



**CHILDCARE AND PARENT SERVICES (CAPS)
Georgia's Subsidy Program**

CAPS Policy – Case Changes and Documentation	No.: CAPS/00-13	Effective Date: 10/01/2016
		Revised: 11/02/2020
		Revision Effective: 11/02/2020

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 Eligibility Requirements Policy (CAPS/00-6), CAPS Income Calculations Policy (CAPS/00-8), CAPS Purchase of Child Care through Scholarships Policy (CAPS/00-10)

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.

13 CASE CHANGES AND DOCUMENTATION

13.1 Purpose

At the time of **application** and redetermination, **parents** are notified of the importance of reporting changes in family circumstances or child care **providers**. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines on what changes should be reported to the **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** program and provide details on situations that require case changes.

13.2 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.

13.3 Case Management Best Practices and Responsibilities

CAPS staff should provide the highest quality of customer service to both internal and external customers. All documentation required to verify changes in case status must be acquired, filed, and documented in the **case record**. CAPS staff must ensure that all data entered in CAPS systems are accurate and current.

13.4 Change in Family Circumstances

13.4.1 The CAPS case may be reviewed when there is a change in the family's circumstances. Some changes, while not required to be reported, will result in an increased benefit for the family by reporting them.

13.4.2 The following is a list of changes that the parent may, but is not required to, report:

- Change in family's income if **gross applicable income** remains at or below 85% of the current **State Median Income (SMI)**
- Child birth, adoption, or addition of a new child
- Marriage
- Change in state-approved activity that is temporary and the activity may resume

13.4.3 The following is a list of changes that the parent is required to report within 10 **calendar days** of becoming aware of the change:

- Change in family's **gross applicable income** where the income is above 85% SMI for a minimum of four consecutive weeks

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- Change in activity that is not temporary (e.g., loss of **employment**, graduation from school or training activity)
- Request for change in child care provider
- Any change in child care arrangements (including child care provider’s location, relationship of the provider and the child, cost, or need for care).
- There is no longer a need for CAPS services
- Family moves out of the state of Georgia
- Change in contact information (e.g., phone number, email address, mailing address)

13.5 Changing Child Care Providers

13.5.1 When choosing to change child care providers, the parent must notify CAPS. Scholarships with the previous child care provider must be expired and scholarships must be authorized and issued to the new provider.

13.5.1.1 Whenever possible, services at the new provider should start at the beginning of a new **service week**. If care at a new provider is needed any time after the service week has begun, payments should reflect authorization based on services provided. If a child attends more than one provider during the service week based on the change, payment can be authorized for both the old and new provider, as long as the child attended at least one day of service.

13.5.2 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.

13.5.3 **Registration fees for provider changes:** The CAPS program will only pay one registration fee per calendar year per child per unique provider. CAPS does not pay registration fees for care authorized in informal provider settings.

Note: CAPS does not pay for other costs, including but not limited to, transportation, meals, activity fees, or book fees that are separate from the weekly rates established by the provider.

13.6 Non-temporary change in state-approved activity

13.6.1 CAPS parents who permanently lose their employment or stop attending education/training programs 13 weeks or more prior to the end of their current eligibility period will be allowed job search as an approved activity for 13 weeks from the date the activity ended.

13.6.1.1 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 existing eligibility period.

13.6.1.2 If the parent does not 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.

13.6.2 CAPS parents who permanently lose their employment or stop attending education/training programs with 12 weeks or less remaining in their current eligibility period will remain eligible for on-going childcare through the end of their current eligibility period. At annual redetermination, the parent must meet applicable state-approved activity requirements.

13.7 Case Suspensions

The term **suspension** shall apply when a case is active but there are no active scholarships.

13.7.1 CAPS cases may be suspended for the following reasons:

Suspension Reason	Description
Child not in Care	When a child will not be in care for an extended period of time, the case may be suspended.

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Suspension Reason	Description
	<p>A. Absenteeism of the child may include: vacation, extended illness, or other extenuating circumstances.</p> <p>B. Suspension for children not in care should not extend beyond three weeks per eligibility period.</p>
Parent Request	<p>Cases may be suspended at the request of the parent.</p> <p>A. Suspension by request should not extend beyond 12 weeks per eligibility period.</p> <p>B. Reasons a parent may request a case suspension include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place of employment or educational program is seasonally closed (e.g., public school employees and students) • Maternity leave after the birth or adoption of a child

13.7.2 When the child care case is suspended, the case will remain open; however, CAPS will not make subsidy payments.

13.7.3 The parent must be informed, and the child care provider notified that any charges during the time CAPS does not make subsidy payments are to be negotiated between the parent and the provider.

13.7.4 In the case of all suspensions, the parent must contact CAPS to have their case reinstated.

13.8 Case Closures

13.8.1 There are instances where the CAPS case may be closed during the eligibility period. When the CAPS case is being closed, the parent and the child care provider will be notified no later than 14 calendar days prior to the closure.

13.8.2 The following is a list of reasons for CAPS case closures:

- The family’s income exceeds 85% of the current SMI for a period of four or more consecutive weeks.
- There has been a **program violation** and the **sanction** is closure of the child care case.
- The parent voluntarily withdraws from the CAPS program.
- There are excessive unexplained absences, and the parent cannot be reached using the most recently provided contact information. Excessive unexplained absence occurs when it is confirmed that CAPS subsidies have not been used by the parent for authorized children, with no contact or previous notification of absence, for a period of at least 30 calendar days. CAPS will attempt to contact parents through each communication channel available (phone, mail, and email) at least two times prior to closing their case for excessive unexplained absences.
- The parent fails to respond to or honor the Child Care Claim and Repayment Statement, or the parent fails or refuses to cooperate with an investigation conducted by DECAL investigative staff.
- The family has moved out of the state of Georgia.

13.9 Eligibility Case Records

13.9.1 The CAPS program will maintain ongoing records regarding the parent’s eligibility and participation in the program until the closure of the case and for a minimum of three years thereafter.

13.9.2 The case records will include all verification used to determine eligibility, as well as notes, written records, system records, forms, and documentation from the CAPS program regarding the parent’s participation in eligibility.

13.9.3 Cases where there is an active **claim**, on-going investigation, or outstanding hearing must be held until the claim has been satisfied, the investigation has been dispositioned, or the hearing process has been completed.

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POLICY REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description of Change
03/26/2018	Changed 50% SMI to 85% SMI in section 13.4, related to income changes PA is required to report.
07/02/2018	Added statement that CAPS will attempt to contact parental authorities at least two times prior to closing their case for abandonment.
10/19/2018	Removed a change in child’s citizenship status from the list of changes parental authorities are required to report.
07/01/2019	Revised language to clarify that CAPS will pay one registration fee per child per unique provider per calendar year. Revised language related to non-temporary changes in state-approved activity to limit job search as an allowed activity to parental authorities 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.
11/02/2020	Renamed abandonment to excessive unexplained absences.