ILLINOIS STATE FACT SHEET

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

CHILD CARE

Implementing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization in Illinois Requires Policy Changes and New Resources

May 2015

In November 2014, Congress reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) with strong bipartisan support. The legislation aims to ensure the health and safety of children in child care settings, improve the quality of care, and make it easier for families to get and keep child care assistance. Yet, unlike previous reauthorizations, this law was not accompanied with a guarantee of new federal funds. Significant new federal and state resources will be essential for states to fully comply with the law's new requirements without further reducing assistance to children. The number of children receiving child care assistance nationwide in 2013 was the lowest since 1998. **From 2006 to 2013 alone, approximately 29,000 children in Illinois lost child care assistance.**[1]

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of selected provisions of the CCDBG reauthorization and Illinois's current policies in related areas, based on the most recently available data. However, it provides only a partial picture of the policy changes and resources required of states to fully implement the law, since state data regarding many important provisions are not available. Even for those provisions that are included in this fact sheet, the information available about state policies may not completely align with the law's requirements; therefore, a checkmark beside a particular requirement below does not guarantee the state's full compliance with that requirement as written in the law.

The CCDBG reauthorization will impact children and families in all care settings, although some provisions apply differently for various types of providers. **Of the children who received CCDBG assistance in 2013 in Illinois, 39 percent were cared for in licensed or regulated child care centers, 20 percent were cared for in licensed or regulated family child care homes, 2 percent were cared for in licensed or regulated group homes, and 37 percent were cared for by license-exempt providers (including 14 percent by relatives and 5 percent by non-relatives in a family home, 14 percent in a child's home and 4 percent in a child care center).**[2]

Eligibility Redetermination

A key goal of the CCDBG reauthorization is to make it easier for families to get and keep child care assistance, supporting more stable employment for parents and more continuous child care for children. Among the provisions that support this goal:

Select Child Care Policy	State Policy
Once a child has been determined eligible, states must consider the child eligible for a period of at least 12 months before a redetermination, regardless of temporary changes in the parent's employment status or participation in education or training, as long as family income does not exceed 85 percent of state median income (SMI).	☒ Illinois does not offer 12-month eligibility for child care assistance.[3]
At redetermination, states must provide for the graduated phase out of assistance for eligible children whose family income has exceeded the state's eligibility threshold but remains below 85 percent of SMI. States may comply by having an income eligibility threshold at redetermination that is higher than that for initial eligibility (commonly known as tiered income eligibility).	☒ Illinois does not have tiered income eligibility for child care assistance.[4]

Other Key Provisions on Family-Friendly Policies:

- States may not terminate child care assistance based on parental job loss or cessation of education or training unless they continue assistance for at least three months to provide time for job search.
- States must make efforts to ensure that the redetermination process does not unduly disrupt parents' work, education, or job training.
- States must make efforts to increase the supply and improve the quality of care for children in underserved areas, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children who receive care during non-traditional hours and to promote access to child care assistance for homeless families.
- States must provide comprehensive consumer education to parents on their child care options, the quality of child care, the availability of child care assistance and other early learning programs, and how to obtain a developmental screening for their children.

Background Check Requirements

The reauthorization law has provisions designed to ensure the safety of children in care, including by requiring all licensed and regulated child care providers and license-exempt providers receiving CCDBG funds (except for relatives), and anyone with unsupervised access to children while they are in care, to undergo comprehensive background checks to maintain employment. States must have the reauthorization's background check requirements in place by September 30, 2017.

Provisions on background checks include:

Select Child Care Policy	State Policy
Providers must request background checks prior to hiring prospective staff members, and at least once every five years for all staff members.	☑ Illinois conducts comprehensive background checks for licensed child care centers.[5] ☑ Illinois conducts comprehensive background checks for licensed small family child care homes.[6] ☑ Illinois conducts comprehensive background checks for license-exempt family child care providers receiving child care assistance.[7]

Health, Safety, and Fire Inspections

The law also includes provisions to protect children's health and safety by requiring annual inspections of child care providers. States must conduct a pre-licensure inspection and an unannounced annual inspection for all regulated and licensed providers receiving CCDBG funds, and one annual inspection for license-exempt providers (except providers related to all children in their care) receiving CCDBG funds. By November 19, 2016, states must have policies and practices in place for enforcing licensing and other regulatory requirements and by November 19, 2017, states must make public the results of monitoring and inspection reports about provider violations of CCDBG and state child care policies.

Select Child Care Policy	State Policy
States must conduct one pre-licensure inspection for licensed providers.	☑ Illinois meets requirement for child care centers.[8] ☑ Illinois meets requirement for family child care.[9]
States must conduct annual unannounced inspections for licensed providers.	☑ Illinois meets requirement for child care centers.[10] ☑ Illinois meets requirement for family child care.[11]
States must make full inspection reports available online.	☒ Illinois does not publish full report.[12]

Other Key Provisions on Health and Safety in Child Care:

- States must establish qualifications and training for licensing inspectors and maintain a sufficient number of inspectors to conduct timely inspections.
- States must establish health and safety standards in a number of specific areas (such as safe sleep practices and preparation for emergencies and disasters) and mandate pre-service or orientation and ongoing training for child care providers serving children receiving CCDBG assistance.

Group Size

The law encourages states to take steps to improve the quality of child care through stronger standards as well as other strategies. For example, CCDBG requires states to determine group size limits for children of different ages.

Select Child Care Policy	State Policy
States must set group size limits for all age populations.	☑ Illinois sets group size limits for every age five and younger.[13]

Other Key Provisions on Child Care Quality:

- States must increase the amount of their CCDBG funds set aside for quality improvement activities, from 4 percent in FY 2015 to 7 percent in FY 2016 and FY 2017; 8 percent in FY 2018 and FY 2019; and 9 percent in FY 2020 and each year thereafter.
- In addition to the overall quality set-aside funds, beginning in FY 2017, states must reserve 3 percent of their CCDBG funds for activities to improve the quality and supply of care for infants and toddlers.
- States must establish a progression of professional development designed to improve the skills and knowledge of the child care workforce and set training requirements that enable providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children.
- States must certify that payment practices for child care providers serving children who receive CCDBG assistance reflect generally accepted payment practices for providers serving children who do not receive such assistance.

1 Hannah Matthews and Stephanie Schmit, Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Participation Continues to Fall, CLASP, 2014, http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CCDBG-Participation-2013-Factsheet-1.pdf.
2 Data for 1% of children in Illinois were invalid or not reported. Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, FY 2013 Preliminary Data Table 6: Average Monthly Percentages of Children Served in All Types of Care, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/fy-2013-ccdf-data-tables-preliminary-table-6.
3 Sarah Minton, Christin Durham, and Linda Giannarelli, *The CCDF Policies Database Book of Tables: Key Cross-State Variations in CCDF Policies as of October 1, 2013*, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/ccdf_final_2.pdf. The information shown here indicates whether the state gives 12-month eligibility to at least some families; however, it does not indicate whether the state meets the reauthorization law's requirements for *continuous* 12-month eligibility.
4 Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, *Turning the Corner: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2014*, National Women's Law Center, 2014, http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/nwlc_2014statechildcareassistancereport-final.pdf. States may also meet the CCDBG requirement for the graduated phase out of care in ways other than tiered eligibility.
5 Child Care Aware of America, *We Can Do Better: Child Care Aware® of America's Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulations and Oversight*, 2013, http://www.naccrra.org/about-child-care/state-child-care-licensing/background-checks. A state only receives a checkmark here if it conducts five background checks for centers: federal fingerprints, state fingerprints, criminal record check, child abuse registries, and sex offender registries.
6 Child Care Aware of America, unpublished data, updated November 2013. A state only receives a checkmark here if it conducts five background checks for small family child care homes: federal fingerprints, state fingerprints, criminal record check, child abuse registries, and sex offender registries. Small family child care homes are defined as homes where up to six children are cared for in the home of the provider for compensation. The state may have different policies for registered family child care homes that are not licensed.
7 Child Care Aware of America, unpublished data, updated November 2013. A checkmark indicates the state conducts five background checks for license-exempt providers: federal fingerprints, state fingerprints, criminal record check, child abuse registries, and sex offender registries. License-exempt providers are defined as home-based providers who are certified as eligible to receive subsidy payments but not required to be licensed by the state.
8 National Association for Regulatory Administration, *The 50-State Child Care Licensing Study: 2011-2013 Edition*, 2013, http://www.naralicensing.org/Resources/Documents/2011-2013_CCLS.pdf.
9 National Association for Regulatory Administration, *The 50-State Child Care Licensing Study: 2011-2013 Edition.* A state only receives a checkmark here if it inspects *both* small family child care homes and large/group family child care homes.
10 National Association for Regulatory Administration, *The 50-State Child Care Licensing Study: 2011-2013 Edition*.
11 National Association for Regulatory Administration, *The 50-State Child Care Licensing Study: 2011-2013 Edition*. A state only receives a checkmark here if it conducts unannounced inspections of *both* small family child care homes and large/group family child care homes.
12 National Association for Regulatory Administration, *The 50-State Child Care Licensing Study: 2011-2013 Edition*.
13 Child Care Aware of America, *We Can Do Better*. A state receives a checkmark here if it regulates group size for every age population five and younger as defined by the state. While the CCDBG law requires regulation of group size for children of all ages, state data are not available for school-age care.