Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Family Engagement

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is amending Minnesota Rules, Chapter 3400, Child Care Fund (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/3400/). The department is holding family engagement sessions to gather feedback on how proposed rule revisions may impact families and to learn more about families’ experiences with CCAP. Feedback received has been taken into consideration when revising rule and families’ suggestions on how CCAP can be improved are being tracked for possible changes.

To date, the department convened sessions with families in the following locations:
- Rochester Head Start Policy Council
- Think Small (Ramsey County)

Summary of Sessions

The following is a summary of common themes and feedback received from families.

Communication with child care workers
- Parents feel respected by their worker at these agencies. Workers are responsive and return messages timely.
- Some parents were not sure who to contact or what steps to take if they did not agree with the action taken on their case.
- Parents reported that their child care providers have some difficulty reaching workers and that communication between worker and parent is stronger than between worker and provider.

Waiting lists
- Parents would like to receive notification of their status/estimated time remaining on the waiting list more frequently than every six months.

Applying for CCAP
- Parents would like more “real information” when applying for CCAP, particularly about copayment amounts and the maximum amount CCAP is able to pay their provider. This information would help with budgeting.

Copayments/cost of care
- Parents would prefer copayments increase gradually each month rather than staying consistent for 12 months. Gradual increases make budgeting easier.
- While parents knew they were responsible for a provider’s charges above CCAP maximum rates, they did not realize how high those costs would be until they met with the provider.
Reporting requirements
• Not all parents were aware of their reporting type (schedule reporters or 12 month reporters).
• Parents like not having to report changes as often.
• There was some confusion on how much information needed to be reported and when.

Notices
• Parents felt that notices were confusing. Parents report receiving multiple notices on the same day with different information and it is difficult to know what is correct.

Absent days
• 25 absent days in a year is not always enough.
• When school is closed for weather-related reasons and a child does not attend care, parents felt this should not count as an absent day.
• If children don’t attend care for a period of time, parents are using absent days rather than having care suspended because do not want to lose their spot with their child care provider.

Redeterminations
• Parents appreciate only having to submit a redetermination every 12 months instead of every six.