



Proposed Changes on Child Care Assistance in the Regulations of the Department of Health

Public Comment Received October 9, 2024 – November 18, 2024

On October 9, 2024, the Department of Health (DOH) proposed changes to regulations on Child Care Assistance published via the Alaska Online Public Notice system under **NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGES ON CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE IN THE REGULATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**. The notice was also published in the Anchorage Daily News. Public comment was available through multiple channels, including: the Department of Health, Division of Public Assistance direct email ambra.mavis@alaska.gov; direct line (907) 500-4375, for Ambra Mavis, Program Coordinator II; and by mail or in person at State of Alaska, Department of Health, Division of Public Assistance, Child Care Program Office 3601 C Street, Suite 140, Anchorage, AK 99503.

An oral hearing was held on November 14, 2024, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to allow for oral presentation and public comments. The public comment period closed at 5:00pm on November 18, 2024. This document contains the questions and comments received and responses by the Department of Health. Identical or substantively similar comments have been consolidated for purposes of response.

PUBLIC COMMENT	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESPONSE
<p>Email request to the Child Care Program Office (CCPO) for a copy of the proposed Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) regulation changes.</p>	<p>A copy of the proposed CCAP regulation changes was provided by the CCPO to the requestor by email.</p>
<p>Two emails with attached letters in support of the proposed CCAP regulation changes were received by the CCPO. Comments were in support of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/expand/improve access to child care; • Decrease barriers to child care/early care and education including tribal and rural communities; and • Emphasis on maintaining the highest standards for health and safety. Continuation of professional development and training to ensure high quality care that is safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate 	<p>Proposed regulation changes are recommendations made by the Governor’s Task Force on Child Care. The purpose of the Governor’s Taskforce on Child Care is <i>“to develop a plan to improve availability and affordability of ... child care throughout Alaska.”</i> The related details may be accessed on the State of Alaska’s website at https://health.alaska.gov/Commissioner/Pages/cctf/default.aspx; https://gov.alaska.gov/governor-dunleavy-establishes-task-force-on-child-care/; and https://gov.alaska.gov/admin-orders/administrative-order-no-346/</p> <p>Tribal CCDF Administrators meet or exceed the federal Office of Child Care (OCC)’s health and safety requirements as approved by the OCC. Tribal CCDF Administrators will continue to work with the OCC federal oversight. This change removes barriers for Tribal CCDF child care providers to care for children participating in the State’s CCAP as well</p>

PUBLIC COMMENT	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESPONSE
	<p>as improves and increases access to child care for families.</p> <p>Removing the requirement for license exempt child care providers of qualifying relatives to have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent removes barriers for child care providers to care for relative children participating in the State’s CCAP as well as improves and increases access to child care for families. The CCAP will continue to monitor these provider types to ensure they meet the State’s CCAP requirements.</p>
<p>Two emails in opposition of the proposed regulation changes received by the CCPO. Opposition received included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of the requirement for tribal entities to meet or exceed health and safety requirements puts children at risk for injury and illness; • It is unfair to legally licensed facilities who are required to adhere to the State’s Health and Safety requirements; and • These changes do not encourage safe and healthy learning environments 	<p>Proposed regulation changes are recommendations made by the Governor’s Task Force on Child Care. The purpose of the Governor’s Taskforce on Child Care is <i>“to develop a plan to improve availability and affordability of ... child care throughout Alaska.”</i> The related details may be accessed on the State of Alaska’s website at https://health.alaska.gov/Commissioner/Pages/cctf/default.aspx; https://gov.alaska.gov/governor-dunleavy-establishes-task-force-on-child-care/; and https://gov.alaska.gov/admin-orders/administrative-order-no-346/</p> <p>Tribal CCDF Administrators meet or exceed the federal Office of Child Care (OCC)’s health and safety requirements as approved by the OCC. Tribal CCDF Administrators will continue to work with the OCC federal oversight. This change removes barriers for Tribal CCDF child care providers to care for children participating in the State’s CCAP as well as improves and increases access to child care for families.</p> <p>Removing the requirement for license exempt child care providers of qualifying relatives to have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent removes barriers for child care providers to care for relative children participating in the State’s CCAP as well as improves and increases access to child care for families. The CCAP will continue to monitor these provider types to ensure they meet the State’s CCAP requirements.</p>