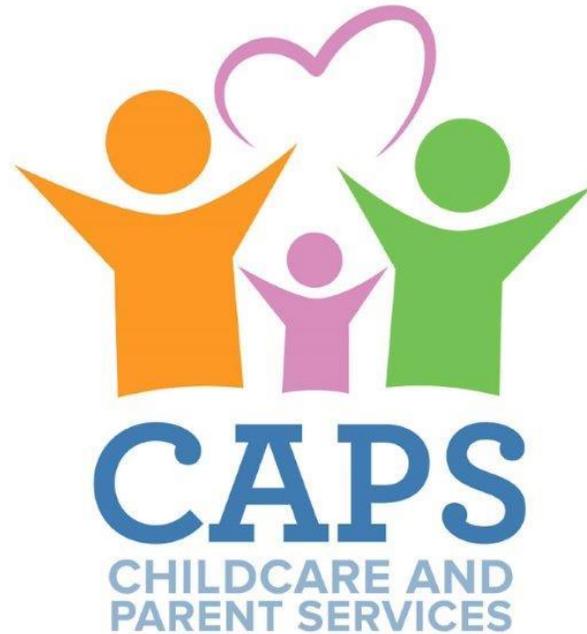


The Childcare and Parent Services Program (CAPS)
Georgia's Subsidy Program
PROCEDURE MANUAL



This procedure manual does not include all applicable state and federal laws. All parties who wish to participate in CAPS are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with all state and federal laws and regulations that govern this program.

Bright from the Start:

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**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

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LEGAL AUTHORITY: Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99.

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Application Process Policy (CAPS/00-4), CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6), CAPS Priority Groups Policy (CAPS/00-7), CAPS Income Calculations Policy (CAPS/00-8)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

3 DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the procedures to be followed by CAPS staff when determining **eligibility** requirements for families applying for CAPS services.

Note: Use guidelines located throughout the [CAPS Policies \(www.caps.decal.ga.gov\)](http://www.caps.decal.ga.gov) for additional assistance. CAPS **application** process requirements can be found in the [CAPS Application Process Policy \(CAPS/00-4\)](#).

3.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL, on behalf of parents.

3.3 Processing the Application

The application process must be completed within 30 **calendar days** from the date the application is received.

Note: The application processing period may be extended beyond 30 **calendar days** for good cause, with supervisor approval, when verification is provided demonstrating a good faith effort by the parent to comply with a request for documentation.)

Make every attempt to process the application as follows:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Make initial contact with the applicant on day 1 to schedule an interview and to issue the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) to the parent , detailing what is needed to verify eligibility.
2	Request that the parent submit all required documentation within 10 calendar days of receipt of the Form 66.
3	Complete the interview by day 10.
4	Issue denial notification by day 11 for applicants determined ineligible during the interview.
5	Complete eligibility determination by day 20.
6	Forward eligibility disposition by day 21 for applicants determined eligible .

3.4 CAPS Interview

The purpose of the interview is to (1) determine if the family meets eligibility for a priority group, using guidelines located in the [CAPS Priority Groups Policy \(CAPS/00-7\)](#); and (2) ensure that all aspects of the family's circumstances have been recorded; and (3) ensure that all needed verification documents have been received. Interviews should be completed by the 10th day after the application has been received but may occur at any time during the 30-day application review period. Interviews should be conducted by phone, in person, or virtually.

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3.5 Verification of Eligibility Requirements

3.5.1 90-day grace period

Families who meet eligibility requirements for certain priority groups may be granted a 90-day grace period to return verification documentation, as prescribed in [CAPS Priority Groups Policy \(CAPS/00-7\)](#). In addition, all families may be granted a 90-day grace period for (a) selecting a child care provider; and (b) verification of child’s citizenship/qualified alien status and immunization, as prescribed in [CAPS Application Process Policy \(CAPS/00-4\)](#) and [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#). The grace period for providing verification will not postpone the eligibility determination. However, if verification documents are not received by the end of the 90-day grace period, the case will be determined ineligible for ongoing child care assistance.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Verification documents should be requested as outlined in the steps below. The 90-day grace period should only be provided for verification documents the family is unable to provide within 10 calendar days.
2	If the 90-day grace period is needed, the family should be provided a custom Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) that includes the following language: You have been authorized for CAPS for 90 calendar days pending the receipt of the following documentation: [list missing documentation]. As discussed, these verification documents must be received by CAPS by [90 days from date of notice]. If verification documents are not received within 90 days from the date of this notice [due date], your child care case will be determined ineligible for ongoing child care assistance.
3	If the 90-day grace period is provided for income verification, applicable family fee shall be calculated based on the parent’s verbal attestation of income.
4	In cases where a grace period has been provided, scholarships should be created for 90 days only, including no care scholarships. If authorizing a no care scholarship, staff are required to send the no care consumer statement to the family.
5	In cases where a grace period has been provided, CAPS staff completing the action must ensure case notes indicate which documents are missing. In addition, the family should be contacted at the recommended intervals of 30, 60, and 85 days to determine if documentation is available.

3.5.2 Residency

Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) to determine the residency requirement for the **family unit**.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Use one of the following to verify the family’s residence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Georgia government issued driver’s license/I.D. card • Current lease or mortgage statement • Notarized statement from landlord or person with whom applicant resides (statement does not need to be notarized for those who meet eligibility for the families who lack fixed, regular, and adequate housing priority group) • Children’s school records within current school year • Voter registration card • Motor vehicle registration card with a Georgia residence address • Wage stubs with residence address • Work or school I.D. with residence address
2	If the family meets residency requirement, proceed with verification of the child’s age requirement.
3	If the family does not verify residency requirement, do the following:

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Step	CAPS Staff Action
	(A) Contact the parent to determine if residency can be verified. (B) If residency verification cannot be obtained, dispose the application and send notification within one business day.

3.5.3 Age Requirement

Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) to determine the age requirement for all children in the family unit needing care.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Use one of the following to verify the age for all children needing care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate • Court records • U.S. Passport • State issued I.D. • Hospital certificate of live birth • Immigration card • Social Security Administration records • Immigration court order • Homeland Security documents
2	If the children meet age requirement, proceed with verification of the children’s citizenship requirement.
3	If there is no verification that children in the family unit meets age requirement, do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Contact the parent to determine if children’s age can be verified. (B) If age verification cannot be obtained, dispose the application and send notification within one business day.

3.5.4 Child’s Citizenship or qualified alien status

Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) to determine the citizenship requirement for all children in the family unit needing care.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Use one of the following to verify citizenship for all children needing care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth Certificate • Certificate of Citizenship • Naturalization Certificate • Vital records • Report of Birth from Abroad of a U.S. Citizen • U.S. Citizen I.D. card • U.S. Passport • Consoler’s report of birth • American Indian Card (first issued by USCIS in 1983) • Court records of parentage, juvenile proceedings, or child support indicating place of birth • Religious record of birth recorded in the U.S. or its territories within three months of birth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The document must show either the date of birth or the individual’s age at the time the record was made.

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Step	CAPS Staff Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any document that establishes place of birth or U.S. citizenship, such as, records from Social Security Administration, Veterans Administration, local government agencies, hospitals or clinic's record of birth or parentage Early school records showing the date of admission to the school, the child's date and place of birth, and the names and place of birth of the parents Census record showing the name, U.S. citizenship, or a U.S. place of birth and date of birth or age of the individual Adoption finalization papers showing the child's name and place of birth in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix), Northern Marianna Islander (Saipan, Rota, Tinian), American Samoa or Swains Island
2	If all children meet citizenship requirements, proceed to child's immunization requirement.
3	Care must be denied for any children that do not meet the citizenship requirement. (A) Deny the eligibility for the children that do not meet the citizenship requirement and send notification within one business day.
4	If there is no verification for <u>all</u> children in the family unit, do the following: (A) Contact the parent to determine if citizenship can be verified. (B) If citizenship verification cannot be obtained for any child needing care, an additional 90 calendar days from the date the application was processed may be granted. The additional 90 days does not affect approval of eligibility unless verification cannot be granted after the 90-day period. For extenuating circumstances beyond 90 days, a waiver may be requested.

3.5.5 Child's Immunization

Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) to determine the immunization requirements for all children in the family unit needing care.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	<p>Current immunizations or a notarized Affidavit of Religious Objection to Immunization (DPH Form 2208) is required for children to receive CAPS. Verification of immunization must be completed using the Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) as issued by the child's physician. If a child has a medical exemption, it must be marked on the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231).</p> <p>A Certificate of Immunization <u>is not</u> required to be present in the CAPS record and no verification is needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enrolled in school settings Children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Children in care at licensed child care providers <p>The immunization requirements are already met based on school/ child care licensing and TANF requirements.</p> <p>A Certificate of Immunization <u>is</u> required to be kept in the CAPS case record for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who are receiving child care through an informal caregiver Non-school-aged children enrolled in license-exempt programs
2	If all children in the family unit meet immunization requirement, proceed to the verification of the applicant's identity.
3	If any children do not meet immunization requirement, an additional 90 calendar days from the date the application is processed may be granted. The additional 90 days does not affect approval of eligibility unless verification cannot be granted after the 90-day period. For extenuating circumstances beyond 90 days, a waiver may be requested.

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Step	CAPS Staff Action
4	Continue with the application process.
5	If the Certificate of Immunization has not been provided by the end of the 90-day period, do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Contact the parent to determine if immunization can be verified for children needing care. (B) Approve the eligibility for all children who meet immunization requirement. (C) Deny the eligibility for any child whose current immunization cannot be verified and send notification within one business day.

Note (1): Refer to the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) for instances when immunizations may be waived. Written documentation of the waiver is required and must be maintained in the **case record**.

Note (2): If immunizations are not current at redetermination, staff must request updated immunization verification.

3.5.6 Identity

Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) to determine the parent's identity.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Use one of the following documents to verify the parent's identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal or state issued identification card • Military issued identification card • Current school identification card • U.S. Passport • Medicare/Medicaid recipient card • Social Security award letter • Declaration of citizenship • Naturalization Certificate • Federal, state, or court documents granting citizenship or asylum • Work/school Visa • Voter Registration Card
2	If the parent meets identity requirement, proceed with verification of the state approved activities.
3	If the parent does not meet the identity requirement, do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Contact the parent to determine if identity can be verified. (B) If identity cannot be verified, dispose the application and send notification within one business day.

3.5.7 State-approved Activities

The parent(s) must participate in one, or a combination of activities as prescribed in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#). Most parents must participate in the stated activity in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) an average of at least 24 hours per week to meet the activity requirement, except as noted in the policy. CAPS staff will use the guidelines located in the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#) and [CAPS Priority Group Policy \(CAPS/00-7\)](#) to determine eligible **state approved activities**.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	If the applicant is participating in one, or a combination of state-approved activities listed in CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6) , staff must confirm the activity hours for the verified activity.

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Step	CAPS Staff Action																	
	<p>(A) Calculating employment hours: Staff will use the wage information for the most recent four weeks of earnings and convert the hours to a weekly amount based on the pay frequency.</p> <p>(B) Calculating self-employment hours: Staff will calculate the monthly hours and convert the hours to a weekly amount.</p> <p>(C) If the pay frequency is in a manner other than a weekly basis, staff will apply the following calculation to convert the hours to a weekly amount:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="305 541 1380 823"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Pay Frequency</th> <th colspan="2">Calculation</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Add hours for</th> <th>Divide total hours by</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Weekly</td> <td>Most recent 4 pay periods/pay stubs</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bi-weekly (every other week)</td> <td>Most recent 2 pay periods/pay stubs</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Semi-monthly (twice a month)</td> <td>Most recent 2 pay periods/pay stubs</td> <td>4.3333</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monthly</td> <td>No addition required – use monthly hours</td> <td>4.3333</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(D) Calculating education/training hours: Staff will multiply the parent’s confirmed credit hours by 2 to determine the education/training weekly hours. For self-paced education/training program with no confirmed in-class instruction or online course hours, six (6) credit hours will be applied towards the activity hour requirement which equates to 12 hours. The parent, if applicable, must supplement the education/training activity with other state-approved activities (such as employment) to meet the 24-hour requirement.</p>	Pay Frequency	Calculation		Add hours for	Divide total hours by	Weekly	Most recent 4 pay periods/pay stubs	4	Bi-weekly (every other week)	Most recent 2 pay periods/pay stubs	4	Semi-monthly (twice a month)	Most recent 2 pay periods/pay stubs	4.3333	Monthly	No addition required – use monthly hours	4.3333
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Semi-monthly (twice a month)	Most recent 2 pay periods/pay stubs	4.3333																
Monthly	No addition required – use monthly hours	4.3333																
2	If the applicant meets state approved activity and hour requirement, proceed with computation of income for eligibility determination.																	
3	<p>If the applicant does not meet the activity requirement, do the following:</p> <p>(A) Contact the parent to determine if there are additional circumstances impacting the activity level.</p> <p>(B) Deny the application and send notification within one business day.</p>																	

3.6 Family Unit Income

3.6.1 Reviewing Income Verification

Use policy guidelines located in the [CAPS Income Calculations Policy \(CAPS/00-8\)](#) to determine income eligibility requirements for families.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Request a minimum of four weeks of income for all family unit members 18 years of age or older to determine eligibility.
2	<p>Review all income and employment documentation to determine if there are any discrepancies or alterations and if the document(s) appear to be credible.</p> <p>Review of income and employment documentation should include consideration of the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do pay stubs contain employee and employer information? • Does year-to-date totals reflect earnings? • Do current pay stubs appear to be photocopies of previous pay stubs? • Do pay stubs include typical deductions, taxes, FICA, etc.?

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Step	CAPS Staff Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there other discrepancies that would appear to show possible tampering with names, amounts, time periods, etc. that indicate discrepancies in the document(s)? Are letters/statements from employers on company letterhead and contain name/contact information for employer?
3	<p>If there are discrepancies with the information provided by the parent, contact the employer for clarification and/or request additional verification.</p> <p>Information can also be verified through other sources, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Labor Databases Eligibility documents submitted to other programs, i.e., TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, etc. Other databases where employment/income can be used to verify eligibility
4	<p>If further inconsistencies exist and income/employment cannot be verified, do the following:</p> <p>(A) Contact the parent to determine if income can be verified.</p> <p>(B) If income cannot be verified, dispose the application and send notification within one business day.</p>
5	Document all contacts in the case record .

Note (1): Income should not be older than four weeks from the date of request.

Note (2): Public assistance benefits are not included when calculating income for CAPS eligibility. The following public assistance programs should be recorded for reporting purposes, but excluded from the gross income calculation:

- TANF
- SNAP
- Benefits from the Social Security Administration
- Adoption supplement

3.6.2 Calculation of Family Income

Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Income Calculations Policy \(CAPS/00-8\)](#) to calculate income for families.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	<p>Review the following types of income to determine if pay is representative of the applicant's normal earnings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unearned Income: Verify and determine the type, amount, and frequency of countable unearned income. Earned Income: Verify the applicant's most recent four weeks of income and number of hours worked for those weeks. If the applicant is self-employed, a completed CAPS Self-employment Report is required. New Employment (less than four weeks) or cash paying employment: A statement from the employer or Employment Verification (Appendix F) is required. The statement should include number of hours and gross earnings, the employer's contact name and phone number, and the parent's employment start date. Irregular Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay periods that include inconsistent or irregular overtime or unpaid leave that affect the amount of earned income are considered non-representative of the applicant's normal earnings; these may be disregarded if pay or hours are inconsistent. The remaining pay periods that are representative can be used to calculate an average of the applicant's monthly income.

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Step	CAPS Staff Action								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional pay stubs or verification can be obtained to determine true representation of pay or hours worked. To determine representative pay, the applicants' pay stubs from the previous three months, or up to six months, may be requested. 								
2	<p>When calculating income for all individuals, use the following guide to convert income to a monthly amount:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>How Often Paid</th> <th>Calculation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Weekly</td> <td>Multiply by 4.3333</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bi-weekly (every other week)</td> <td>Multiply by 2.1666</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Semi-monthly (twice a month)</td> <td>Multiply the amount by 2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note: Calculations are based on the gross amount (before all deductions) listed on pay stubs.</p>	How Often Paid	Calculation	Weekly	Multiply by 4.3333	Bi-weekly (every other week)	Multiply by 2.1666	Semi-monthly (twice a month)	Multiply the amount by 2
How Often Paid	Calculation								
Weekly	Multiply by 4.3333								
Bi-weekly (every other week)	Multiply by 2.1666								
Semi-monthly (twice a month)	Multiply the amount by 2								
3	Convert the monthly amount to an annual amount by multiplying the monthly income by 12 for each type of income source.								
4	<p>Once calculated, the family's gross applicable income is compared to the maximum allowable income chart (Appendix A).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family meets the CAPS income eligibility requirements if the income is equal to or less than the maximum income for the size of the family unit. The family does not meet the CAPS income eligibility requirements if the income exceeds the maximum income for the size of the family. 								

Note: Income determination is the final eligibility requirement. Once the family has met all eligibility requirements, the application can be approved.

3.7 Scholarship Issuance

When a family is determined eligible or approved for the CAPS program, the 12-month **eligibility period** begins. The **child care scholarship** authorizes the use of subsidies during the eligibility period. Scholarships are the authorization of CAPS services and are issued for each child receiving subsidy.

Refer to the [CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy \(CAPS/00-6\)](#), [CAPS Annual Redetermination Policy \(CAPS/00-14\)](#) and the [CAPS Participating Providers Policy \(CAPS/00-11\)](#).

Complete the following steps to issue a scholarship:

Step	CAPS Staff Action				
1	<p>Ensure the selected provider is eligible to participate in CAPS as prescribed in CAPS Participating Providers Policy (CAPS/00-11).</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Provider Type</th> <th>Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Provider Type	Action		
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Step	CAPS Staff Action
	<p>Licensed – Includes Child Care Learning Homes (CCLC) and Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH)</p> <p>(A) Determine if the provider is already enrolled in the CAPS program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the provider is enrolled and active (not dismissed) in CAPS, confirm via the CAPS Workflow Portal if they are a Quality Rated Provider which includes providers who are Star Rated, in CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status, or in CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status. , If the provider is not considered Quality Rated under one of the following three (3) criteria: Star Rated, CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status, or CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status, they cannot be issued a CAPS scholarship. For additional information on Quality Rated refer to CAPS Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements (Appendix II). <p>(B) If the provider is not enrolled in CAPS, explain to the family that CAPS will contact the provider to start the enrollment process, but the provider may choose not to enroll in CAPS. If the provider choose not to enroll in CAPS, notify the family of the provider’s decision to not enroll in CAPS and assist them with locating a program that is enrolled with CAPS.</p>
	<p>License-exempt – Includes Government owned and operated (Category 1) and Day camps (Category 7)</p> <p>(A) Review the exemption type and ensure care is only authorized within the exemption guidelines as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government owned and operated (category 1) programs that participate in CAPS are most commonly before and after care provided by local school systems. However, this exemption type also includes some full day programs (for example, child care programs operating during the customary school day on military bases or on college campuses). ○ Day camps (category 7) can only provide care for children five years of age and older when school is not in session. <p>(B) Determine if the provider is already enrolled in the CAPS program.</p> <p>(C) If the provider is not enrolled in CAPS, explain to the family that CAPS will contact the provider to start the enrollment process, but the provider may choose not to enroll in CAPS.</p>
	<p>Informal Providers</p> <p>(A) Determine if the family meets the criteria for using an informal provider (based on their verbal attestation).</p> <p>(B) Determine if the informal provider they selected is already enrolled in the CAPS program.</p> <p>(C) If the provider is not enrolled in CAPS, explain to the family that CAPS will contact the provider to start the enrollment process, but the provider may choose not to enroll in CAPS. Also, explain that the provider will not be eligible for payment from CAPS until all household members 17 years of age or older have completed background check requirements as prescribed in CAPS Health and Safety Standards Policy (CAPS/00-15).</p>
2	Determine the type of care needed.
3	Collect the provider rates for each child needing care and either save a copy of the rates in the electronic case record or enter rates and how they were obtained (e.g., KOALA, over the phone from the provider) in case notes.
4	Issue scholarships for 12 months of eligibility (or 90 days if grace period was provided) based on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider rate • CAPS payment zone • CAPS maximum reimbursement rate • Child’s age

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Step	CAPS Staff Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of care authorized <p>Note: For children in Georgia’s Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) custody who have been determined eligible for CAPS, CAPS will reimburse up to the provider’s published rate. For children with qualifying disabilities, CAPS will reimburse up to the provider’s published rate, but the family may be assessed a fee based on the family’s gross income. Refer to CAPS Family Fee Policy (CAPS/00-9) regarding when CAPS will assess family fees.</p>
5	Send the scholarships to the parent and the selected child care provider.
6	Document the case record with all actions and include copies of all correspondence between parent, child care provider, and CAPS staff.

Note: Do not expire or create multiple scholarships during the **eligibility period** for children due to:

- Age change (child turns 1 or 3)
- Temporary breaks in parent activity

In the situations above, no new scholarship is required until the family is re-determined for eligibility at the end of the 12-month eligibility period.

3.8 Notifications

All notifications of eligibility must be sent to the parent within one business day of the eligibility determination.

Changes that negatively impact the parent must include a 14-day adverse action period to allow for receipt and review and include a request for an administrative hearing.

- The change cannot take place prior to the end of the **service week** after the 14th day has expired.
- In cases where the action positively impacts the family unit, the change can take place on the 1st day of the next service week following the change.

When a case has been determined eligible and services have begun with a child care provider, the child care provider must also receive notice within one business day of the determination.

The child care scholarship will be generated through system automation.

- The scholarship will be forwarded to the child care provider and the parent no later than the 1st week of care and serve as authorization for child care services along with the [Disposition and Parent Information form \(Appendix L\)](#), or other system generated notice informing the parent of eligibility for CAPS.
- Any new child care scholarship will be forwarded to the child care provider and the parent within seven calendar days of the effective date of the new child care scholarship.

Note: All changes to the child care scholarship must comply with CAPS policy and changes must be documented by the CAPS staff member in the electronic case file.

3.9 Consumer Education

After an application has been approved, CAPS staff will provide the parent information on the following:

- Goals of the subsidy program
- Parent rights and responsibilities
- Types of child care **providers**
- Child care options, assessing quality, and **Quality Rated** providers
- Health and safety information and how to make a complaint concerning a child care provider

CAPS Procedure – Determination of Eligibility	No.: CAPS/01-3	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 05/01/2022
		Revision Effective: 05/01/2022

- Developmental screenings
- Child development
- Family engagement
- Healthy eating and physical activity
- State supports for social, emotional, and behavioral health of children
- Information about programs for children with disabilities
- Information about preschool special education and early intervention programs
- Other assistance programs for which families may be eligible
- Voter registration
- Family Support Guide ([Appendix AA](#))
- How to read a **child care scholarship**
- Requirements for signing their child in and out each day the child attends care
- Other child care resources

PROCEDURE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
03/26/2018	Removed references to Graduated Phase-out and income limits in section 3.7.
07/02/2018	Revised section 3.4 to reflect the limited scope of the interview and added section 3.9 regarding the Family Support welcome call.
10/01/2018	Revised section 3.4 to note that each family's circumstances must be assessed to determine if they meet eligibility for a priority group during the CAPS interview; added procedures for the 90-grace period for verification documents.
10/01/2019	Revised language to note that CAPS will provide 14 days' notice of adverse actions and renamed the section previously titled <i>Welcome Call</i> to <i>Consumer Education</i> .
05/15/2020	Revised language related to case dispositions and provider rate sheets. Added language related to eligible child care providers.
11/02/2020	Revised section 3.5.1 to note that families may be granted 90-day grace period for selecting a child care provider.
07/01/2021	Added language related to CAPS/Quality Rated milestones.
10/01/2021	Revised language to state the interview can be conducted via phone, in person, or virtually. Removed milestone language regarding CAPS/Quality Rated goal. Added additional information on Quality Rated can be viewed in the CAPS/Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements (Appendix II).
05/01/2022	Revised language to clarify how staff will confirm participation in a state-approved activity and hour requirement. Added language for calculating activity hours.

CAPS Procedure – Authorizations at Higher Rates	No.: CAPS/01-4	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2018
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2018

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99.

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Family Unit Policy (CAPS/00-5), CAPS Priority Groups Policy (CAPS/00-7)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

4 AUTHORIZATIONS AT HIGHER RATES

4.1 Purpose

The CAPS program provides increased financial support for children in DFCS custody and **children with disabilities** under specific conditions. The purpose of this procedure is to define the requirements and process for CAPS staff to authorize higher reimbursement rates for these children.

4.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL, on behalf of **parents**.

4.3 Authorizing CAPS for Children in Georgia DFCS Custody

4.3.1 Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Social Services Responsibilities

Georgia DFCS Social Services Staff determines the following:

- The risk level of each child in Georgia DFCS custody with a **Child Protective Service (CPS)** case.
- Whether the child is in imminent danger if he or she was to remain in the current living environment.
- If the need for care is due to a temporary emergency situation or if the need for care is regular and ongoing.

Note: Regular and ongoing care is defined as child care needed for a child placement of four (4) consecutive weeks or longer.

The Georgia DFCS Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) may submit a referral to CAPS when:

- On-going child care is needed rather than temporary or short term (less than 4 weeks) child care.
- Child care services are included in an open CPS case, safety/case plan, or court order and no other funding is available.
- The court orders child care services for the protection of the child.

4.3.2 CAPS Staff Responsibilities

Care may be authorized at rates higher than the state maximum reimbursement rate for children in DFCS custody.

After the SSCM completes and submits a [\(Child Welfare Child Care Services Referral From\)](#) or system generated referral to CAPS, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	When received, date stamp the Form 57 from the DFCS Social Services Case Manager; as well as, the copy of the case plan indicating child care is needed to support stabilization with the child's placement.
2	Review Form 57 or the system generated referral to ensure all required information is contained in order to determine eligibility for the case.
3	Using the information contained on Child Welfare Child Care Services Referral From, contact the child care provider listed to obtain a copy of the provider's published rates or have the provider complete a Provider Rate Sheet (Form 61) .

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		Revision Effective: 10/01/2018

Step	CAPS Staff Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The published rate is the cost of care that the child care provider distributes as public record and submits to the State Provider Management Agent (SPMA) as its typical cost of child care.
4	<p>Create a scholarship authorizing care beginning from the point at which the Form 57 was received by CAPS. If the child care provider's rate exceeds the state maximum reimbursement rate, authorize the scholarship at a rate that is equal to the child care provider's published rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the time-sensitive nature of DFCS custody cases, CAPS eligibility should be completed and scholarships issued within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the Child Welfare Child Care Services Referral Form.
5	Send a copy of the scholarship to the foster parent and child care provider.

Note: The Social Services and CAPS Staff must follow the same referral process for children in Georgia DFCS custody who are placed with a relative, Child Placement Agency (CPA), or family foster home.

4.4 Communicating Changes

4.4.1 Georgia DFCS Responsibilities

DFCS SSCM should notify CAPS within five (5) calendar days of all changes to the social service case via [Form 57](#) or system generated referral. Changes include, but are not limited to:

- Closure of the CPS case
- New placement for children in case
- Transfer of custody arrangements
- Changes in the CPS case plan

4.4.2 CAPS Staff Responsibilities

When notification of changes are received, complete the following within ten (10) calendar days:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Review the change received.
2	Determine if the family/child is eligible for on-going CAPS eligibility.
3	Expire and re-issue scholarships based on the new need for care.
4	Document the case activity log.

4.5 Authorizations for Children with Disabilities

4.5.1 CAPS Staff Responsibilities

Care may be authorized at rates higher than the state maximum reimbursement rate for children who have a disability that impacts their learning. Use guidelines located in the [CAPS Priority Groups Policy \(CAPS/00-7\)](#) to determine if the child meets CAPS requirements for the children with disabilities priority group.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	<p>Determine if the family meets eligibility for services for a child with a disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When eligibility is determined for the child with a disability, all siblings in the child's family unit may be authorized for care.

CAPS Procedure – Authorizations at Higher Rates	No.: CAPS/01-4	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
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		Revision Effective: 10/01/2018

Step	CAPS Staff Action
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the child care provider's rate exceeds the state maximum reimbursement rate for the child with a disability, authorize a scholarship that is equal to the provider's published rate. The published rate is the cost of care that the child care provider distributes as public record and submits to the SPMA as its typical cost of child care.
3	Issue scholarships for remaining children in the family unit as dictated by the need for care.

Note: If needed, child care may be provided for children with disabilities through the end of the certification period in which the child turns 18 years of age.

PROCEDURE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
10/01/2018	Revised language to clarify that care may be authorized at rates higher than the state maximum reimbursement rate for children in DFCS custody and children with disabilities for all provider types (including informal providers).

CAPS Procedure – Case Changes	No.: CAPS/01-5	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99.

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Purchase of Child Care thru Certificates Policy (CAPS/00-10), CAPS Case Change and Documentation Policy (CAPS/00-13), CAPS Redetermination Procedure (CAPS/01-6)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

5 CASE CHANGES

5.1 Purpose

At any time during the **eligibility period**, there may be changes in the circumstance of the **family unit** or child care arrangements that affect eligibility or benefits. The purpose of this document is to define the procedures to ensure case changes are processed according to **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** policy.

Note: Follow guidelines outlined in the [CAPS Case Change and Documentation Policy \(CAPS/00-13\)](#) for information about child care case changes.

5.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL, on behalf of **parents**.

5.3 Processing the Change

The change request must be completed within 14 **calendar days** from the date the request is received by CAPS.

Make every attempt to process the change as follows:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	<p>Initiate 3 separate contact attempts once the change request is assigned with the parent by phone, SMS text message, or email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) The first contact attempt must occur within 24 business hours. (B) The second contact attempt must occur within 48 business hours following the first contact attempt. (C) The third and final contact attempt must occur within 24 business hours following the second contact attempt. <p>Note: CAPS staff must document all details of each contact attempt in the case record.</p>
2	<p>If verification documents are needed to process the change, email the parent the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) detailing the documents needed to process the change request. Request that the parent submit all required documentation within 3 business days from the date on the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N).</p> <p>Note: due to the time allowed to submit verification documents, the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) must be emailed to the parent (if email is available). If email is not available, the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) must be mailed. The parent will have 7 calendar days from the mail date to submit verification documents.</p>
3	<p>Complete the change request by day 14.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) The change request will be withdrawn if the parent does not respond to CAPS after the third and final contact attempt or submit the requested documents by the verification documents due date.
4	<p>Notify parent of the change status or disposition by day 14.</p>

CAPS Procedure – Case Changes	No.: CAPS/01-5	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

Step	CAPS Staff Action
	Note: if staff are unable to process the change due to the parent failing to submit verification documents, the request will be withdrawn, and the parent will need to submit a new change request. Staff must inform the parent in writing of the need to submit a new change request.

5.4 Change in Child Care Provider

A parent may request a change in provider arrangements, including changes in providers or the location where care is given, or the need for care. Licensed providers must be a **Quality Rated Provider**, which includes providers who are Star Rated, in **CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status**, or in **CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status**. For additional information on Quality Rated refer to [CAPS Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements \(Appendix II\)](#).

When a parent requests a change in the provider arrangement, complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action					
1	Contact the parent to determine the following:					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>New provider selected?</th> <th>Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td> (A) Confirm the type of provider (i.e., licensed, license-exempt, or informal) (B) If the new provider is a licensed provider, confirm the provider is a Quality Rated Provider via the CAPS Workflow Portal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the licensed provider is a Quality Rated Provider, complete the steps in C through F below. ○ If the licensed provider is a Non-Quality Rated provider, complete the steps in “No/Non-Quality Rated Provider.” (C) Expire the scholarships at the previous child care provider. (D) Notify the previous child care provider using the Disposition and Parent Information Form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter indicating the last date of eligible payment. (E) Create the appropriate scholarship authorizing care with the new child care provider. (F) Notify the new child care provider using the Disposition and Parent Information Form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter of start of service. (G) Send copies of the new scholarships to the parent and new provider. (H) Proceed to Step 2. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>No/Non-Quality Rated</td> <td> (A) Inform the parent of the child care provider options available. (B) Refer parent to DECAL website to review provider type’s available, provider health and safety reports, and quality ratings. (C) Refer parent to ALLGAKIDS for possible referral. (D) Proceed to Step 2. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	New provider selected?	Action	Yes	(A) Confirm the type of provider (i.e., licensed, license-exempt, or informal) (B) If the new provider is a licensed provider, confirm the provider is a Quality Rated Provider via the CAPS Workflow Portal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the licensed provider is a Quality Rated Provider, complete the steps in C through F below. ○ If the licensed provider is a Non-Quality Rated provider, complete the steps in “No/Non-Quality Rated Provider.” (C) Expire the scholarships at the previous child care provider. (D) Notify the previous child care provider using the Disposition and Parent Information Form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter indicating the last date of eligible payment. (E) Create the appropriate scholarship authorizing care with the new child care provider. (F) Notify the new child care provider using the Disposition and Parent Information Form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter of start of service. (G) Send copies of the new scholarships to the parent and new provider. (H) Proceed to Step 2 .	No/Non-Quality Rated
New provider selected?	Action					
Yes	(A) Confirm the type of provider (i.e., licensed, license-exempt, or informal) (B) If the new provider is a licensed provider, confirm the provider is a Quality Rated Provider via the CAPS Workflow Portal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the licensed provider is a Quality Rated Provider, complete the steps in C through F below. ○ If the licensed provider is a Non-Quality Rated provider, complete the steps in “No/Non-Quality Rated Provider.” (C) Expire the scholarships at the previous child care provider. (D) Notify the previous child care provider using the Disposition and Parent Information Form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter indicating the last date of eligible payment. (E) Create the appropriate scholarship authorizing care with the new child care provider. (F) Notify the new child care provider using the Disposition and Parent Information Form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter of start of service. (G) Send copies of the new scholarships to the parent and new provider. (H) Proceed to Step 2 .					
No/Non-Quality Rated	(A) Inform the parent of the child care provider options available. (B) Refer parent to DECAL website to review provider type’s available, provider health and safety reports, and quality ratings. (C) Refer parent to ALLGAKIDS for possible referral. (D) Proceed to Step 2 .					
2	Document the case record of all actions taken.					

Note (1): A review for eligibility does not have to be completed for a case when there is a change in providers unless the **parent** also reports a change in circumstance that significantly impacts his/her eligibility. Reviews for on-going eligibility will be conducted at the annual redetermination or during reported case changes.

Note (2): When a **parent** initiates a change in providers without notifying CAPS and there is not a **child care scholarship** that authorizes subsidies with the new provider, the **parent** is responsible for the full cost of the child care. CAPS will not pay for services retroactively for any period prior to authorization. Refer to the [CAPS Purchase of Child Care through Scholarships Policy \(CAPS/00-10\)](#).

CAPS Procedure – Case Changes	No.: CAPS/01-5	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

5.5 Changes in Income

Parents may report when there are changes in family income; however, reporting shall be mandatory if the family income exceeds 85% SMI. Changes in income include reductions or increases in **earned income** or countable **unearned income** within the family unit.

5.5.1 Change Resulting in Positive Impact

If there is a reduction in the income of the family unit that results in a positive impact in services (e.g., reduced **family assessed fees** or reduced out of pocket expenses for the **parent**):

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Review the documents received to determine if the new income is correct. The case change must be made within 14 calendar days of the receipt of the change in income.
2	Expire and re-issue scholarships.
3	Send the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) to the parent and child care provider within one business day of the determination.
4	Change that positively impact families should be effective the first day of the new service week following the determination.
5	Document the case record of all actions taken.

5.5.2 Change Resulting in Negative Impact

If there is an increase in the income that results in a negative impact in services (i.e., increased family fees due to income, increased out of pocket expenses). The change must be reviewed.

- If the new income exceeds 85% of the **State Median Income (SMI)**, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Review the documents received to determine if the new income is correct.
2	Expire all scholarships and close the case.
3	Send the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) to the parent and child care provider within one business day of determination. Send the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action .
4	Terminate care no earlier than the end of the service week after the 14 th day has expired.
5	Document the case record of all actions taken.

- If it is determined that the family unit's **gross applicable income** remains at or below 85% of the SMI, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Document the case record, including capture of new income.
2	No further action is needed.

Note: All actions relating to increases in income below 85% SMI will be reviewed and implemented at redetermination. Refer to the [CAPS Redetermination Procedure \(CAPS/01-6\)](#) for more information.

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5.6 Changes in Activity

Parents may report when there are changes in activity. Changes in activity include breaks or loss of **employment**, school, training, or educational activity.

5.6.1 Temporary Change

Temporary change in activity is defined as any time-limited absence from work for an employed **parent** due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness; any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working; any student holiday or break for a **parent** participating in a training or educational program; any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program; any other time-limited cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 13 weeks.

If a temporary change in the **parent's employment**, school, training, or educational activity is reported, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Document the case record.
2	No further action is needed for temporary changes in activity. Care for children will continue during breaks to allow for continuity of services.

5.6.2 Non-temporary Change

Non-temporary changes in activity include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Loss of employment – supported by a separation notice or termination letter from employer
- Graduation from school or training program – supported by diploma, graduation certificate(s), graduation letter from program

If there is a change in activity due to a non-temporary change, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action						
1	Review the documents received to determine if the change is temporary or non-temporary. If the change is non-temporary, proceed to Step 2 below. If the change is temporary, document in the case record. No further action is needed for temporary changes in activity.						
2	<p>If the change is non-temporary, determine the number of weeks remaining in the eligibility period from the date the activity ended.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1354 1421 1732"> <thead> <tr> <th>Is there 13 weeks or more remaining in eligibility period from the date the activity ended?</th> <th>Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>(A) Proceed to Step 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>(A) Inform the parent that care can continue through the end of the current eligibility period and that at annual redetermination, the parent must meet applicable state-approved activity requirements. Adjust the family fee, if applicable. Document in the case record.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Is there 13 weeks or more remaining in eligibility period from the date the activity ended?	Action	Yes	(A) Proceed to Step 3	No	(A) Inform the parent that care can continue through the end of the current eligibility period and that at annual redetermination, the parent must meet applicable state-approved activity requirements. Adjust the family fee, if applicable. Document in the case record.
Is there 13 weeks or more remaining in eligibility period from the date the activity ended?	Action						
Yes	(A) Proceed to Step 3						
No	(A) Inform the parent that care can continue through the end of the current eligibility period and that at annual redetermination, the parent must meet applicable state-approved activity requirements. Adjust the family fee, if applicable. Document in the case record.						
3	Contact the parent to discuss job search as an allowed activity for up to 13 weeks from the date the activity ended.						
4	Send notification to the parent within one day of the confirmation of change. The notification must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued eligibility for up to 13 weeks for job search from the date the activity ended. 						

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		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

Step	CAPS Staff Action						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New scholarships detailing positive impacts to family's services (e.g., decrease in family fee allowing the family to realize cost savings). If the parent resumes participation in a state-approved activity at any level during the 13-week job search period, on-going child care can continue for the duration of the eligibility period. If the parent <i>does not</i> resume participation in a state-approved activity at any level during the 13-week job search period, the case will close at the end of the 13-week job search period. 						
5	<p>Three weeks prior to the end of the 13-week job search period, contact the parent to determine if care can continue.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participating in Employment or Approved Training?</th> <th>Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td> (A) Request the parent provide verifying documentation. (B) If the parent meets employment or training requirements, continue care at the existing level until case redetermination.. (C) If the parent does not meet employment or training requirements, proceed with the steps in the No section. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td> (A) If the parent has not resumed participation in a state-approved activity at any level during the 13-week job search period, the case should be closed. Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. The case cannot be terminated earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14th day. If the parent resumes and reports participation in a state-approved activity at any level prior to the last day of the 13-week job search period, on-going child care can continue for the duration of the eligibility period. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Participating in Employment or Approved Training?	Action	Yes	(A) Request the parent provide verifying documentation. (B) If the parent meets employment or training requirements, continue care at the existing level until case redetermination.. (C) If the parent does not meet employment or training requirements, proceed with the steps in the No section.	No	(A) If the parent has not resumed participation in a state-approved activity at any level during the 13-week job search period, the case should be closed. Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. The case cannot be terminated earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14 th day. If the parent resumes and reports participation in a state-approved activity at any level prior to the last day of the 13-week job search period, on-going child care can continue for the duration of the eligibility period.
Participating in Employment or Approved Training?	Action						
Yes	(A) Request the parent provide verifying documentation. (B) If the parent meets employment or training requirements, continue care at the existing level until case redetermination.. (C) If the parent does not meet employment or training requirements, proceed with the steps in the No section.						
No	(A) If the parent has not resumed participation in a state-approved activity at any level during the 13-week job search period, the case should be closed. Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. The case cannot be terminated earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14 th day. If the parent resumes and reports participation in a state-approved activity at any level prior to the last day of the 13-week job search period, on-going child care can continue for the duration of the eligibility period.						
6	Document the case record of all actions taken.						

5.7 Changes in Family Unit

Parents may report when there are changes in the family unit. Changes in the family unit may include:

- Addition of child(ren) (e.g., birth, adoption, or custody)
- Marriage
- Family unit member moves in or out of home
- Death of a member of the family unit

Changes in family unit composition can be supported by documents included but not limited to:

- birth certificates
- confirmation of birth from hospital
- adoption records
- death certificates
- marriage licenses
- divorce decrees

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- court documents

5.7.1 Change Resulting in a Positive Impact

If there is a change in the family unit that results in an immediate impact in services (e.g., birth of child requires increase in services for family), do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Review the documents received to determine if the new income is correct. The case change must be made within 14 calendar days CAPS receipt of the change in the composition of the family unit.
2	Complete the eligibility for new services and send the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) to the parent and child care provider within one business day of the determination.
3	Change that positively impact families should be effective the first day of the new service week following the determination.
4	Document the case record of all actions taken.

5.7.2 Change Resulting in Negative Impact

If there is a change that results in a negative impact in services (e.g., increase in family fees may cause more out of pocket expense to the family), the change must be reviewed. Complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Document the new change in the case record.
2	No further action is needed.

Note: All additional actions will be reviewed and implemented at redetermination. Refer to the [CAPS Redetermination Procedure \(CAPS/01-6\)](#) for more information.

5.8 Changes in Contact Information

Parents must report when there are changes in their contact information. This will allow for seamless on-going communication between the **parent** and CAPS. Changes in contact information may include:

- Phone
- E-mail
- Address

When changes in contact information is reported, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Update the case record/system to reflect the new contact information (including address, e-mail and phone).
2	If the family no longer resides in the state of Georgia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Close the case within one business day of the determination and expire all active scholarships. (B) Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. The case cannot be terminated earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14th day.
3	Document the case record of all actions taken.

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		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

5.9 Voluntary Closures

If the **parent** chooses to voluntarily withdraw from the CAPS program, written notification must be received. The [Voluntary Withdrawal Request \(Appendix M\)](#), or any other written request for voluntary withdrawal should include:

- Date
- Name of the child care provider
- Name of child(ren)
- Last desired date of service
- Reason for the withdrawal

When closing the child care case if the **parent** voluntarily withdraws, CAPS staff must do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Complete the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state-approved letter to notify the parent and child care provider of the case closure and indicate the last day CAPS will subsidize the cost of care. Note: The effective closure date on the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state-approved letter should be the same as the parent's written request.
2	Expire all active scholarships and close the case.
3	Document the case record of all actions taken.

5.10 Excessive Unexplained Absences

The following lists situations where excessive unexplained absences warrants action:

- A provider has provided information that a new **parent** has not utilized the child care scholarship within the first 30 calendar days of service.
- A provider has provided information that an existing child no longer attends the child care facility for a period of at least 30 calendar days.

When notification is received that a family has abandoned the CAPS program, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action						
1	<p>Make at least two attempts to contact the parent using each available communication channel (phone, mail, email) to determine if care is still needed.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1428 1421 1890"> <thead> <tr> <th>Care Still Needed</th> <th>Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td> (A) Review scholarships and re-issue as needed based on new need for care arrangement(s). (B) Provide notification to the parent and child care provider of new care arrangements. (C) Document the case record of all actions taken. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td> (A) Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state-approved letter at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. (B) Expire all active scholarships and close case no earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14th day. (C) Document the case record of all actions taken. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Care Still Needed	Action	Yes	(A) Review scholarships and re-issue as needed based on new need for care arrangement(s). (B) Provide notification to the parent and child care provider of new care arrangements. (C) Document the case record of all actions taken.	No	(A) Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state-approved letter at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. (B) Expire all active scholarships and close case no earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14th day. (C) Document the case record of all actions taken.
Care Still Needed	Action						
Yes	(A) Review scholarships and re-issue as needed based on new need for care arrangement(s). (B) Provide notification to the parent and child care provider of new care arrangements. (C) Document the case record of all actions taken.						
No	(A) Notify the parent and child care provider by sending the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state-approved letter at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action. (B) Expire all active scholarships and close case no earlier than the last day of the service week following the end of the 14th day. (C) Document the case record of all actions taken.						

CAPS Procedure – Case Changes	No.: CAPS/01-5	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

PROCEDURE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
07/02/2018	Revised section 5.5.1 to align with new definition of temporary change and section 5.9 to clarify that CAPS will make at least two attempts to contact parents prior to closing cases for abandonment.
07/01/2019	Revised language related to non-temporary changes in state-approved activity to limit job search as an allowed activity to parents with more than 13 weeks remaining in their current eligibility period. Removed the 13-week suspension period that previously followed job search for non-temporary changes in state-approved activity.
10/01/2019	Revised language to note that CAPS will provide 14 days' notice of adverse actions.
11/02/2020	Renamed abandonment to excessive unexplained absences.
07/01/2021	Added language, effective August 1, 2021, licensed providers must be a Quality Rated Provider, which includes providers who are Star Rated, in a Quality Rated Probationary Status, or in a Quality Rated Provisional Status.
10/01/2021	Added language on how to process changes. Removed milestone date regarding CAPS/Quality Rated goal. Added additional information on Quality Rated can be viewed in the CAPS/Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements (Appendix II).

CAPS Procedure – Redetermination	No.: CAPS/01-6	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6), CAPS Case Change and Documentation Policy (CAPS/00-13)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

6 REDETERMINATION

6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the procedure for determining ongoing eligibility for the **Child Care and Parent Services (CAPS)** program.

6.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL, on behalf of **parents**.

6.3 Annual Redetermination

- 6.3.1 As prescribed in [CAPS Priority Group Policy \(CAPS/00-7\)](#), priority group status is not required at annual redetermination. This applies to all children who receive CAPS, including those who were initially approved under the Children in DFCS custody priority group who have transitioned out of foster care during the eligibility period.
- 6.3.2 Although priority group status is not required at annual redetermination, all families should be screened for priority groups at annual redetermination to determine if the family qualifies for any applicable policy exceptions.
- 6.3.3 To complete the annual redetermination process, CAPS staff should do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Review applicable points of eligibility outlined in the CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6) . Parents shall not be required to re-verify circumstances that have already been verified and are not questionable or subject to change (e.g., identity, citizenship, social security numbers). (A) Families that identify with one of CAPS priority groups may need to provide supporting documentation to meet program eligibility.
2	Send the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) to the parent . (A) Send the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) no later than 45 calendar days before the end of the current eligibility period. (B) The Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) must include all information needed by CAPS to complete the parent's redetermination.
3	Give parent timely notice to comply with the requirements in the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) .
4	If the parent complies with all requirements in the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) , proceed with interview (Step 6).
5	If the parent does not respond, or does not comply with all requirements of the Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist (Appendix N) , contact the parent and follow up with a Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) to the parent and child care provider. (A) The Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) should be sent no later than 14 calendar days before the end of the current eligibility period.

CAPS Procedure – Redetermination	No.: CAPS/01-6	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

Step	CAPS Staff Action
	(B) The Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) must include at a minimum, any missing items needed to determine eligibility, the last date of CAPS service, and a request for administrative hearing notice.
6	Conduct an interview either by phone, in person, or virtually. Review points required during an interview in the CAPS Determination of Eligibility Procedures (CAPS/01-3) .
7	Determine continued eligibility. (A) Complete on-going eligibility prior to the end of the current eligibility period to avoid disruption of service/subsidy payments. (B) New scholarships for on-going eligibility must be sent to the parent and child care provider.
8	Document the case record of all actions taken.

6.3.4 If the **parent** does not submit all required documentation before the end of the eligibility period, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Close the case when the eligibility period ends.
2	Send the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state approved letter to the parent and child care provider.
3	Document the case record of all actions taken.

6.3.5 If the **parent** completes the interview process and it is determined that he/she remains **eligible**, do the following:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Update and document case record.
2	Create new scholarship that begins the Monday following the end of the previous scholarship. Note: Existing licensed providers who are not a Quality Rated Provider , which includes providers who are Star Rated, in CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status , or in CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status , cannot be issued any new scholarships. Families with existing scholarships at a Non-Quality Rated Provider must select a new provider. For additional information on Quality Rated refer to CAPS Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements (Appendix II) .
3	Provide the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) or other state-approved letter with a copy of the scholarship to the parent and child care provider.
4	Provide consumer education information to the family. The consumer education information will consist of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of the subsidy program • Parent rights and responsibilities • Types of child care providers • Child care options, assessing quality, and Quality Rated providers • Health and safety information and how to make a complaint concerning a child care provider • Developmental screenings • Child development • Family engagement • Healthy eating and physical activity • State supports for social, emotional, and behavioral health of children • Information about programs for children with disabilities

CAPS Procedure – Redetermination	No.: CAPS/01-6	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

Step	CAPS Staff Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about preschool special education and early intervention programs Other assistance programs for which families may be eligible Voter registration Family Support Guide (Appendix AA) How to read a child care scholarship Requirements for signing their child in and out each day the child attends care Other child care resources
5	Document the case record of all actions taken.

6.4 Income at Redetermination

At each annual redetermination period, the family income must be verified.

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Complete the same process for redetermination as for initial eligibility. Refer to the CAPS Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6) for eligibility requirements. Refer to Appendix A for the CAPS maximum income chart to ensure the family remains under the maximum income limit.
2	<p>(A) Once calculated, the family's gross applicable income is compared to the maximum allowable income chart (Appendix A).</p> <p>(B) The family remains eligible if the gross applicable income does not exceed the maximum allowable federal limit of 85% SMI for the family unit size. New scholarships can be issued for ongoing services.</p>
3	<p>If at any time during the eligibility period the family's gross applicable income exceeds 85% SMI for four consecutive weeks, the case must be closed. Complete the following steps:</p> <p>(A) Send the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) to the parent and the child care provider within one day of the determination and at least 14 calendar days prior to the effective date of the adverse action.</p> <p>(B) The Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) must contain, at a minimum, the reason for closure, the last date of CAPS subsidies, and the request for administrative hearing notice.</p>
4	Document the case record of all actions taken.

PROCEDURE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
03/26/2018	Removed reference to Graduated Phase-out and income limits in section 6.4.
10/01/2018	Added clarification that priority group status is not required at annual redetermination, but families should still be screened for priority groups at annual redetermination to determine if they qualify for any applicable policy exceptions.
10/01/2019	Revised language to note that CAPS will provide 14 days' notice of adverse actions.
07/01/2021	Added language, effective January 1, 2022, existing licensed providers who are not a Quality Rated Provider, which includes providers who are Star Rated, in a CAPS/Quality Rated Probationary Status, or in a CAPS/Quality Rated Provisional Status, cannot be issued any new scholarships.
10/01/2021	Added language that families who identify with one of CAPS priority groups at redetermination may need to provide supporting verification documents to meet program eligibility. Revised language to state the interview can be conducted via phone, in person, or virtually. Added language to note the family must

CAPS Procedure – Redetermination	No.: CAPS/01-6	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2021
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2021

Date	Description of Change
	be provided consumer education information if determined eligible for ongoing services. Removed milestone date regarding CAPS/Quality Rated goal. Added additional information on Quality Rated can be viewed in the CAPS/Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements (Appendix II).

CAPS Procedure – Hearing Requests	No.: CAPS/01-7	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 05/01/2022
		Revision Effective: 05/01/2022

LEGAL AUTHORITY: OCGA § 50-13-1 et seq., 7 CFR 226.6(k); Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99.

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Parent Rights and Responsibilities Policy (CAPS/00-3), CAPS Administrative Hearings Policy (CAPS/00-18), CAPS Determination of Eligibility Procedure (CAPS/01-3)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

7 HEARING REQUESTS FOR PARENTS

7.1 Purpose

Parents may disagree with eligibility determinations, income calculations, and/or claim establishments. In these instances, a **parent** may request an **administrative hearing** to allow an Administrative Law Judge to review the action and determine if the correct determination was reached. Certain actions are not subject to administrative hearings, including changes in federal law that affect entire populations, a **parent's** selection of a **provider** who has been dismissed from the **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** program, or lack of available funding. For a complete list of circumstances not subject to the administrative hearing process, please review Section 18.4.1 of CAPS policy, [Administrative Hearings \(CAPS/00-18\)](#).

Each request for an administrative hearing by a **parent** must be submitted in writing to CAPS. The purpose of this document is to define the procedure to be followed by CAPS staff when responding to hearing requests.

Note: This procedures document must be used in conjunction with CAPS policies and may not include all applicable state and federal laws. All parties who wish to receive subsidies through CAPS and those who are acting on behalf of the CAPS program, are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with all state and federal laws and regulations that govern this program.

7.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL, on behalf of **parents**.

7.3 Procedure

When a request for an administrative hearing by a **parent** is received, the CAPS staff will proceed with the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Contact the parent to determine if a resolution can be made prior to the hearing date. (A) If a resolution is reached, the parent must submit a written statement to withdraw the hearing request. Once the written statement is received, send it to Legal to continue hearing process. If a resolution is not reached, inform the parent the administrative hearing will proceed as requested.
2	When parents receive notification of an adverse action , they are allowed 14 calendar days to request an administrative hearing. If the parent has requested continued eligibility within the 14 calendar days, create scholarships of on-going eligibility until there is a disposition from OSAH.
3	File all documents in the case record .
4	Take no further action until notification or a decision from OSAH is received.
5	Update the case according of the decision from OSAH and provide notification to the parent of the hearing decision and agency action. (A) If the hearing results in closure of the case, provide timely notice to the parent and child care provider of the action taken. (B) If the hearing results in continued eligibility, provide notification, and scholarships of on-going services to the appropriate parties.

CAPS Procedure – Hearing Requests	No.: CAPS/01-7	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 05/01/2022
		Revision Effective: 05/01/2022

PROCEDURE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
10/01/2019	Revised language to note that CAPS will provide 14 days' notice of adverse actions.
05/01/2022	Removed language stating CAPS staff will complete and send the Office of State Administrative Hearing (OSAH) Form 1. This action is completed by DECAL Legal.

CAPS Procedure – Managing Program Integrity	No.: CAPS/01-8	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2019
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2019

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Federal Register: 45 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 98 and 99

Cross Reference/See Also: CAPS Parent Rights and Responsibilities Policy (CAPS/00-3), CAPS Application Process Policy (CAPS/00-4), CAPS Child Care Provider Rights and Responsibilities Policy (CAPS/00-12), CAPS Program Integrity Policy (CAPS/00-16), CAPS Administrative Hearings Policy (CAPS/00-18)

Note: Definitions of words or phrases in **bold** are located in [Definitions and Acronyms](#). Only the first occurrence of the defined words or phrases are bolded.

8 MANAGING PROGRAM INTEGRITY

8.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the procedures to be followed by CAPS staff related to ensuring program integrity. CAPS staff must ensure that eligibility is determined correctly for families receiving **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** subsidies. This is the first step in the prevention of improper payments. As the first line of contact for families, CAPS staff are vital in the prevention, detection, and reporting of activities that appear to be in violation of CAPS policy and **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)** regulations to ensure program integrity and the utilization of funds to families for which the program is intended to serve.

Note: This procedures document must be used in conjunction with CAPS policies and may not include all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and policies. All parties who wish to receive subsidies through CAPS and any party responsible for the administration of the CAPS program are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with all state and federal laws and regulations, including those found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR § 98) and policies that govern this program.

8.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of the **Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**, all parties responsible for the administration of the CAPS program, **parents**, and child care **providers** who receive subsidies administered by DECAL, on behalf of **parents**.

8.3 Types of Improper Payments

There are four types of errors which lead to improper payments: **administrative error (AE)**, **client error (CE)**, **provider error (PE)**, and **program violation (PV)**.

- Administrative errors (AE) are a result of an agency discrepancy where eligibility was determined incorrectly. In cases where the improper payment is completely based on an AE, the agency will not seek recoupment.
- Client errors (CE) are a result of the **parent's** unintentional submission or omission of documentation/verification that led to inaccurate determination of eligibility resulting in an improper payment. CEs may be pursued for recoupment.
- Provider errors (PE) are a result of the child care provider's unintentional submission or omission of documentation/verification that led to incorrect payment issuance resulting in an improper payment. PEs may be pursued for recoupment.
- Program violations (PV) are the result of an intentional act by the **parent** or child care provider to misrepresent/mislead by providing false documentation/verification or intentionally omitting documentation/verification in an effort to be determined **eligible** for services or payment. PVs may be considered **fraud** if established by a court of jurisdiction and DECAL may pursue any and all legal or equitable remedies available to the CAPS program in accordance with applicable state and federal laws or regulations to collect **overpayments** in full from **parents** and child care providers.

8.4 Maintaining Program Integrity

It is the responsibility of every CAPS staff member to minimize the opportunity for improper payments by performing their duties as outlined in CAPS policies and procedures. It is essential that staff fully understand these policies and procedures. Staff must make sure that **applications** and supporting documents (used to verify the information in the application) have been fully completed, properly signed, and dated. Any conflicting or missing information must be brought to the attention of the

CAPS Procedure – Managing Program Integrity	No.: CAPS/01-8	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 10/01/2019
		Revision Effective: 10/01/2019

parent or child care **provider** for clarification or completion. Thoroughly reviewing the **case record** and documents that verify the information in the case record prior to issuing a scholarship will aid CAPS in reducing errors and preventing misrepresentation.

CAPS staff will review the **parent’s** rights and responsibilities during the interview for initial enrollment and for each subsequent **eligibility period**, ensure the **parent** fully understands their rights and responsibilities as subsidy program participants, and document confirmation in the case activity log. The **parent’s** rights can be found in the [CAPS Parent Rights and Responsibilities Policy \(CAPS/00-3\)](#).

The **parent** provides information on the child care application as well as supporting documentation. Although the **parent** is the primary source of information and is fully responsible for it, verification of the information and documentation provided is sometimes necessary. Staff should verify questionable or inconsistent information when reviewing the child care application and supporting documentation. The signature page of the child care application gives CAPS the authority to investigate discrepancies. Internal methods of verification that may be used by CAPS staff include, but are not limited to: the Work Number (<https://www.theworknumber.com/>), Georgia Department of Labor **wage** and benefit information, available eligibility systems, or direct contact with the listed employer. Refer to the verification section of the [CAPS Application Process Policy \(CAPS/00-4\)](#) for additional information.

If there are inconsistencies in the verification submitted by the **parent** and the employer, educational institution, or internal methods of verification, the CAPS staff should take the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Contact the employer or educational institution to verify what was received.
2	Contact the parent to determine if additional documentation is needed to support documentation. (A) If documentation/verification continues to be inconsistent and eligibility cannot be verified, deny application for eligibility. (B) If documentation/verification can be confirmed, continue to process eligibility.
3	File all document and record all actions taken in the case record.

CAPS should ensure that child care providers fully understand their rights and responsibilities as subsidy program participants and this should be documented in the provider profile. Rights and responsibilities for child care providers are included throughout the CAPS policy and are listed in the [CAPS Child Care Provider Rights and Responsibilities Policy \(CAPS/00-12\)](#). It is the responsibility of the **State Provider Management Agent (SPMA)** to ensure that the provider understands and complies with the Provider Agreement as well as **sanctions** associated with non-compliance.

Program integrity also includes instances where intentional program violations are committed by CAPS staff or contractor staff. Every effort will be made to identify, detect, report, and take action against any individual found to have committed intentional violations against the CAPS program, up to and including, investigation, termination, and prosecution.

As prescribed in the Code of Ethics for Executive Branch Officers and Employees, all CAPS staff must make every effort to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. An appearance of conflict exists when a reasonable person would conclude from the circumstance that the employee’s ability to perform their job responsibilities is compromised by personal interests. An appearance of conflict could exist even in the absence of a true conflict.

To avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest, CAPS staff must recuse themselves from any proceeding in which the employee’s impartiality might reasonably be questioned. If CAPS staff determine that they should recuse themselves from a proceeding, they must immediately inform their manager who will re-assign that work to another staff member.

To further avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest, all CAPS cases where a DECAL employee is a member of the family unit must be brought to the attention of and overseen by a CAPS Manager. The CAPS Manager will assign the case to a CAPS Coordinator to process and the CAPS Manager will conduct a quality assurance review of that case to ensure accuracy.

CAPS Procedure – Managing Program Integrity	No.: CAPS/01-8	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
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8.5 Managing Program Integrity for Parents

8.5.1 Processing of Overpayments caused by Parents

CAPS staff will use guidelines above to determine errors that lead to improper payments in order to process overpayments when **parents** receive subsidy payments for which they were not eligible.

When an overpayment is identified for a **parent**, proceed with the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action for AE and CE Overpayments						
1	<p>After determining an overpayment has occurred due to an administrative error (AE) or client error (CE), use the Report of Claim Determination (Appendix P) and the Claims Determination Worksheet (Form 112A – 2nd page) to calculate the total amount of the overpayment.</p> <p>(A) If the overpayment results from an AE, document the case record and take no further action.</p> <p>(B) If the overpayment results from a CE and is:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Amount</th> <th>CAPS Staff Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than \$600</td> <td>Proceed to Step 2.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$600 or greater</td> <td>Refer the case to DECAL Audits and Compliance (See procedure 8.5.2 for the referral process).</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Amount	CAPS Staff Action	Less than \$600	Proceed to Step 2.	\$600 or greater	Refer the case to DECAL Audits and Compliance (See procedure 8.5.2 for the referral process).
Amount	CAPS Staff Action						
Less than \$600	Proceed to Step 2.						
\$600 or greater	Refer the case to DECAL Audits and Compliance (See procedure 8.5.2 for the referral process).						
2	Review with your supervisor as to the accuracy of the overpayment determination.						
3	Send the approved Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O) , or other system-generated notice to the parent notifying him/her of the established claim . Document the case record of actions taken.						
4	<p>If the parent does not complete and return the Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O) within 10 calendar days, the CAPS staff must:</p> <p>(A) Contact the parent to ensure the Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O) was received. If not received, verify current contact information and inform the parent of the information contained in the Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O).</p> <p>(B) If the Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O) was received and not submitted within 10 calendar days, take action to close the child care case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail the Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L), along with the original Form 111C or system-generated notice to the parent including 14 calendar days for adverse action. Include rights to an administrative hearing of the overpayment amount. Refer to Administrative Hearings Policy (CAPS/00-18) for procedures governing the administrative hearing process. 						
5	If the parent responds within 14 calendar days disputing the agency's findings, review the information provided and make a determination within 10 calendar days. Send the Child Care Claims and Collection Notice - Parent (Appendix Q) or system-generated notice to the parent .						
6	If the parent is a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicant/recipient , inform the TANF Family Independence CAPS staff that the parent is required to repay a claim for child care.						
7	Calculate the minimum amount the parent must pay each month by dividing the total claim amount by 12. The resulting amount is the minimum monthly payment owed by the parent .						
8	If the resulting amount poses a hardship on the parent , consult with your manager to determine if a renegotiation of the repayment statement to a lower amount can occur. Renegotiations can occur as long as the claim is paid in full within 24 months.						
9	<p>By the 5th business day after the claim has been processed, send completed copies of Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O), Report of Claim Determination (Appendix P), and the CAPS Claims Determination Worksheet (112A) or system-generated notice to DECAL :</p> <p>Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Financial Services – CAPS Claims</p>						

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Step	CAPS Staff Action for AE and CE Overpayments
	2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, East Tower, Suite 670 Atlanta, GA 30334
10	File a copy of each form in the parent’s electronic record and document all actions taken.

Note: If a **parent** files bankruptcy any notification of the bankruptcy must be sent to the DECAL legal staff responsible for processing.

8.5.2 Parent Referrals for Investigations and Program Violations

If the **parent** is suspected of a **program violation**, a determination of on-going eligibility must be made prior to referring the case to DECAL’s Audits and Compliance Division. All suspected program violations involving the **parent** must be referred to DECAL’s Audits and Compliance Division regardless of continued eligibility status and amount of the improper payment.

If it is determined that the **parent** is suspected of a CAPS program violation, complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action for PV Parent Overpayments								
1	Submit a completed referral to the DECAL Request for Investigation (Form 5667) to: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Office of Audits and Compliance 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE Suite 754-East Tower Atlanta, GA 30334 CAPS.Investigations@decals.ga.gov								
2	Document the case record including the date of referral.								
3	Take no further action until notification of a decision from the investigation is received.								
4	Update the case according to investigation results and provide notification to parent of the agency action. <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1157 1442 1472"> <thead> <tr> <th>Investigation Result</th> <th>CAPS Staff Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Establish claim</td> <td>Follow procedures outlined in procedure 8.5.1 (Processing of Overpayments caused by Parents) to establish the claim.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Continue Eligibility</td> <td>Provide the parent notification of on-going services.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Notice of Non-Compliance</td> <td>(A) Close the case. (B) Complete Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) and notify the parent and child care program, providing timely notice of case termination and last date of authorized services.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Investigation Result	CAPS Staff Action	Establish claim	Follow procedures outlined in procedure 8.5.1 (Processing of Overpayments caused by Parents) to establish the claim.	Continue Eligibility	Provide the parent notification of on-going services.	Notice of Non-Compliance	(A) Close the case. (B) Complete Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) and notify the parent and child care program, providing timely notice of case termination and last date of authorized services.
Investigation Result	CAPS Staff Action								
Establish claim	Follow procedures outlined in procedure 8.5.1 (Processing of Overpayments caused by Parents) to establish the claim.								
Continue Eligibility	Provide the parent notification of on-going services.								
Notice of Non-Compliance	(A) Close the case. (B) Complete Disposition and Parent Information form (Appendix L) and notify the parent and child care program, providing timely notice of case termination and last date of authorized services.								
5	Document the case record of all actions taken.								
6	DO NOT attempt to re-negotiate consent agreements or court orders obtained by DECAL’s Audits and Compliance Division.								

8.5.3 On-going Case Management for Active Cases with Claims

DECAL Financial Services office will recoup and track repayment of active cases with claims for CAPS **parents**. The **parent** may continue to receive services as long as agreed upon payments are received. If the **parent** stops making payments and the claim is not paid in full, he/she may be subject to sanctions, up to and including **suspension** and termination of child care services. Refer to [CAPS Program Integrity Policy \(CAPS/00-16\)](#) for additional information regarding sanctions for **parents**.

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8.5.4 Collection Procedures for Closed Parent Cases

If staff closes a CAPS case that has an outstanding claim, the **parent** maintains responsibility for repayment of the balance. CAPS staff must complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Send the Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O) to the parent for three consecutive months when the parent fails to make a payment on the claim.
2	No further collection attempts are necessary unless the parent reapplies for CAPS.
3	File any mail returned by the postal services in the parent's case record. Note: No further letters are to be sent unless a current address is obtained.
4	Document all actions taken in the case record.

If a new application is received from a **parent** with a previously established overpayment claim, staff must complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Contact and inform the parent of the outstanding balance of the previous claim.
2	If payments are not current, a new application should not be approved until all sanctions have been resolved and a new repayment agreement has been signed. Work with the parent to obtain a completed repayment agreement.
3	Instruct the parents to submit all payments for claims in the form of a cashier's check or money order to: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Financial Services – CAPS Claims 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive East Tower, Suite 670 Atlanta, GA 30334
4	Submit all forms (Child Care Repayment Statement - Parent (Appendix O) , Report of Claim Determination (Appendix P) , and CC Claims and Collection Notice Parental Authority (Appendix Q) or system generated notice) to the above address within five calendar days after the claim documents have been processed.

8.5.5 Procedure for Underpayments for Parents

When an **underpayment** for a **parent** is determined, complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	Determine what change caused the underpayment and make any necessary changes to prevent the continuance of an underpayment.
2	Determine the date the underpayment first occurred. (A) If the underpayment occurred more than 90 calendar days before discovery, take no further action. (B) If the underpayment occurred within 90 calendar days of discovery, proceed to Step 3.
3	Calculate the underpayment using CAPS Claims Determination Worksheet (Form 112A) or system-generated notice starting with the first week it occurred.
4	Authorize reimbursement of the underpayment using CAPS Claims Determination Worksheet (Form 112) or system-generated notice.
5	By the 5 th calendar day after the underpayment has been established, send completed copies of CAPS Claims Determination Worksheet (Form 112 & 112A) or system-generated notice to DECAL:

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Step	CAPS Staff Action
	Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Financial Services – CAPS Claims 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive East Tower, Suite 670 Atlanta, GA 30334
6	File a copy of each form in the parent’s case record.
7	Send CC Claims and Collection Notice Parental Authority (Appendix Q) or system-generated notice to the parent to notify him/her of the underpayment.
8	Document all actions taken in the case record.

8.6 Managing Program Integrity for Child Care Providers

8.6.1 Processing Improper Payments for Providers

Improper payments (overpayments and underpayments) may be discovered at multiple levels, either by DECAL staff, contractor staff, or may be reported by the general public. Child care provider overpayments can include administrative errors (AE), provider errors (PE), or program violations (PV). Upon receipt of information related to a possible improper payment or to determine if an improper payment has occurred, CAPS staff must determine whether the claim is an underpayment or overpayment and the type of error (AE, PE, or PV) that exists.

When there is an Administrative Error (AE) or Provider Error (PE) against a child care provider and the total of the claim is determined to be less than \$600, staff should complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action for AE and PE Overpayments						
1	Expire the incorrect scholarship.						
2	Create a scholarship with the correct payment amount for the remaining eligibility period if the parent remains eligible for on-going services.						
3	Determine the amount of the provider overpayment.						
4	<p>(A) If the overpayment results from an AE, document the case record and take no further action.</p> <p>(B) If the overpayment results from a PE and is:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="337 1354 1421 1528"> <thead> <tr> <th>Amount</th> <th>CAPS Staff Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than \$600</td> <td>Proceed to Step 5.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$600 or greater</td> <td>Refer the case to DECAL Audits and Compliance Unit (See procedure 8.6.2 for the provider referral process).</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Amount	CAPS Staff Action	Less than \$600	Proceed to Step 5.	\$600 or greater	Refer the case to DECAL Audits and Compliance Unit (See procedure 8.6.2 for the provider referral process).
Amount	CAPS Staff Action						
Less than \$600	Proceed to Step 5.						
\$600 or greater	Refer the case to DECAL Audits and Compliance Unit (See procedure 8.6.2 for the provider referral process).						
5	Send notification using the system functionality to the SPMA detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name and demographic information of child care provider Type of improper payment (PE) Amount of improper payment Dates improper payment occurred Certificate/child demographic information included in the improper payment 						
6	Submit copies of all documentation that supports the findings and cause of the overpayment to the SPMA.						
Step	State Provider Management Agent (SPMA) Action for PE less than \$600						
1	The SPMA will review notification received from CAPS to determine claim and supporting information.						

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Step	CAPS Staff Action for AE and PE Overpayments
2	<p>Send notice to child care provider detailing the claim amount, repayment options, and right for an administrative hearing.</p> <p>(A) If the provider does not return the request for appeal within ten calendar days, the SPMA will take actions to begin recoupments of future payments.</p> <p>(B) If the provider submits request for appeal, the SPMA will forward hearing request to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Ira Sudman, Chief Legal Officer 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, East Tower, Suite 754 Atlanta, GA 30334</p>
3	If the child care provider agrees with the determination of the improper payment, the SPMA will begin processing recoupment and collection of funds from future payments.

8.6.2 Child Care Provider Referrals for Investigations and Program Violations (PV)

A referral to DECAL Audits and Compliance Unit will be made in the following instances:

- When a PE results in an overpayment of \$600 or more within a three-year period or less
- Any and all program violations

When it appears that a child care provider may have provided false or misleading information in order to receive funds or that there has been a program violation involving CAPS, staff complete the following steps:

Step	CAPS Staff Action
1	If the violation involves a CAPS, DFCS or DECAL staff member, contact must be made to CAPS within one business day of determination. Information can be provided via email to caps.complaints@decalfga.gov or by calling 1-833-4GACAPS (1-833-442-2277). All information received will remain confidential.
2	<p>Send a referral to the DECAL Audits and Compliance Unit by completing the Request for Child Care Provider Investigation Form (Appendix V) and routing the form to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Office of Audits and Compliance 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE Suite 754-East Tower Atlanta, GA 30334 CAPS.Investigations@decalfga.gov</p>
3	Document the provider activity log and include the date of referral.
4	If the case is being referred to DECAL’s Audits and Compliance Division, there should be no attempt to negotiate a repayment agreement or contact the parent or child care provider regarding the investigation.

During a DECAL Audits and Compliance investigation:

- The Audits and Compliance Examiner will give the child care provider 15 calendar days from receipt of notice to respond to any request for records via mail. The examiner will review all requested documents and determine if a claim exists.
- If the child care provider does not comply with any requests or fails to provide documents to support requests for payment, the DECAL Audits and Compliance Examiner will notify them of the repayment options and any future sanctions that may be imposed.
- The results of the investigation will be sent to the SPMA and copied to the DECAL Adverse Action and Claims unit. The SPMA is responsible for pursuing, collecting, tracking, and reporting claims negotiated by DECAL Audits and Compliance for child care program violations.

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Failure to comply with an investigation may result in further sanctions imposed by the CAPS program, up to and including any and all legal remedies available to DECAL.

Note: Claims brought against child care providers due to program violations should not be terminated until the claim is paid in full. Claims should be documented in the child care provider’s record for collection processes even if the provider no longer receives CAPS subsidies or is no longer operating. In these cases, payments for claims can be processed manually. Cases for child care providers should not be closed until the investigations have been completed and all overpayments are paid in full.

8.6.3 Processing Claims for Child Care Provider Repayment Agreements

The SPMA is responsible for recouping claims and managing any monies related to an improper payment when the claim is the result of a PE or PV of a child care provider.

Child Care Claims and Repayment Statement, CAPS Claims Determination Worksheet, Child Care Claims, and Collection Notice, or system-generated forms/notices are required for claims entered in the **State Provider Management System (SPMS)**.

The SPMA is responsible for:

- Negotiating a repayment agreement for claims not processed through Audits and Compliance
- Conveying a child care provider’s right to an appeal of the claim amount
- Establishing offsets for child care provider claims that are substantiated (either through the appeals process or by voluntary participation by the child care provider)
- Notifying the child care provider of any action taken on the claim (e.g., claims notification, payment schedule, claim balance, etc.)
- Collecting claims and tracking the amount paid and balance due for each Claim
- Notifying inactive child care providers of requirements for on-going manual payments
- Reporting the status of the claim

Note: If the child care provider stops caring for children receiving CAPS subsidies, the state SPMA will send Child Care Claims and Collection Notice or system-generated letter to the child care provider to pursue the claim for three consecutive months, at which time DECAL will seek all available legal remedies to pursue collections. The child care provider will be flagged in the system to trigger offsets of substantiated claims if the child care provider becomes active in the future.

8.6.4 Procedure for Underpayments for Child Care Providers

Underpayments to child care providers may occur for various reasons, including but not limited to data entry errors, incorrect assessment in the level of the need for care, incorrect start dates for care, and incorrect type of care authorized. Reasons for underpayment will result in an incorrect amount authorized or an issue with the child care provider’s submission of under-billed **service weeks**.

There are two possible scenarios where a child care provider may be under paid.

<i>Scenario 1</i>	Step	CAPS Staff Action
<i>Incorrect amount authorized on scholarship.</i>	1	Determine the date the underpayment first occurred. (A) If the underpayment occurred more than 90 calendar days before discovery, take no further action. (B) If the underpayment occurred within 90 calendar days of discovery, proceed to Step 2 .
	2	Expire the first scholarship using the Sunday of the last paid service week.
	3	Send a system alert or e-mail to the SPMA that indicates the child care provider was underpaid for service week(s) and the amount underpaid for each week. (This should be the difference between old and new amounts to provider.)

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<i>Scenario 1</i>	Step	CAPS Staff Action
	4	Create a new scholarship for eligibility for on-going services with the correct rate.
	5	Document all actions taken in the case record.

<i>Scenario 2</i>	Step	CAPS Staff Action
<i>Provider A submitted invoice for “No Care” because child was actually attending at Program B. Provider B never received payment for services and the family remained eligible.</i>	1	Determine the date the underpayment first occurred. (A) If the underpayment occurred more than 90 calendar days before discovery, take no further action. (B) If the underpayment occurred within 90 calendar days of discovery, proceed to Step 2 .
	2	Expire the scholarship for Provider A using the Sunday of the last paid service week.
	3	Create scholarship for Provider B for the correct eligibility period.
	4	Send a system alert to the SPMS to inform them of the need for review and payment processing on the occasional scholarship .
	5	Document all actions taken in the case record.

Note: The SPMA will review and issue underpayment for the service week(s) to Provider B.

PROCEDURE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
07/02/2018	Revised to indicate that DECAL will not seek recoupment for any claims based completely on administrative error. Previously, DECAL would seek recoupment if the claim based completely on administrative error exceeded \$600.
02/01/2019	Changed the name of this policy from “Managing Improper Payments and Program Violations” to “Managing Program Integrity.”
10/01/2019	Added language related to conflicts of interest and revised language to note that CAPS will provide 14 days’ notice of adverse actions.

APPENDICES AND FORMS

Appendix	Form Number	Form Name
Appendix A		CAPS Maximum Income Limits Chart
Appendix B		Save Verification Process
Appendix C		Maximum Reimbursement Rate Chart
Appendix D		Family Fee Assessment Chart
Appendix E		Record Keeping Procedures for CAPS Case Files
Appendix F		Employment Verification
Appendix G	Form 1	OSAH Administrative Hearing Form 1
Appendix H	Child Welfare Child Care Services Referral From	Social Services DFCS Custody Referral
Appendix I	Form 58	Informal Provider Enrollment
Appendix J	Form 60	CAPS Child Care Application
Appendix K	Form 61	Provider Rate Sheet
Appendix L	Form 62	Disposition and Parent Information
Appendix M	Form 64	Voluntary Withdrawal by Parent
Appendix N	Form 66	Appointment Letter and Verification Checklist
Appendix O	Form 111 (C & P)	Repayment Statement (Parent and Provider)
Appendix P	Form 112	Report of Claim Determination Worksheet
Appendix Q	Form 113 (C & P)	Child Care Claims and Collection Notice (Parent and Provider)
Appendix R	Form 114 (C & P)	Hardship Repayment Request (Parent and Provider)
Appendix S	Form 600	CAPS Referral for Georgia's Pre-K Program
Appendix T	Form 633	Informal Provider Monitoring Checklist
Appendix U	Form 704	Civil Rights Compliance for Child Care Providers
Appendix V	Form 5667 & 5776B	Request For Investigation (Parent and Provider)
Appendix W	Form W-9	IRS Taxpayer Identification Form
Appendix X		Uniform Accounting System (UAS) Code Listing
Appendix Y	Form 601	Child Care Provider Agreement
Appendix Z	Form 602	Family Asset Certification
Appendix AA		CAPS Consumer Education Guide
Appendix BB		Hope Scholarship Eligible Institutions
Appendix CC		Self-employment Report
Appendix DD		Education and Training Verification
Appendix EE		Statement of Guardianship
Appendix FF		TANF Referral for Child Care
Appendix GG		Exempt Provider Monitoring Checklist
Appendix HH		Health and Safety Standards for Informal Providers
Appendix II		CAPS Quality Rated Guidelines and Requirements