start date of employment, pay frequency and the number of pay periods reflected in the year-to-date. Divide the year-to-date by the number of pay periods to get the average per pay period. The pay period average should be multiplied by the appropriate multiplier based on the frequency of the pay period. When using this method, staff must review the current check provided to determine if the calculated average is close to the average on the paycheck.



Example 1: The customer provided his most recent check stub dated September 30, 21. The weekly gross is \$485 and the year-to-date is \$19,218. Staff confirmed the customer started working for this employer June 26, 2019. Based on this information the customer received 39 pay checks from January 1, 2021- September 30, 2021. Divide the year-to-date total (\$19,218) by the number of pay periods (39) to get the average per pay period amount (\$492.76).

Example 2: The customer provided her most recent check stub dated July 23, 2021. The bi-weekly gross is \$1,296 and the year-to-date is \$14,859.74. Support Center staff confirmed the customer started working for this employer February 10, 2021. Based on this information the customer received 12 pay checks from February 10, 2021-July 23, 2021. Divide the year-to-date total (\$14,859.74) by the number of pay periods (12) to get the average per pay period amount (\$1,238.31).

6.4.3. Fluctuations in Earning

Fluctuations in earnings during sustained employment are income amounts that differ due to any of the following:

- Variable work schedules without an expected number of hours per day or per week for a pay period
- Overtime pay
- Pay based solely on commissions or tips
- Fixed compensation paid in different time periods, as in education
- Seasonal or temporary employment
- 6.4.4. Bonuses and Lump Sum Payments

If pay documents indicate that a family member received a bonus or other lump sum during the income calculation period or in the year-to-date amount, Support Center staff must determine the number of months the bonus or lump sum covers and if there is any expectation of future repetition. (Is it annual, quarterly, or one-time?). In that case, the sum is averaged over the applicable number of months to reach an average monthly figure. For example:

- Average an annual or one-time bonus by 12
- Average a lump sum payment by 12
- Average a quarterly bonus by 3
- Average a onetime payment by 12
 - ✓ Workforce Solutions practice is to annualize some fluctuations in income and average others across the three-month eligibility determination period.
 - ✓ Examples of income that should be annualized may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Coaching stipend paid only for season



- Accrued vacation leave paid out in a lump sum at year end
- Holiday employment (may be a temporary increase in regular hours or additional employment)

Examples of income that should be averaged over the three-month eligibility determination period include:

- a quarterly bonus
- overtime pay
- variable work schedules
- seasonal or temporary employment

Support Center staff must explain in TWIST counselor notes all actions taken.

6.4.5. Determining Self-Employment Income

To determine income for a parent who is self-employed, Support Center staff must verify one of the following documents from the most recent tax year and/or most recent quarter, or for new self-employment enterprises, one of the following documents covering a time period within the previous three months is required:

- IRS Form 1040 with IRS Schedule C, F, or SE federal income tax returns
- IRS Tax Transcript
- Statement of profit or loss
- Recent business bank statements
- Business records that document income and expenditures, such as:
 - Copies of money orders or checks received
 - Lists of and/or invoices for customers served with dates and identifying information (such as addresses)
 - Personal receipt books of business activity and amount
 - Personal payment records with third-party signed verification (such as notary)
- 6.4.6. Itemized Operating Expenses

Document and deduct operating expenses from the self-employment gross income for the same period. Operating expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Rent
- Cost of utilities
- Gas for automobiles
- Payroll
- Booth rental
- 6.4.7. Unearned Income

A family member may receive income unearned outside of employment, such as merit-based scholarships, alimony payments, or rental income. If a family member has received countable unearned income within the previous three months,



determine the frequency of the income and average accordingly to determine an average monthly amount of unearned income.

6.4.8. Excluded Income

We exclude the following sources from our calculations of a family income when determining eligibility and Parent Share of Cost. Any income source not specifically excluded is included.

- Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, school meals, and housing assistance
- Monthly monetary allowances provided to or for children of Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects
- Needs-based educational scholarships, grants, and loans—including financial assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act—Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants, the Federal Work-Study Program, PLUS, Stafford loans and Perkins loans
- Individual Development Account withdrawals for the purchase of a home, medical expenses or educational expenses
- Tax refunds and tax credits such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Advanced EITC, child tax credits, etc.
- > Onetime cash payments, insurance payments, gifts and lump sum inheritances
- > VISTA and AmeriCorps living allowances and stipends
- Noncash or in-kind benefits such as employer-paid fringe benefits, food, or housing received in lieu of wages (for example, an employer provides a uniform or tools)
- > Foster care payments and adoption assistance
- Special military pay or allowances, including subsistence allowances, housing allowances, family separation allowances, or special allowances for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger
- Income from a child in the household between 14 and 19 years of age who is attending school
- Early withdrawals from qualified retirement accounts classified as hardship withdrawals by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Unemployment compensation
- Child support payments
- Cash assistance payments, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income, Refugee Cash Assistance, general assistance, emergency assistance and general relief
- > Onetime income received in lieu of TANF cash assistance
- Income earned by a veteran while on active military duty and certain other veterans' benefits, such as compensation for service-connected death, vocational rehabilitation, and education assistance
- Regular payments from Social Security, such as the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund



- Lump sum payments received as assets from the sale of a house, in which the assets are to be reinvested in the purchases of a new home (consistent with IRS guidance)
- > Payments received as the result of an automobile accident insurance settlement that are being applied to the repair or replacement of an automobile
- > Any income sources specifically excluded by federal law or regulation
- Employer reimbursements for work-related expenses (such as travel or uniforms)

When calculating income eligibility and Parent Share of Cost for a family with a child with disabilities, the cost of the child's ongoing medical expenses is deducted from the family income.

6.5. Applying Income Guidelines for Child Care Financial Aid

Support Center staff must use TWIST to record and process applications for child care services.

- Effective February 2, 2022, the Support Center will use the 85% State Median Income (SMI) for both Initial Eligibility and Sustaining Eligibility for customers applying for the general Income Eligible/At Risk and Local Match financial aid.
- Customers initially applying must meet the Initial Eligibility income requirement (85% SMI) to receive financial assistance for child care. At recertification, a customer's income cannot exceed sustaining income limits (85% SMI) to continue receiving financial assistance for child care.

Income eligibility limits are set in TWIST. TWIST will store the 85% SMI Initial Eligibility income requirement. Customers must be determined eligible initially with this income requirement.

6.6. Documenting Eligibility and Determining Characteristics

Workforce Solutions staff must use the **Validating and Entering Qualifications Guide** to determine acceptable documentation sources for supporting eligibility criteria. In addition, the Financial Aid Eligibility Glossary provides definitions to clarify reporting and eligibility criteria.

Support Center staff who determine eligibility for child care financial aid – and Workforce staff who help customers identify and gather documents that support eligibility -- must refer to the Validating and Entering Qualifications Guide.

Support Center staff must obtain all necessary documents before determining eligibility. Documents must be current within the last month and proof of income for the last three months from the date the application was started.



Any income fluctuations that have been considered when calculating income must be clearly explained in TWIST Counselor Notes.

6.7. Data Entry Requirements

Support Center, Payment Office, and Tracking Unit staff must make sure accurate and timely entry of all child care referral, customer, provider, budget, and claim information into TWIST and/or other TWC designated IT data automation systems for child care services.

"Timely data entry" is defined as no later than five business days from the date we receive the information to the data entry date.

6.8. Eligibility Notification

Workforce Solutions must notify customers about eligibility for financial aid as soon as possible, within 20 calendar days from the date we have received all required application documents. Once eligibility is verified, Support Center staff must inform the parent with a written notification. Receipt of the notification of eligibility must be acknowledged by the parent before care is authorized.

Selection of a provider and entering into care or continued attendance at a previously selected provider constitute acknowledgment of the notification of eligibility.

6.9. Authorizing Child Care

Support Center staff must verify all eligibility requirements have been met prior to authorizing child care services. To authorize child care services, Support Center staff must notify the parent and the child care provider.

- 6.9.1. The twelve-month eligibility period begins on the referral start date.
- 6.9.2. Support Center staff must have a conversation with the customer to determine the type of care needed such as full-time, part-time or blended care, if the customer's selection is not clear on the financial aid application. Definitions of full-time, part-time and blended care are provided in Section 13.
 - School-age children must be authorized for blended care at eligibility unless there is a special circumstance, such as the parent working late or overnight shifts. In this case, a child can be authorized for full-time care. This information must be documented in TWIST Counselor Notes.
 - Support Center staff will review a list of school-age children receiving full-time care and will change to blended care effective September 1st of each year.
 - Support Center staff are required to send a notice to parents with school-aged children receiving full-time care 30 days before September 1st, notifying them that care will change to blended. If



parents need full-time care because their child(ren) is not attending school full-time, they must contact us within 15 days.

- 6.9.3. The Form 2450 is the official notification to the provider authorizing or discontinuing care. Support Center, Payment Office and Tracking Unit staff must:
 - Send a completed Form 2450 via email or mail to the child care provider no later than the day care is authorized, suspended, or discontinued;
 - Give the provider a courtesy phone call to let them know the 2450 was sent to them; and
 - Document the method the 2450 was sent to the provider and store a copy of the form in document management system
- 6.9.4. When transferring care to a different provider, Payment Office staff must send a 2450 authorizing care to the new provider and a 2450 to the previous provider discontinuing care.
- 6.9.5. When staff made an error in authorizing the child care for a child, staff must send an updated 2450 to the provider with the appropriate reason marked.
- 6.10. Changes to Customer Status
 - 6.10.1. Workforce Solutions <u>requires</u> customers to report to us within 14 calendar days when there is a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for child care services:
 - family exceeds 85% State Median Income level for family size
 - permanent interruption in work, training, participation
 - 6.10.2. Workforce Solutions <u>requests</u> customers report to the Support Center when there is a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility or parent share of cost. Circumstances may include:
 - Change in family income (wage or salary increase or decrease)
 - Change in number of persons in the family (a parent's written attestation is sufficient documentation to remove a family member's income if they are no longer part of the household; must document in TWIST counselor notes)
 - Change in employment
 - Change in education or training (increase or decrease in number of training hours)

Note: Support Center staff must make sure that the parent share of cost is reduced, if eligible, any time the parent reports a decrease in income or an increase in family size or decrease in the number of children in care.

6.10.3. Changes to customer circumstances do not require customers to submit a complete financial aid application.



- 6.10.4. When a customer reports a change in circumstances, the Support Center must review the information to determine if the change affects the customer's eligibility or Parent Share of Cost.
 - Following review of a customer's new information, Support Center staff must update any elements that change on the Intake Common screen in TWIST
 - If the new information results in a loss of eligibility (e.g., a permanent change in gross family income causes family income to rise above the eligibility threshold; the loss of a family member causes family income to rise above the eligibility threshold), staff must use the existing process for denying or discontinuing financial aid.
 - If the new information indicates extenuating circumstances that may jeopardize a family's self-sufficiency, staff may initiate a temporary reduction in Parent Share of Cost. Any temporary reduction for extenuating circumstances must be supported in TWIST Counselor Notes. Counselor note must address the reason for and the duration of the temporary reduction. Extenuating circumstances may include unexpected temporary costs such as medical expenses, work-related expenses that are not reimbursed by the employer and extraordinary events or disasters that affect a family financially. At the end of the temporary reduction the eligibility period.
 - If the new information results in the addition or deletion of a child who needs child care resulting in an increase or decrease in the Parent Share of Cost, staff must notify the customer and the vendor of the change in Parent Share of Cost.
 - For any change of information, staff must summarize actions in a TWIST Counselor Note.
 - If a child's caregiver changes permanently, such as in the event of a parent's death or a parent's incarceration that will last longer than three months, the child's eligibility and care must continue during the 12-month period if the new caregiver meets both of the following conditions:
 - Family income is below 85 percent of SMI
 - Caregiver is participating in work, education, or training at any level

If necessary, a three-month Activity Interruption may be used to allow a new caregiver time to verify income and participation requirements.

6.11. Eligibility for Continuing Child Care Financial Aid We re-determine eligibility every 12 months. The Support Center must send redetermination letters to all customers at least 60 days prior to the end of the customer's 12-month eligibility period unless there are extenuating circumstances documented in TWIST counseling notes. The Support Center must continue to provide child care financial aid to parents/caretakers if:



- 1. The family's income is below 85% of the state median income or the customer continues to be eligible for assistance under one of the other eligibility criteria (Section 6.1).
- 2. Parents are meeting activity requirements (work and/or school, or participation in TANF Choices, SNAP E&T)
- 3. The child continues to reside in the 13-county Gulf Coast region
- 4. The child is under 13 years of age or 19 years of age if special circumstances apply
- 5. Check to see if there is program violation for excessive absences or failure to pay Parent Share of Cost (See Section 9.1 and 10.9) that may apply at redetermination of eligibility.
- 6. Parents do not have a current, open requirement to repay disallowed costs. See section 6.8)
- 7. The family continues to meet the definition of homelessness.

Note: There is no time limit on how long a family can qualify for child care services if the family continues to meet the definition of homelessness at the time of eligibility redetermination.

6.11.1. Documenting Eligibility for Continuing Financial Aid Workforce Solutions documents the following elements when re-determining eligibility:

- Residence
- Family income
- Parents' activity hours

Note: Customers applying for At-Risk child care services must complete a full financial aid application during initial enrollment and redeterminations.

6.11.2. Workforce Solutions looks at our existing records to check:

- Children's ages
- Absences once an eligibility redetermination has been made, absences accrued in the time remaining between the end of the current eligibility period and the beginning of the new eligibility period are not required to be reassessed.



- 6.11.3. At redetermination, Workforce Solutions uses the 85% sustaining eligibility income guidelines. We use the same methods for calculating activity hours, calculating income, and validating/documenting qualifications as we use for initial eligibility.
- 6.11.4. If a parent is meeting the activity hour requirements by attending school, the parent must demonstrate progress in the education/training program by showing they are currently enrolled in an education/training program.

Workforce Solutions accepts the education/training institution's acceptance of the parent as a student as proof the parent is making successful progress in the education/training program. A parent's progress toward completion of the education or job training program must be based only on the parent's performance while receiving child care.

6.11.5. Redetermination Eligibility Start and End Dates New eligibility periods begin the first date of the month following the end of the 12month eligibility period.

The new eligibility and referral date must be the first day of the next month and end 12 months later, on the last day of the month.

Example: A customer's 12-month eligibility ends in July 2021.

When we re-determine the customer's eligibility for financial aid, the new eligibility and referral date will begin August 1, 2021 and end on July 31, 2022.

6.12. Extending Program Details

- 6.12.1. Support Center staff must extend the Program Detail for 30 days to allow time for eligibility to be determined and/or the parent to receive the 15-day closure letter, if not eligible. Support Center staff should inform the parent and the provider of the extension and send an updated 2450 to the provider. This applies when Support Center staff:
 - a. are unable to complete an eligibility redetermination by the 15th of the month in which eligibility ends; or
 - b. request documents for an eligibility redetermination from parents that arrive after the 15th of the month in which eligibility ends.

Example: A parent's 12-month eligibility period will expire at the end of December 2021.

After receiving a recertification notification letter, the parent turns in their documents on 11/25/21. When conducting the review for the closure letter, Support Center staff must determine the customer's eligibility has not been



completed. At this time, Support Center staff must extend the Program Detail for 30 days (January 31, 2022) to allow time for eligibility to be completed and the closure letter to be sent, if the family is determined ineligible.

- 6.12.2. Support Center staff must remove any parents from the closure list who have documents pending processing in document management system and a closure letter must not be sent to the customer.
- 6.13. Mandatory Waiting Period to Reapply

When the Payment Office determines a customer committed fraud (an attempt to obtain or increase a benefit or other payment, either for the individual or another individual, by making a false statement or representation or failing to disclose a material fact, knowing it to be false), the parent is not eligible to reapply for child care financial aid or be placed on the waiting list until the recoupment is completely repaid.

When a parent owes a recoupment due to fraud, this status will be flagged on the Intake Common Family tab in TWIST.



7. Appeals/Board Reviews

- 7.1. A parent has 14 calendar days to request a review if we:
 - Determine the parent is not eligible for child care financial aid; or
 - Deny, delay, reduce, suspend, or terminate a child's enrollment; or
 - Set a recoupment amount the parent believes is not justified or is unfair.

Exception: Caregivers authorized for protective services child care may not appeal, but must follow the procedures established by DFPS.

- 7.2. The Support Center must send a written denial to any ineligible customer who applies for financial aid by completing our Financial Aid Application or who responds to our request for recertification of financial aid at least 15 calendar days before the adverse action. The letter must tell the customer why we denied their application and how to appeal the decision.
- 7.3. A customer who disagrees with our decision to deny, reduce, or discontinue financial aid or to set a recoupment amount may file an appeal by following the Complaint Processing Standards and Guidelines.
- 7.4. If a parent requests a hearing, the child care financial aid continues during the appeal process until we decide to uphold or deny the appeal.

Exception: Workforce Solutions must not pay for child care during an appeal when we discontinued financial aid because of excessive absences or failure to pay parent share of cost.

7.5. If we deny the parent's appeal, Workforce Solutions must stop the financial aid and can recover the financial aid dollars the parent received during the appeal process.



8. Duration

8.1. Eligibility Period

Once Workforce Solutions determines the parent eligible, they have access to child care financial aid for a minimum of 12 months from the date of the first referral plus the additional days necessary to end eligibility on the last day of the month.

Example: A customer is eligible to begin receiving child care financial aid on August 5, 2021 and the first referral is dated August 16, 2021, then the end date must be August 31, 2022.

In the TWIST Child Care Program Summary tab - enter the customer's referral period start and end dates for the full 12-month period of eligibility.

Parents who are determined eligible must choose a provider and start care within 14 calendar days of eligibility determination. If a customer fails to do so, a denial letter must be sent. The customer must reapply for child care financial aid.

8.2. Breaks in Child Care

8.2.1. Temporary Changes in Work, Education or Training

A customer may experience a planned interruption in their qualifying activity. This could mean the customer is experiencing a planned interruption in employment or school. The customer may continue to bring their child to care during this temporary interruption in their qualifying activity. The customer remains eligible during the temporary interruption.

If at time of eligibility redetermination, the family is experiencing a temporary status change in work, education or job training, extend the eligibility period to the date the parent is expected to return to work, school, or training. The redetermination would then be based on the work, education, training, and income upon the parent's return to activity.

Any extension of the 12-month eligibility periods is only granted on a case-by-case basis when a customer is experiencing a temporary status change in work, education, or training. Support Center staff must document in TWIST Counselor Notes the duration of and reason for any extension granted for a customer's eligibility redetermination.

8.2.2. Permanent Activity Interruption

A permanent activity interruption occurs when a customer

- Loses their job, or
- Is not an active student in a training or education program, or
- Stops meeting participation requirements for TANF Choices or SNAP E&T.

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The customer may continue to bring their child to care during this permanent interruption in their qualifying activity. The permanent interruption begins:

- When the customer work or school activity stops
- At the beginning of the following month for customers who stop participating in TANF Choices or SNAP E&T.

The customer must begin a new activity within three months of the beginning of the permanent interruption to continue receiving child care financial aid.

Example: The customer was terminated from their job on November 30th. They reported the job loss on December 10th. The Activity Interruption will begin on December 1st (first day of no activity), not December 10th.

Note: A customer in a permanent activity interruption period, who at time of redetermination does not have a qualifying activity, is not eligible and the Support Center must stop the financial aid, end the referral, and close the record.

8.2.3. Suspension

A suspension occurs when a customer decides they do not need child care for a planned period, usually due to a break in their qualifying activity. An example would be when a customer is attending school, and there is a break in this activity. To avoid counting the days the child does not attend care as an absence, the customer can request a suspension. A customer must have an active referral before a suspension can be completed.

Effective May 1, 2021, a customer must request a suspension with at least one-week advanced notice. Suspensions must be at least a week in duration. A week is defined as seven calendar days.

8.2.3.1. Request to Suspend

To request a suspension, customers must call or email the Support Center. The customer must provide the last day of care and the name of the child/ren to suspend. Support Center staff must end the referral as of the date provided by the customer and enter the End Reason.

Support Center staff must provide the customer with the suspension letter and file a copy of the notice in the customer's file then notify and send the 2450 to the provider.

8.2.3.2. Returning from a Suspension

Customers must notify Workforce Solutions two weeks in advance of a return date following a suspension.

Workforce Solutions must add a new referral including new start and end dates. Notify and send the 2450 to the provider.



9. Attendance

9.1. Absences

Workforce Solutions tracks attendance at child care providers for all customers including customers receiving protective services child care. Use Child Care Absence Worklist Report 272 available through the Workforce Report portal to help track and notify providers and parents about absences.

- 9.1.1. Parents must make sure that their children attend on a regular basis consistent with the child's authorization for enrollment and inform us when child care is no longer needed.
- 9.1.2. Parents must follow their providers' attendance reporting process to record children's presence and absence.
- 9.1.3. Child care providers must report a child as absent when the child has five consecutive days of absences.
 - Example: A child is absent Thursday and Friday of one week and then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the next week. This means this child has five consecutive days of absences.
 - Each "provider report" will count toward the child's 40 absence limit:
 - five consecutive day absences = one provider report
 - \circ eight provider reports = 40 absence limit
- 9.1.4. Child care terminations will occur when a child has eight provider reports during a 12-month eligibility period.
- 9.1.5. The Support Center must document multiple attempts to provide notice of each child's general absences and the potential for a termination of child care service by giving written notice to parents and the provider when a child reaches 15 and 30 general absences cumulatively within a 12-month eligibility period.
- 9.1.6. Workforce Solutions expects all parents to comply with the attendance standards. A failure to meet attendance standards will result in a finding of a program violation for child care services funded by At-Risk, Choices, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), and former Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) funds. Before a program violation is issued, the Support Center must attempt to communicate with parents via multiple channels including phone calls, emails, text messages, and formal written notices, as appropriate. All communication and documentation sent to the customer must be completed no later than five business days after running the absence report and noted in TWIST Counselor Notes.



Failure to meet attendance standards that result in a program violation will lead to the parent's loss of eligibility for child care services for that child for 60 days from the date Workforce Solutions withdraws authorization for child care. Once the Support Center confirms a child exceeded 40 absences within a 12-month eligibility period, Workforce Solutions must notify the parent and the child care provider that the referral for child care for that child will end.

For families with no siblings in care, the child care program detail will be closed and the customer must reapply with a new application and have eligibility determined again (new 12-month eligibility period, if approved)

For customers with siblings in care, the child care program detail will remain open and Support Center staff must enter a new referral for the previously terminated child (all children must have same eligibility determination period)

Workforce Solutions staff must record the reason for ending a referral or terminating the child care program detail in The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) with the termination reason "Excessive Absences."

- 9.1.7. The Support Center must give prompt notification and access to the review process when ending child care services due to program violations. Termination notifications sent to the parent must include information on the mandatory 60-day waiting period.
- 9.1.8. Workforce Solutions must not pay for child care services during a review when services are ended due to excessive unexplained absences.
- 9.1.9. After the 60-day penalty period (a result of failure to meet attendance standards) the parent may reapply for Workforce Solutions financial aid for the child or children. This request must be added to the waiting list with a priority status.
- 9.1.10. The 60-day penalty period does not apply to a customer who during the 60-day penalty period is:
 - 9.1.10.1. A Choices customer who requires child care to participate in Choices.
 - 9.1.10.2. A Choices customer on Choices sanction status and requires child care to demonstrate participation in Choices.
- 9.1.11. Absences due to a child's documented chronic illness, disability, or court-ordered visitation are not counted in the number of absences.



9.2. Suspending Financial Aid

To help avoid absences during a temporary interruption in work or an education/training program, the customer can ask that we suspend financial aid; however, <u>a suspension does not</u> require a child care provider to hold a place for a child.

• We don't require a customer whose aid was suspended to reapply for child care financial aid, and we won't place the parent on a waiting list if they return to work, education or training within the time allowed for the suspension.

Exception:

If the eligibility end date is before the expiration of the suspension period, the customer must meet work or education/training requirements before the beginning of the new eligibility period to be determined eligible. (Refer to Section 8.2.1)

After returning from a suspension, normal rules apply, and a customer must report required changes in hours and pay within 14 days of occurrence.

9.3. Attendance Tracking

- 9.3.1. Customers must follow their providers' attendance reporting process to record their children's presence and absence.
- 9.3.2. Child care providers must report a child as absent when the child has five consecutive days of absences.
 - Example: A child is absent Thursday and Friday of one week and then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the next week. This means this child has five consecutive days of absences.
 - Each "provider report" will count toward the child's 40 absence limit:
 - five consecutive day absences = one provider report
 - \circ eight provider reports = 40 absence limit
- 9.3.3. Support Center staff must contact families to inquire about the reported provider absences prior to counting them towards the 15, and 30-day absence notifications as well as prior to beginning the termination process.
 - If any of the absences included in a Provider Notice can be credited back to the child, then that Provider Notice may no longer contain five (5) consecutive days and would not be counted towards the total of eight (8) Provider Notices required for termination to begin for excessive absences
 - Holidays are not counted as absences
 - Child care terminations will occur when a child has eight provider reports



- 9.3.4. Support Center staff responsible for tracking attendance must use the Manual Attendance Process for <u>Tracking 5 Consecutive Absences Desk aid</u> for the process for tracking absences.
- 9.4. Provider Attendance Policies

Child care providers may end a child's enrollment with the provider if the child does not meet the provider's established attendance policy. When a provider ends a child's enrollment for this reason, the Support Center must work with the customer to place the eligible child with another eligible provider.

- 9.4.1. If the Support Center staff cannot reach the customer after repeated contact attempts, or the customer is not communicating with the provider or bringing the child to care, they must end the child care referral after 30 calendar days of no contact but leave the child's eligibility and TWIST Program Detail open. Support Center staff must document the reason for the termination of the referral in TWIST Counselor Notes.
- 9.5. DFPS General Protective Care Attendance Standards

Children who are receiving care under a DFPS General Protective Care authorization, care must continue in accordance with the authorization regardless of accrued absences.

- 9.5.1. Workforce Solutions must not count absences accrued under DFPS General Protective Services Care toward a child's absence total within a 12-month eligibility period. Support Center staff must coordinate with DFPS and the child's caregiver to encourage attendance.
- 9.5.2. If the Support Center staff cannot reach the customer after repeated contact attempts, or the customer is not communicating with the provider or bringing the child to care, they must end the child care referral after 30 calendar days of no contact but leave the child's eligibility and Program Detail open. Before ending the referral, Support Center staff must contact the DFPS regional day care coordinator to ensure that DFPS is aware that the child is not attending. The reason for the termination of the referral must be documented in TWIST Counselor Notes.



10. Parent Share of Cost

- 10.1. Workforce Solutions assesses most parents receiving child care financial aid a share of the cost. Workforce Solutions determines a parent's share using a sliding scale based on family size and income and other factors as appropriate. Workforce Solutions sets the sliding scale to be affordable and not result in a barrier to families receiving child care services. Using the sliding scale, if we calculate the parent's share to be \$0, then Workforce Solutions must not charge the parent any cost.
 - 10.1.1. The following parents are exempt from paying the Parent Share of Cost:
 - Parents participating in Choices or in Choices child care
 - Parents participating in SNAP E&T or in SNAP E&T child care
 - Parents of child receiving Child Care for Children Experiencing Homelessness
 - Parents receiving protective services child care unless DFPS assess the parent share of cost
 - 10.1.2. We calculate a teen parent's share of cost solely on the teen parent's income and size of the teen's family.
 - 10.1.3. Parent Share of Cost can only be assessed:
 - At initial eligibility determination; or
 - At eligibility redeterminations; or
 - When adding a child; or
 - When a parent reports a change in income, family size, or number of children in care that would result in a reduced Parent Share of Cost; or
 - When resuming work, job training, or education activities following a temporary change or during the three-month continuation of care period that would result in a reduced Parent Share of Cost.
 - 10.1.4. Support Center staff must make sure that the parent share of cost does not increase above the amount assessed at initial eligibility determination or at the 12-month eligibility redetermination, except upon the addition of a child in care.
 - 10.1.5. If a child is added or removed from care after a Board-to-Board transfer, the new parent share of cost must be based on our sliding fee scale, as long as the amount is at or lower than the original parent share of cost.



10.2. TWIST Calculations

- 10.2.1. TWIST will automatically determine a Parent Share of Cost using a sliding scale derived from the Gross Monthly Income and the number of children in care. In TWIST, these are called the System Calculations.
- 10.2.2. Support Center staff must make sure the correct parent share of cost is entered in TWIST. Explain any deviation from the system-calculated Parent Share of Cost in TWIST Counselor Notes
- 10.2.3. View the Share of Cost sliding scale in TWIST under the Child Care Administration menu of the WDA Administration section of TWIST. Locate the Parent Share of Cost amounts for a customer by finding the customer's household (HH) size and income range in the chart. At the top of the column is the share of cost amounts for the first child and additional children. These are the amounts TWIST uses in the System Calculations.

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Employer Services	Size	First Child \$	12.00	First Child \$	65.00		Child \$	120.00		Child \$	170.00		hild \$	220 70
Survey Optional Question		Add1 Child \$		Add1 Child \$		Addi	Child \$	40.00	Addi	Child \$	55.00	Addit	Child \$	
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	4	0 931	02	932 1397 1091 1636	11 8 11 8	1398 1637	1863 2181	14 11 15 11	1864 2182	2328	15 12 15 12	2329	2794 3271	15 16
	6	0 1050		1251 1874	12 8	1875	2499	15 11	2500	3124	16 12	3125	3749	16
	7	0 1409	0 2	1410 2113	12 8	2114	2818	15 11	2819	3522	16 13	3523	4226	16
	8	0 1568	0 2	1569 2352	12 8	2353	3136	15 11	3137	3920	16 13	3921	4704	16
	9	0 1727	0 2	1728 2591	12 8	2592	3454	15 12	3455	4318	16 13	4319	5181	16
	10	0 1886	0 2	1887 2829	12 8	2830	3773	16 12	3774	4716	16 13	4717	5659	17
	11	0 2045	0 2	2046 3068	12 8	3069	4091	16 12	4092	5114	16 13	5115	6136	17
	12	0 2205	02	2206 3307	12 8	3308	4409	16 12	4410	5511	16 13	5512	6614	17
	13 14	0 2364	0 2	2365 3546 2524 3784	12 8 12 8	3547 3785	4728 5046	16 12 16 12	4729 5047	5909 6307	16 13 16 13	5910 6308	7091	17 17
	15	0 2682	0 2	2683 4023	12 8	4024	5364	16 12	5365	6705	16 13	6706		17
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	5	3272 3816	17 14	3817 4035	16 15	4036	3725 4362	16 15	4363	5383	17 13			
	6	3750 4374	17 14	4375 4623	16 15	4624	4362	17 15	4363	6125	17 14			
	7	4227 4931	17 15	4932 5212	16 15	5213	5635	17 16	5636	6264	17 15			
	8	4705 5488	17 15	5489 5801	16 16	5802	6272	17 16	6273	6403	17 17			
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The System Calculations also attach the Parent Share of Cost to the provider. When you select <u>Copy System Calculations</u>, TWIST will copy the System values into the Authorized values.

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Program Summary Eligibility Summary		Eligibility Detail	Í (Characteristics		Employme	nt History	Edu	ucation		
Family	Income	Referral		Share of Cost			Attendance				
Parent Share of Cost											
	Copy System Calculations		91.4 172.0	159.00	159.00	159.00	<u>48.00</u> 159.00	40.01 159.00	22.85 159.00		
Provider			Apr 11	May 11	Jun 11	Jul 11	Aug 11	Sep 11			
System	Learning Center - 8 2	WDA	.0	00.	.00	.00	.00	.00	22.85		
Authorized	Learning Center - 8 2	WDA	172.0	159.00	159.00	159.00	159.00	159.00	159.00		
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10.3. Discounts

Workforce Solutions authorizes discounts to the Parent Share of Cost for the following reasons.

10.3.1. Texas Rising Star Provider

Effective June 1, 2021, Support Center staff will provide a 30% discount for all customers upon the selection of and acceptance by a Texas Rising Star-certified provider for any full month the child is in care. The 30% discount excludes Texas Rising Star entry-level designated providers.

If there is a partial month, Support Center staff can adjust the customer's parent share of cost based on the customer's needs. Support Center staff must document all actions in TWIST counselor notes.

Workforce Solutions must make sure the parent continues to receive the reduction if one of the following applies:

- The provider loses Texas Rising Star certification
- The parent moves or changes employment within the workforce area and no Texas Rising Star-certified providers are available to meet the needs of the parent's changed circumstances

If a parent transfers to another workforce area in which a reduction for the selection of a Texas Rising Star provider is not offered, the reduction will no longer apply.

- 10.4. Selecting the Provider that will collect Parent Share
 - 10.4.1. If the customer uses more than one child care provider, TWIST will automatically apportion the Parent Share among the different providers.
 - 10.4.2. To simplify the process, Support Center staff may select one provider to collect the Parent Share. This means the customer must pay the full cost share to one provider and will not pay a portion to several providers.



- 10.4.3. Support Center staff must adjust the apportioned Parent Share of Cost in the Provider section by recording the full Parent Share of Cost in the Authorized line for one provider and by using the Authorized line to remove the Parent Share of Cost from any other provider.
 - ✓ Include the customer in the process of deciding which provider will collect the Parent Share of Cost.

10.5. Applying Parent Share of Cost

Use the TWIST System Calculations for Parent Share of Cost as described in Section 10.2 only when:

- You are taking a new application for child care services.
- You are re-certifying eligibility for child care services.
- Upon the addition of a child that would result in an increase in the parent share.
- Upon a parent's report of a change in income, family size, or number of children in care that would result in a reduced parent share.
- Upon resumption of work, job training, or education activities following temporary changes.
- Upon resumption of work, job training, or education activities during the three-month continuation of financial aid period.
- 10.6. Discretion in Setting Parent Share of Cost

The customer may experience situations that Support Center staff consider are reason to modify the Parent Share of Cost. These situations include but are not limited to:

- The customer is unemployed and seeking employment;
- The customer requests an interruption in service for future months (child will not attend for an extended period);
- Other significant, temporary event that would affect customer's ability to pay the Parent Share.



Reasons	Examples of Documentation can include:					
Reduction in hours	Check stubs					
Loss of employment	Lay-off notice, letter from employer or verification from employer (includes phone verification)					
Work-related expenses that are not reimbursed by the employer	Documentation from employer					
Unexpected temporary costs such as medical expenses	Medical bills					
Extraordinary events or disasters that affect a family financially	Depends on the event, i.e. hurricane declaration, etc.					

- ✓ Support Center staff may make changes to the Authorized Parent Share of Cost in TWIST for future months based upon a consultation and an agreement with the customer.
- ✓ Whenever an adjustment is made to the Parent Share of Cost, Support Center staff must enter justification in counselor notes and documentation in Document management system. Documentation must include the reason for and the duration of the temporary reduction.
- ✓ In some instances, exceptions to the chart above may be approved by a manager or designee on a case-by-case basis. Approval note must be entered in TWIST by Supervisor or Manager.
- ✓ In all instances, Support Center staff must document their actions and provide justification in TWIST counselor notes.
- ✓ Support Center staff must keep a log of all temporary reductions granted to parents facing extenuating circumstances. Log should contain the following information:

Date Name Twist ID	Reason	Original Parent Share	Revised Parent Share	Duration	
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10.7. Partial Month

- 10.7.1. When a customer transfers from one vendor to another, Support Center staff can adjust the Parent Share of Cost for the current month and assign a proportion of the parent share to the new vendor.
- 10.7.2. If the referral was scheduled to end other than at the end of the month, TWIST calculates a partial month Parent Share of Cost.



- 10.7.3. When recertifying eligibility and creating a new program detail, TWIST will not apply a partial month Parent Share of Cost for the current month.
- 10.8. Failure to Pay
 - 10.8.1. Payment of the parent share is a transaction between the parent and the vendor.
 - Workforce Solutions does not pay a vendor the parent share if a parent fails to make appropriate payments.
 - The vendor may refuse to accept the child if the parent does not pay their share of cost. Transfer to another provider is prohibited, unless the parent has paid the parent share of cost to the current provider, barring the transfer being related to a health and safety concern for the child.
 - 10.8.2. Nonpayment of the Parent Share of Cost, when reported by a vendor, is a program violation for customers assessed a Parent Share of Cost. The vendor must report nonpayment of the Parent Share of Cost to Workforce Solutions by the last working day of the month the Parent Share of Cost was due.
 - 10.8.3. Workforce Solutions Support Center staff must attempt to communicate via multiple channels including (as appropriate) phone calls, emails, text messages, and written notifications to the parent notifying them of possible termination of care due to failure to pay the Parent Share of Cost. Support Center staff must also attempt to evaluate a family's financial circumstances for possible reduction of the Parent Share of Cost. Staff must evaluate the family's financial circumstances and determine the appropriate action by the 10th calendar day of the month following the month in which the vendor reported the failure to pay the Parent Share of Cost. The appropriate action could be:
 - Termination of the parent's child care services due to a program violation or
 - Adjust the Parent Share of Cost for future months. (See Section 10.6 above for additional guidance).
 - ✓ Support Center staff must track all early terminations of child care services due to failure to pay the Parent Share of Cost, including family size, income, family circumstances, and the reason for the termination. If there is a pattern of frequent early terminations, Workforce Solutions must evaluate and may adjust their sliding fee scale structure to ensure it is not a barrier to assistance for families at certain income levels.
 - 10.8.4. Workforce Solutions must give prompt notification and access to the appeals process when ending child care services due to program violations.



- 10.8.5. Workforce Solutions will not pay for child care services during an appeal when we end financial aid for failure to pay Parent Share of Cost.
- 10.8.6. If Workforce Solutions ends financial aid due to nonpayment of the Parent Share of Cost, the customer must wait a minimum of 60 days before the family can reapply for child care services. If the customer reapplies, Support Center places the customer as a third priority group.
- 10.8.7. Support Center staff must record the reason for ending the child care financial aid in the program detail in TWIST with the termination reason Non-payment of PSOC.



11. Providers

Workforce Solutions has developed the Vendor Handbook and Parent Agreement to inform both vendors and parents of their role and responsibilities relating to child care financial aid services.

11.1. Selecting a Provider

Workforce Solutions partners with an Early Education contractor to help parents find quality child care options. Parents receiving child care financial aid have the option of choosing a provider that best meets their child care needs. Workforce Solutions staff are responsible for referring (authorizing) children for services at the specific vendor location chosen from the list of approved providers.

11.1.1. Types of Providers

Child care providers are not employees of Workforce Solutions.

- <u>Regulated Vendors</u> must publish and have available to the public, a copy of their license or registration with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) or permit from the Department of Health and rates for services.
 - o Licensed Child Care Center
 - Licensed Child Care Home
 - Registered Child Care Home
- Listed (Relative) Vendors must meet the following criteria:
 - Be a grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, or sibling of the child and be over 18 years of age,
 - Have a certification of relationship form signed by the parent,
 - Maintain a separate residence from the family receiving child care financial aid, and
 - $\circ~$ Be listed, and maintain their listing status with DFPS

11.2. Transferring to a Different Provider

- 11.2.1. If the parent or vendor desires to change the location that care is provided, the parent must contact Workforce Solutions to request that change. Any new location must be a Workforce Solutions authorized vendor before we pay for service at that location.
- 11.2.2. Effective May 1, 2021, we can accommodate a parent's request to transfer to a different provider, however a parent must give at least two weeks advanced notice before the transfer can become effective. The two-week waiting period does not apply to parents whose children attended a child care provider placed on corrective or adverse action by the DFPS. Transfers are prohibited when the parent has failed to pay the parent share of cost to the current provider.



11.2.3. When transferring care to a different provider, staff must send a 2450 authorizing care to the new provider and a 2450 to the previous provider discontinuing care.

Note: Exceptions may be approved by a manager or designee on a case-by-case basis. Approval note must be entered in TWIST by the Manager.

- 11.2.4. When possible, arrange for the transfer to occur in the transition from one month to the next.
- 11.2.5. If a transfer will occur within the month, the parent share of cost for the month may be split between the previous vendor and the new vendor.
- 11.2.6. The Financial Aid Payment Office processes transfers and may assume the TWIST information related to the parent share of cost is correct unless the vendor or the customer asks us to review the information.
- 11.2.7. When FAPO receives such a request, the staff must review the data in TWIST and, if appropriate, contact the Support Center to discuss an adjustment to the parent share of cost.
 - The Support Center staff determines the parent share of cost.
 - Payment Office staff must record these actions in counselor notes.
- 11.2.8. When a parent is transferring into our board area, the Support Center must verify the Program Detail from the previous board area is closed. The parent will only need to provide proof of residency. A new program detail must be opened with the same end date from the previous board area. The PSOC should not exceed the amount previously assessed. The Support Center must notify the provider and send a 2450.
- 11.2.9. When a parent is transferring from our board area, the Support Center must end the program detail for the day requested from the parent. The Support must also notify the provider and send a 2450.
- 11.3. Paying Providers
 - 11.3.1. Workforce Solutions sets maximum reimbursement rates that vendors can be reimbursed for child care based on the following:
 - the type of vendor;
 - the age of the child; and
 - the type of care authorized (full-time, part-time, blended)
 - 11.3.2. Workforce Solutions uses data from an annual market survey to establish maximum reimbursement rates.

Current Daily Reimbursement Rates for vendors are displayed on:



- the Vendor Rate Schedule
- the Vendor Agreement
- the Vendor Connection website
- Staff Resources at www.wrksolutions.com
- 11.3.3. Workforce Solutions pays a provider for services rendered at the provider's published rate up to our maximum reimbursement rate. Providers are not allowed to charge parents the difference between their published rates and the Board Reimbursement rates.
- 11.3.4. Enhanced Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions has established enhanced reimbursement rates for all age groups receiving care at Texas Rising Star and Texas School Ready providers. These rates are published on the <u>Workforce Solutions website</u>.

11.3.4.1 Reimbursement for Transportation

When appropriate, transportation reimbursement is included in the established maximum reimbursement rate for a provider.

11.3.5. Inclusion Assistance Rates for Children with Disabilities

Payment Office must make sure that providers reimbursed for additional staff or equipment needed to assist in the care of a child with disabilities are paid a rate up to 190% of the provider's reimbursement rate for a child without disabilities of that same age. The higher rate must take into consideration the estimated cost of the additional staff or equipment needed by a child with disabilities.

11.3.5.1. Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 protects children with disabilities and requires child care providers to serve children with disabilities if reasonable accommodations can be made. <u>However, child care providers cannot charge parents for the cost of making such accommodations available</u>.

Reference: <u>Commonly Asked Questions about Child Care Centers and the</u> <u>Americans with Disabilities Act</u>

11.3.5.2. Workforce Solutions Inclusion Assistance Rate

While child care providers are legally responsible for making reasonable modifications for any child with disabilities, we provide additional funds for providers serving families with low incomes, to assist them in making such reasonable accommodations. We also make the inclusion assistance rate available to assist providers and families if a child's disability requires



more than just reasonable modifications for the child to be fully included in the child care provider's daily activities.

11.3.5.3 The Gulf Coast Workforce Board contracts with an Early Education contractor to process requests for the inclusion assistance rate from parents.

Parents/guardians in the Gulf Coast area may contact either the Workforce Solutions Support Center or the Early Education contractor.

The Support Center or a career office sends a request to the Early Education contractor through FACS. Information in the request must include:

- a. The child's name
- b. The child's date of birth
- c. The child's disability
- d. The parent's name and contact information
- e. The child care provider's name, address, and telephone number
- 11.3.5.3.1 The Early Education contractor sends out a disability packet to parent that includes parent permission forms that authorizes Inclusive Care Consultant access to the child for classroom observations and collection of further information.
- 11.3.5.3.2 Parents send permission forms back to the Early Education contractor and their staff create a file and send information to the Inclusive Care Consultant.
 - The Inclusive Care Consultant contacts parent and child care program to schedule an observation visit.
 - The Consultant develops an inclusion plan based on information gathered during the observation
 - The Consultant
 - Provides on-site support to ensure the teacher understands how to implement the plan.
 - o ensures that the provider has met the minimum standards set forth in 40 TAC §746.1315 for CPR and first aid training during the provider's most recent inspection by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; and



 reviews one of the following, depending on which program the child is enrolled in

- Individualized Family Service Plan from the ECI program or Early Head Start;
- Individualized Education Plan from Head Start or publicschool special education services, including Early Childhood Special Education; or
- other supporting documentation to identify modifications that may include types of equipment recommended for the child.
- 11.3.5.3.3 The Consultant schedules a follow up visit within six months from the initial placement to determine if any adjustments need to be made to the inclusion plan.
- 11.3.5.3.4 The Early Education contractor must update each inclusion plan at least once a year.
- 11.3.5.3.5 Authorizing the Inclusion Assistance Rate

A child's parent is the only authorized person who can request Workforce Solutions pay an inclusion assistance rate to a provider. A child care provider may not make such a request.

- If a child care provider requests the inclusion assistance rate for a child, the Early Education contractor and/or Payment Office must inform the child care provider that:
 - The inclusion assistance rate can be requested only by the parent.
 - The provider should discuss with the parent the provider's concerns regarding the child's special needs.
 - The provider can recommend that the parent contact Workforce Solutions to discuss inclusion assistance rate benefits and process.
 - The provider can refer the parent to the following appropriate programs and services for children with disabilities:
 - > SSI benefits
 - ➢ SSDI benefits
 - ► ECI
 - Public school special education services, including Early Childhood Special Education



Child Care Standards and Guidelines

- 11.3.5.3.5.1 Upon the receipt of a request by a parent for authorization of the inclusion assistance rate, the Early Education contractor confirms the parent's enrollment in or receipt of benefits from one or more of the following programs:
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits
 - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits
 - Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program
 - A Head Start program that identified the child as having a disability
 - Public school special education services, including preschool programs for children with disabilities (Early Childhood Special Education)
- 11.3.5.3.5.2 The Early Education contractor assesses the provider's need for the Inclusion Assistance Rate using Form CC-2419 and considering the cost of the following:
 - Additional staff and necessary training
 - Necessary equipment
 - Necessary minor renovations
 - Expected duration of the inclusion assistance rate
 - The percentage of the increase rate, which is not to exceed 190 percent of the provider's reimbursement rate

The Early Education contractor submits the completed Form CC-2419 to the Support Center which then enters the inclusion rate in TWIST. Support Center staff must document their actions in TWIST counselor notes and store the form in Document management system.

- 11.3.5.3.5.3 Workforce Solutions Payment Office must verify provider compliance with approved activities within 30 calendar days of receiving approval for the inclusion assistance rate.
- 11.3.5.4 The Payment Office must make sure providers are paid no later than 21 calendar days following the completion of the service delivery time frame available to be paid.
- 11.4. Vendors Placed on Corrective or Adverse Action
 - 11.4.1. Workforce Solutions receive weekly notification if a child care vendor has been placed on corrective or adverse action by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.



- 11.4.2. The Vendor Corrective and Adverse Action Desk Aid provides detailed guidance for staff regarding the actions to be taken when a child care vendor is placed on corrective or adverse action. You can find this Desk Aid at this link under Workforce Solutions Financial Aid: <u>http://www.wrksolutions.com/staffresources/performance-improvement/desk-aids</u>.
- 11.4.3. There are specific letters for notifying parents when a vendor is on corrective or adverse action. You can find these Parent Notification letters at this link under Letters and Forms: <u>http://www.wrksolutions.com/staff-resources/services-we-offer/financial-aid-services#Issuanes-Letters</u>. The letters are available in English and Spanish



12. Deterring, Detecting and Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse

- 12.1. Deterring Fraud
 - 12.1.1. <u>Standards and guidelines</u>. We use these standards and guidelines and the system procedures from these standards and guidelines to establish an orderly, equitable and effective process for awarding child care financial aid and reduce the opportunities for customers, providers and staff to commit fraud, waste taxpayer dollars and abuse our system for private or personal gain.
 - 12.1.2. Workforce Solutions contractors and staff have a responsibility to follow these standards and guidelines and the resulting procedures to deter fraud, waste and abuse.
- 12.2. Detecting and Reporting Fraud
 - 12.2.1. System Reports

We use periodic reports to identify potential fraud among customers, including a report on identity mismatches, unemployment insurance claimants, family income, and activity hours. The Support Center and Payment Office are responsible for processing these reports, identifying any issues, and acting. The Child Care Authentication Guide describes this process, and staff may access the Guide online through <u>Issuance 17-11</u>.

12.2.2. Fraud Standards and Guidelines

Issuance 17-11 establishes Workforce Solutions' standards and guidelines for identifying, reporting, determining and resolving fraud, waste, theft and abuse. The standards and guidelines also describe the responsibilities of staff and Workforce Solutions units in this process.

12.2.3. Provider Fraud

If a provider agreement is terminated due to fraud or any other reason, the Payment Office must enter this information into TWIST comments and notify any other Board with a current provider agreement of this action.

Workforce Solutions staff may also access the standards and guidelines through a <u>direct link</u> to the Financial Aid page in Staff Resources at <u>www.wrksolutions.com</u>. The fraud standards and guidelines are found in the Manuals section of the page.



13. Definitions

Following are definitions of terms used in these standards and guidelines

- 13.1. <u>Attending a job training or educational program</u>—An individual is attending a job training or educational program if the individual is:
 - Considered by the program to be officially enrolled
 - Meeting all attendance requirements established by the program
 - Making progress toward successful completion of the program at the time of eligibility redetermination.
 - Note: The individual who continues to be enrolled and accepted as a student in a job training or educational program is, by definition, meeting attendance requirements and making progress toward successful completion of the program.
- 13.2. <u>Blended</u>—A combination of full-time and part-time care for school age children. For example, a school age child attends care regularly before and after school but needs full-time care during summer breaks.
- 13.3. <u>Child</u>—An individual who meets the general eligibility requirements contained in this guide for receiving child care services.
- 13.4. <u>Child with disabilities</u>—A child who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Caring for oneself
 - Performing manual tasks
 - Walking
 - Hearing
 - Seeing, speaking or breathing
 - Learning
 - Working
- 13.5. <u>Child Care Regulation (CCR)</u>—Division responsible for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children who attend or reside in regulated child care facilities and homes. Previously a division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), CCR is now part of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).
- 13.6. Dual-Parent—Two-parent family.
- 13.7. Educational program—A program that leads to one of the following:
 - High school diploma
 - Certificate of High School Equivalency



- Undergraduate degree from an institution of higher education
- 13.8. Eligible Foster Youth An eligible foster youth is a:
 - 1. Current Foster Youth--A youth, age 14 or older, who is receiving substitute care services under the managing conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. This includes youth residing in private foster homes, group homes, residential treatment centers, juvenile correctional institutions, and relative care; or
 - 2. Former Foster Youth--A youth up to 23 years of age, who formerly was under the managing conservatorship of DFPS, until:
 - a. the conservatorship was transferred by a court;
 - b. the youth was legally emancipated (i.e., the youth's minority status was removed by a court); or
 - c. the youth attained 18 years of age.
- 13.9. <u>Eligible Veteran</u>—any one of the following:
 - 1. Federal/state qualified veteran—a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable as specified at 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active services include full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, other than full-time for training purposes. (Note: This definition does not apply to eligibility for services provided by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program/Local Veterans' Employment Representatives staff.)
 - 2. Federal qualified spouse—the spouse of:
 - a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
 - b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
 - i. missing in action;
 - ii. captured in line of duty by a hostile force; or
 - iii. forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
 - c. any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;
 - d. any veteran who died while a disability, as indicated in paragraph (3) of this section, was in existence.
 - 3. State qualified spouse—a spouse:
 - a. who meets the definition of federal qualified spouse; or



- b. of any member of the Armed Forces who died while serving on active military, naval, or air service.
 - Note: The spouse of a living veteran or service member (definitions 2 or 3 above) will lose their eligibility if the veteran or service member loses the status that is the basis for eligibility. For example, the spouse of a veteran with a total service-connected disability will not be eligible if the veteran's disability is revised to a lower level. Similarly, a spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member will lose their eligibility upon divorce from the veteran or service member.
- 13.10. <u>Excessive unexplained absences</u>—More than 40 unexplained absences in a 12-month eligibility period. "Unexplained" is defined as an absence that is any of the following:
 - Not due to a child's documented chronic illness, disability, or a court-ordered custody or visitation agreement
- 13.11. <u>Family</u>—Two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or decree of court, who are living in a single residence and are included in one or more of the following categories:
 - Two individuals, married—including by common-law—and household dependents
 - A parent and household dependents
- 13.12. <u>Full-time</u>—Care authorized for six to twelve hours per day for children attending child care
- 13.13. <u>Household dependent</u>—An individual living in the household who is one of the following:
 - Adult considered as a dependent of the parent for income tax purposes
 - Child of a teen parent
 - Child or other minor living in the household who is the responsibility of the parent
- 13.14. <u>Improper payments</u>—Any payment of Workforce Solutions grant funds that should not have been made or that was made in an incorrect amount (including overpayments and underpayments) under statutory, contractual, administrative, or other legally applicable requirements governing the administration of grant funds, including payments:
 - To an ineligible recipient
 - For an ineligible service
 - That are duplicate payments
 - For services not received
- 13.15. <u>In loco parentis –</u> An individual 18 years of age or older who is responsible for the day-today care and supervision of the child when the child's natural parent, adoptive parent, stepparent or legal guardian is not available to care for the child. The individual must document the reason the child's parents are unavailable to care for the child and that they are exercising parental responsibility for the child.



- 13.16. <u>Individual experiencing homelessness</u>—An individual who is homeless, as defined in the <u>McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434(a))</u>, <u>Subtitle VII-B</u>, <u>§725</u>: "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."</u>
- 13.17. <u>Job training program</u>—A program that provides training or instruction leading to one of the following:
 - Basic literacy
 - English proficiency
 - An occupational or professional certification or license
 - Acquisition of technical skills, knowledge and abilities specific to an occupation
- 13.18. <u>Listed family home</u>—A family home, other than the eligible child's own residence, that is listed, but not licensed or registered with, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
- 13.19. <u>Military deployment</u>—The temporary duty assignment away from the permanent military installation or place of residence for reserve components of the single military parent or dual military parents. This includes deployed parents in the regular military, military reserves or National Guard.
- 13.20. <u>Parent</u>—An individual who is responsible for the care and supervision of a child and is identified as the child's natural parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis (as determined in accordance with Workforce Solutions policies and procedures). Unless otherwise indicated, the term applies to a single parent or both parents.
- 13.21. <u>Part-time</u>—Care authorized for less than six hours per day for children attending child care
- 13.22. <u>Protective services</u>—Services provided in any of the following circumstances:
 - When a child is at risk of abuse or neglect in the immediate or short-term future and the child's family cannot or will not protect the child without DFPS Child Protective Services intervention.
 - When a child is in the managing conservatorship of DFPS and residing with a relative or a foster parent.
 - When a child has been provided with protective services by DFPS within the previous six months and requires services to ensure the stability of the family
- 13.23. <u>Provider</u>—A provider is one of the following:
 - Regulated child care provider
 - Relative child care provider
 - Listed family home



- 13.24. <u>Regulated child care provider</u>—A provider caring for an eligible child in a location other than the eligible child's own residence and is one of the following:
 - Licensed by Child Care Regulation (CCR)
 - Registered with CCR
 - Operated and monitored by the United States military services
- 13.25. <u>Relative child care provider</u>—An individual who is at least 18 years of age, and is, by marriage, blood relationship or court decree, one of the following:
 - The child's grandparent
 - The child's great-grandparent
 - The child's aunt
 - The child's uncle
 - The child's sibling (if the sibling does not reside in the same household as the eligible child)
- 13.26. <u>Residing with</u>—Unless otherwise stated in this guide, a child resides with the parent when the child is living with and physically present with the parent during the time period for which child care financial aid is being requested or received.
- 13.27. <u>Self-employed</u>—An individual is considered self-employed if the individual works in an income-producing trade or business as one of the following:
 - The sole proprietor or independent contractor
 - A member of a partnership
 - Otherwise in business for him or herself and not a paid employee of the business or enterprise
- 13.28. <u>Teen parent</u>—An individual 18 years of age or younger, or 19 years of age and attending high school or the equivalent, who has a child.
- 13.29. <u>Texas Rising Star</u>—A voluntary, quality-based rating system of child care providers participating in Workforce Solutions subsidized child care.
- 13.30. <u>Texas Rising Star provider</u>—A provider certified as meeting the Texas Rising Star program standards. Texas Rising Star providers are certified as one of the following:
 - 2-Star Program Provider
 - 3-Star Program Provider
 - 4-Star Program Provider
- 13.31. <u>Working</u>—Working is defined as participation in:
 - Activities for which one receives monetary compensation such as a salary, wages, tips and commissions
 - Job search activities (Applies to TANF Choices and SNAP E&T only)
 - TANF Choices or SNAP E&T employment or education/training (volunteer work, subsidized work, attending school or training)