



CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN FOR:

North Dakota

FFY 2010-2011

This Plan describes the CCDF program to be conducted by the State/Territory for the period 10/1/09 – 9/30/11. As provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations, the Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including changing the options selected or described herein.

The official text of the applicable laws and regulations govern, and the Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to them regardless of the fact that, for purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 162.5 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Form ACF 118 Approved OMB Number: 0970-0114 expires 04/30/2012

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AMENDMENTS LOG

**CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN FOR: NORTH DAKOTA
 FOR THE PERIOD: 10/1/09 – 9/30/11**

Lead Agencies must submit plan amendments within 60 days of the effective date of an amendment (§98.18 (b)).

Instructions for Amendments:

- 1) Lead Agency completes the first 3 columns of the Amendment Log and sends a photocopy of the Log (showing the latest amendment sent to ACF) and the amended section(s) to the ACF Regional Office contact. Lead Agency also should indicate the Effective Date of the amended section in the footer at the bottom of the amended page(s). A copy of the Log, showing the latest amendment pending in ACF, is retained as part of the Lead Agency's Plan.
- 2) ACF completes column 4 and returns a photocopy of the Log to the grantee.
- 3) The Lead Agency replaces this page in the Plan with the copy of the Log received from ACF showing the approval date.

Note: This process depends on repeated subsequent use of the same Log page over the life of the Plan. At any time the Log should reflect all amendments, both approved and pending in ACF. The Lead Agency is advised to retain "old" plan pages that are superseded by amendments in a separate appendix to its Plan. This is especially important as auditors will review CCDF Plans and examine effective date of changes.

SECTION AMENDED	EFFECTIVE/ PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE	DATE SUBMITTED TO ACF	DATE APPROVED BY ACF

PART 1 ADMINISTRATION

The agency shown below has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State (or Territory), to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E)

1.1 Lead Agency Information (as designated by State/Territory Chief Executive Officer)

Name of Lead Agency: **North Dakota Department of Human Services (NDDHS)**
Address of Lead Agency: **State Capitol, 600 East Boulevard Ave, Department 325, Bismarck, ND 58505-0250**
Name and Title of the Lead Agency's Chief Executive Officer: **Carol Olson, Executive Director**
Phone Number: **701-328-2538**
Fax Number: **701-328-1545**
E-Mail Address: dhseo@nd.gov
Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/>

1.2 State/Territory Child Care (CCDF) Contact Information (day-to-day contact)

Name of the State/Territory Child Care Contact (CCDF): **Linda Elstad**
Title of State/Territory Child Care Contact: **Child Care Subsidy Administrator**
Address: **State Capitol, 600 East Boulevard Ave, Department 325, Bismarck, ND 58505-0250**
Phone Number: **701-328-4603**
Fax Number: **701-328-1060**
E-Mail Address: lelstad@nd.gov
Phone Number for CCDF program information (for the public) (if any): **701-328-2232**
Web Address for CCDF program information (for the public) (if any):
<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/childcare.htm/>

Name of the State/Territory Child Care Contact (CCDF): **Tara Lea Muhlhauser**
Title of State/Territory Child Care Contact: **Director of CFS/Early Childhood Services Administrator**
Address: **State Capitol, 600 East Boulevard Ave, Department 325, Bismarck, ND 58505-0250**
Phone Number: **701-328-4809**
Fax Number: **701-328-3538**
E-Mail Address: tmuhlhauser@nd.gov
Phone Number for CCDF program information (for the public) (if any): **701-328-3587**
Web Address for CCDF program information (for the public) (if any):
<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/>

1.3 Estimated Funding

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amounts will be available for child care services and related activities during the 1-year period: October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. (§98.13(a))

CCDF: **\$9,541,022**

Federal TANF Transfer to CCDF: **\$500,000**

Direct Federal TANF Spending on Child Care: **\$500,000**

State CCDF Maintenance of Effort Funds: **\$1,017,036**

State Matching Funds: **\$1,855,656**

Total Funds Available: **\$13,413,714**

1.4 Estimated Administration Cost

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount (and percentage) of Federal CCDF and State Matching Funds will be used to administer the program (not to exceed 5 percent): **\$569,834 (5%) (5% of \$11,396,678 + Fed Share of match + State Share of match + Discretionary inc Target Funds)**. (658E(c) (3), §§98.13(a), 98.52)

1.5 Administration of the Program

1.5.1 Does the Lead Agency directly administer and implement all services, programs and activities funded under the CCDF Act, including those described in Part 5.1 – Activities & Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care, Quality Targeted Funds and Set-Aside?

Yes.

No. If no, use **Table 1.5.1** below to **identify** the name and type of agency that delivers services and activities. If more than one agency performs the task, identify all agencies in the box under “Agency,” and **indicate** in the box to the right whether each is a non-government entity.

Table 1.5.1: Administration of the Program

Service/Activity	Agency	Non-Government Entity (see Guidance for definition)	
Determines individual eligibility:			
a) TANF families	County TANF Social Services Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
b) Non-TANF families	County non-TANF Social Services Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Assists parents in locating care	Lakes & Prairies Community Action Agency and Lutheran Social Services (faith-based) Child Care Resource & Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Makes the provider payment	County Social Services enter the payment into the system, checks mailed by lead agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Quality activities	Lakes & Prairies Community Action Agency and Lutheran Social Services (faith-based) Child Care Resource & Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.5.2. Describe how the Lead Agency maintains overall internal control for ensuring that the CCDF program is administered according to the rules established for the program (§98.11).

The lead agency is the North Dakota Department of Human Services. The Child Care Subsidy Administrator and Early Childhood Services Administrator write the policy and county offices are required to administer the subsidy and quality functions in the same manner. North Dakota Century Code 50-11.1-07, Service Chapter 620-01, N.D.C.C. §50-01.2-00(3) and §50-01.2-02-2(1) govern the relationship between the Lead Agency and counties.

The Early Childhood Services Administrator writes the policy and contracts for North Dakota’s Child Care Resource and Referral Networks. The CCR&R’s administer the parent referral process and quality activities accordingly. North Dakota Century Code 50-11.1-11 and Service Chapter 620-01 govern the Lead Agencies relationships with the CCR&R’s.

The ECS Administrator meets, at minimum, quarterly with the directors of the CCR&R's. These meetings are for the purpose of discussing progress and completion of contracted work, to bring up new information or concerns, and to adapt the work plan or contract if necessary. The ECS Administrator receives unsolicited reports from licensors and ECS regional Supervisors regarding the CCR&R work in the field and is copied on all their provider newsletters and provider alerts. As North Dakota is a small, in population, state, CCR&R staff members and both CCDF Administrators often find themselves on the same ND early childhood planning committees, work groups, or taskforces. This allows for additional observation of CCR&R contract work. Lastly, the ECS Administrator is in weekly contact with the CCR&R directors to discuss many issues or to ask for assistance on projects.

Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy Administrator supervises eligibility workers by writing and maintaining program policy, reimbursement rates, and the sliding fee schedule. The lead agency also provides training which includes new worker training and experience worker training on new policies, changes in policy, changes in rates, and sliding fee scale and outreach information for the counties such as brochures and posters.

Child Care Subsidy Administrator meets with Regional Representatives to explain policy at least three times a year at field staff to discuss current policy. Regional Representatives in turn provide new and ~~old~~ current policy training and assistance to counties bimonthly. Regional Representatives assist in review (unofficial) of cases to determine where there may be errors in policy interpretation to prevent errors. Regional Representatives also call the state office when they have questions that they cannot answer and need to discuss with Child Care Subsidy Administrator.

A sampling plan has been developed to select CCAP payments for review each year. The Child Care Subsidy Administrator completes the reviews and contacts the county directly about the results and the results are shared with the Regional Representatives. The results of the review are shared with the county as the reviews are completed. The results of the statewide review are presented to County Directors Association and the Regional Representatives. Additional training by state staff will take place by email, IVN, on-site training or on the web when needed to clarify policy.

When the Child Care Subsidy Administrator reviews a case file and there are errors in the case file for nonpayment, overpayment, and or underpayment the eligibility workers are asked to explain how the errors arose

The errors could have been caused by placing incorrect figures in the ~~application~~ eligibility system, incorrect figures for income, deductions, number of members in the household, and ages, of children. Regional Representatives, county supervisors, and county directors are contacted by Child Care Subsidy to resolve issues if the eligibility worker is not able to explain the reason for the error. Eligibility workers ~~are allowed~~ may provide ~~to~~ an explain to the Child Care Subsidy Administrator why they believe the case is correct. If the eligibility worker is correct the case file error is no longer noted.

Quality

North Dakota has a state-supervised, county-administered system. The Early Childhood Services (ECS) Administrator programmatically supervises ECS Regional Supervisors and county child care licensors by writing and maintaining program rules and policies for the child care licensing system. Direct supervision of ECS Regional Supervisors is the responsibility of the eight Regional Human Services Center Directors. Direct supervision of the county child care licensors is the responsibility of the county directors.

The counties are not branches of the North Dakota Department of Human Services (lead agency). The relationship is governed by North Dakota Century Code. Roles and responsibilities are identified in program policy and procedure manuals. Early Childhood Services (ECS) Regional Supervisors (RS), state-level licensing staff members, work with and monitor county licensors. County Reimbursement for licensing costs from the CCDF monies is contingent upon compliance with North Dakota Century Code, Administrative Code and Program Policy and Procedures. ECS RS's monitor the work of the county licensors in their region through complete reviews of all paperwork, including inspection reports, that is submitted for new licenses, renewed licenses, and licenses undergoing an annual review.

The ECS Administrator conducts monthly conference calls and quarterly meetings to provide updated licensing information to the ECS RS's. ECS RS's work is monitored through individual calls with the ECS Administrator in which licensing situations that involve substantiated serious deficiencies are discussed. Oftentimes these calls will include a Department lawyer. Finally, both the Department lawyer and the ECS Administrator review all notices before they are issued.

The Early Childhood Services Regional Supervisors provide training and technical assistance to counties concerning program issues. They meet on a regular basis with county licensing staff to monitor their work through listening to licensors discuss their concerns and situations. ECS RS's also provide updated licensing information at these meetings.

The Early Childhood Services Administrator contracts with Lutheran Social Services (faith-based) and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Agency to provide Child Care Resource and Referral services. The Early Childhood Services Administrator works with CCR&R to ensure the development and delivery of services for the following initiatives as they pertain to child care services

- Consumer Education
- Healthy Child Care
- Early Learning Guidelines
- Early Childhood Professional Development
- Emergency Preparedness
- Infant Toddler Services

The Early Childhood Services Administrator receives quarterly and semi-annual reports from CCR&R, meets with CCR&R Directors at least three times per year and

participates in monthly conference calls to contracted services. A detailed work plan is negotiated as a part of the contractual process including deliverables and timeframes. The ECS Administrator also has opportunities of observe the work of CCR&R staff members as they participate on early care and education work groups, on ECS State Team, and on various committees.

The Early Childhood Services Administrator writes and issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) every four years for Child Care Resource and Referral Services. The last time a RFP was issued was in May of 2009.

1.5.3. Describe how the Lead Agency ensures adequate personnel, resources, systems, internal controls, and other components necessary for meeting CCDF reporting requirements (658K, §98.67, §§98.70 & 98.71, §§98.100 to 102), including the Lead Agency's plans for addressing any reporting deficiencies, if applicable. At a minimum, the description should address efforts for the following reporting requirements:

a) Fiscal

The North Dakota Century Code sections 50-06-06.11. and 50-06-20. allows the Department to operate the program and makes the Department responsible, fiscally and programmatically, for the Child Care Assistance Program.

- Section 50-06-06.11 - Within the limits of federal regulations, the department of human services, at the election of the early childhood facility, shall directly pay early childhood facilities monthly under child care assistance programs administered by the department.
- 50-06-20. 1. The state shall bear the cost, in excess of the amount provided by the federal government, of:
 - a. Except as provided in section 50-24.1-14, services provided under chapter 50-24.1;
 - b. Benefits provided under subsection 19 of section 50-06-05.1;
 - c. Supplements provided under chapter 50-24.5 as basic care services;
 - d. Services provided under chapter 50-09 as child care assistance) gives North Dakota the authority to operate the Child Care Assistance Program.

Appropriations for the program are approved by the Legislative Assembly.

Fiscal Administration provides a monthly Child Care Assistance report to the Public Assistance Director and the Child Care Subsidy Administrator. The report details caseload, expenditures, and appropriations for Child Care Assistance subsidized programs which include non-TANF recipients, TANF recipients, Diversion Assistance recipients, and Crossroads recipients. The reports are used to monitor usage and fund utilization under the subsidized programs. Fiscal Administration properly records, monitors, and accounts for all CCDF transactions in the State's accounting software system. The accounting system is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. North Dakota Department of Human Service was heavily involved in the design and development of the accounting system to assure accountability of all programs administered by the department. Fiscal Administration personnel have the necessary knowledge and expertise to ensure expenditures are properly spend and

accounted for. Any discrepancies or deficiencies discovered by Fiscal Administration personnel are immediately brought to the attention of the Director of Public Assistance and the Child Care Administrator. If there is such an occurrence, the issue is discussed and resolved.

As required under Federal Law, OMB Circular A-133, North Dakota is audited annual for the State Auditor's Office. They audit the financial statements for this program, test the internal controls, conduct case file reviews to determine compliance with policy and program rules, and provide written documentation of the findings. The Department takes appropriate action on the findings.

ACF-696 – North Dakota's financial report to ACF for the Child Care and Development Fund is completed by Fiscal Administration and reviewed by the Director of Public Assistance before each submission of the report to ACF.

ACF-800 - Overview of Annual Aggregate Data Reporting for States and Territories is a collaborative effort by Fiscal Administration, Child Care License Administrator, and Child Care Subsidy Administrator. The Child Care Subsidy Administrator takes responsibility for collection of the data necessary to complete the form and enters the information on the Child Care Bureau's website.

b) Data

Information Technology Division is responsible for all statewide area network services planning, selection, and implementation for all state agencies, including institutions under the control of the State Board of Higher Education, counties, cities, and school districts. ITD is also responsible for computer support services, software development, statewide communications services, standards for providing information to other state agencies and the public through the internet, technology planning, process redesign and quality assurance. The Information Technology Department (ITD) has been assigned to follow the North Dakota Century Code 54-59 regarding planning and compliance for technology. North Dakota has developed their own internal control strategies and mechanisms for addressing issues related to CCDF. In order to receive access to the application system for child care assistance, a county director must complete required forms. Requests go through the ITD and ITS security personnel. Specific and individual signs-on are given to each individual and level of access is determined based on need; some eligibility workers can only inquire on a case and others can enter information to authorize payments. Signing into the supersession requests a password in addition to the signon. Passwords must meet standards and must be changed in accordance with standards. Passwords are required to be changed every 90 days. If an individual attempts to access the system with an incorrect password, the individual is locked out of the system after three tries. These attempts are recorded by ITD systems. The application system records who accesses the system and when. Eligibility and state staff are provided the Administrative Procedure Manual 449-05 which addresses protecting system information.

ACF-801, case-level data is compiled and submitted to Child Care Bureau by Information Technology Systems. The Child Care Subsidy Administrator upon receipt reviews the ACF-801 – Summary Data Assessment Report and Detail Data Assessment Report. The Child Care Subsidy Administrator determines the course of action necessary to make corrections identified on the report. Further information may be found at <http://www.nd.gov/itd/planning/>

c) Error Rate

North Dakota case record review of Child Care Assistance subsidy payments is based on the CCDF methodology. Determining errors focuses on client eligibility and employs a case record review process to determine whether child care subsidies were properly authorized and correct payments made. Using this type of review allows the state to identify the types and sources of errors. North Dakota uses a random number plan that Department of Human Services Decision Support Services (research unit) has developed. The Child Care Assistance Subsidy Administrator is the lead for this project. The Department of Human Services contracts with Maximus, Inc. Maximus provides service by reviewing cases and provides data that shall be used to report proper and improper determinations of eligibility and payments.

Verification processes are available to the eligibility workers for Child Support payment made and received through the state Child Support Enforcement Division. The “TECS” and Vision system which is a SNAP (Food Stamps), Medicaid, and TANF eligibility system also provides verification of the birthdates for the eligible children. Access to the interface with Vital Statistics also allows birth dates to be verified.

Training for eligibility workers will be held using various platforms that will address components of the error findings such as:

- **determining income correctly**
- **determining correct age of children in the case**
- **determining household composition**
- **determining grant code (TANF, non-TANF, Crossroads or Diversion)**
- **correct use of sliding fee schedule**
- **determine number of allowable hours a child was in care resulting in correct payment to providers**
- **determining Child Support paid used as a deducted**

Training is provided using the following methods:

- **Training on specific error findings are presented during field staff meetings. Field staff meeting occur three times a year and include representatives from all Economic Assistance, Medicaid and Healthy Step Programs. Regional Representatives are state employees that act as liaisons and trainers on policy to eligibility workers. Error finds are presented during these meetings and Regional Representatives take the findings and reviewing policy with the eligibility workers when they visit their county. The further review of policy will prevent errors.**

- **New Worker Training is provided by the Child Care Subsidy Administrator. This training is provided annually and may be provided more if the need arises. Training will include:**
 - determine eligibility
 - determine income
 - determine correct age of children
 - determine household composition
 - determine grant code,
 - determine sliding fee scale
 - determine number of hours child in care
 - determine correct Child Support deduction
- **Policy training on areas of concern will be done by Webinar trainings. These will be scheduled as needed throughout the year.**
- **New policy training is conducted on an as needed basis by the Child Care Administrator either in person, by Webinar or IVN.**

System enhancements will be made as needed to accommodate the requirements of the program.

Steps have been taken by the Child Care Subsidy Administrator to reduce error rate by adding two alerts to the Child Care payment system. An alert has been added to question the eligibility workers when adding a case to the system, “Is there an application has been signed and dated.” An alert has been added to the system to prompt the eligibility worker to check if billing form has been signed and dated.

The North Dakota payment system has been changed so calculations of payments are automated in the system. An Excel worksheet (which had been used in the past to determine amount of payment was transferred to the Child Care system) may be used as a check against the system to assure the calculations are correct. This process will eliminate the errors caused by transferring information from the Excel worksheet to the Child Care payment system.

Child Care reviews will continue to be conducted on an ongoing basis with immediate feedback to eligibility workers. Child Care Subsidy Administrator will conduct case file reviews monthly rather than annually. In addition, improper payments of underpayments or overpayments will be monitored to assure corrections are made. The outcome of the reviews will be used to determine training needs and possible system enhancements.

The entire Child Care Assistance manual is being rewritten to provide clear policy guidance to eligibility workers. The Child Care Assistance policy manual will provide better understanding of policy. Examples in the policy manual will provide better understanding of policy and reduce errors. It is anticipated this project will take one year.

1.6 Funds Used to Match CCDF

1.6.1 Will the Lead Agency use public funds to meet a part of the CCDF Match requirement pursuant to §98.53(e)(1)?

- Yes, **describe** the activity and source of funds: State General Funds
 No.

1.6.2 Will the Lead Agency use private donated funds to meet a part of the matching requirement of the CCDF pursuant to §98.53(e)(2)?

- Yes. If yes, are those funds: (**check one below**)
 Donated directly to the State?
 Donated to a separate entity or entities designated to receive private donated funds?
a) How many entities are designated to receive private donated fund?
b) **Provide** information below for each entity:
Name:
Address:
Contact:
Type:
 No.

1.6.3 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement?

- Yes (**respond to 1.6.5**), and:
a) The State assures that its level of effort in full day/full year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to §98.53(h)(1).
b) (____ %) Estimated percentage of the MOE requirement that will be met with Pre-K expenditures. (Not to exceed 20%.)
c) If the Lead Agency uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the MOE requirement, **describe** how the Lead Agency will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):
 No.

1.6.4 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF Matching Fund requirements? (§98.53(h))

- Yes (**respond to 1.6.5**), and
a) (____ %) Estimated percentage of the Matching Fund requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (Not to exceed 30%.)
b) If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the Matching Fund requirement, **describe** how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

No.

1.6.5 If the Lead Agency indicated “yes” to 1.6.3 or 1.6.4, **describe** Lead Agency efforts to ensure that pre-K programs meet the needs of working parents: (§98.53(h)(2))

1.6.6 Will the Lead Agency use any other funds to meet a part of the CCDF Match requirement pursuant to §98.53(e)(1)?

Yes, **describe** the activity and source of funds:
 No.

1.7 Improper Payments

1.7.1 How does the Lead Agency define improper payments?

An improper payment is any payment that should have not been made or that was made in an incorrect amount according to policy. Incorrect amounts are overpayments and underpayments (including inappropriate denials or service). An improper payment includes any payment that was made to an ineligible recipient or for an ineligible service. Improper payments also are duplicate payments and payments for services not received.

1.7.2 Has your State implemented strategies to prevent, measure, identify, reduce, and/or collect improper payments? (§98.60(i), §98.65, §98.67)

Yes, and these strategies are:

North Dakota has implemented the following elements to correct causes of improper payments and will utilize the following options to prevent measure and reduce improper payments:

- **New worker training will be conducted annually or more often if needed.**
- **Measurement of errors is achieved by conducting monthly review of eligibility and payment accuracy. Error findings are brought to the attention of the eligibility worker and the county director. Errors in policy or system that are commonly occurring throughout the state are used as training. If system changes or policy changes are required to address error prone areas, action is taken to implement.**
- **Ongoing eligibility worker training will be used to address areas of need indentified by eligibility workers and to address error findings to reduce errors.**
- **Training on specific error findings will be presented during field staff meetings to identify recent errors that are currently causing problems. Regional Representatives will train eligibility workers on findings and solutions by reviewing policy manual with the eligibility workers when they visit their counties three times a year. Child Care**

Subsidy Administrator will share the number of errors that have occurred. Training of policy with Regional Representative who then provides training to counties will help reduce and prevent errors.

- **Child Care Subsidy Administrator will continue to check application system to determine if there are other changes that can be made to prevent errors. Ensure that the application system continues to work correctly for proper payments. Child Care Subsidy Administrator will go in monthly and check system to make sure it is working correctly.**
- **Child Care Assistance policy manual will be updated to clearly define requirements of the program. Examples in the policy manual will provide better understanding of policy and reduce errors.**
- **Eligibility workers will be encouraged to do reviews of other eligibility worker's cases and share the results of those reviews with supervisors and other eligibility workers.**
- **Correction of overpayments and underpayments to correct benefits is in place in the computer system. Eligibility workers who are not able to collect overpayments from parents/caretakers or providers, will call the state office and report overpayments. The state has personnel collecting overpayments. When personnel cannot obtain the overpayment then a collection agency is contacted to try to obtain the overpayment.**
- **North Dakota plans to reduce improper payments from 27% to 12% by identifying the causes of the errors and training to prevent the errors.**

No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?

Yes, and these planned strategies are:

No.

PART 2
DEVELOPING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

2.1 Consultation and Coordination See guidance

2.1.1 Lead Agencies are required to *consult* with appropriate agencies and *coordinate* with other Federal, State, local, tribal (if applicable) and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services (§98.12, §98.14(a),(b), §98.16(d)).

Indicate the entities with which the Lead Agency has a) **consulted** and b) **coordinated** (as defined below), by checking the appropriate box(es) in Table 2.1.1.

Consultation involves the meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the State Plan. **At a minimum, Lead Agencies must consult with representatives of general purpose local governments (noted by the asterisk in the chart below).**

Coordination involves the coordination of child care and early childhood development services, including efforts to coordinate across multiple entities, both public and private (for instance, in connection with a State Early Childhood Comprehensive System (SECCS) grant or infant-toddler initiative). **At a minimum, Lead Agencies must coordinate with** (1) other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies responsible for providing child care and early childhood development services, (2) public health (including the agency responsible for immunizations and programs that promote children’s emotional and mental health), (3) employment services / workforce development, (4) public education, and (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and (6) any Indian Tribes in the State receiving CCDF funds (noted by the asterisks in the chart below).

Table 2.1.1 Consultation and Coordination

Agency	a) Consultation in Development of the Plan	b) Coordination with Service Delivery
Representatives of local government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Public health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Employment services / workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Public education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
TANF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *

PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES IN: North Dakota
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/09 – 9/30/11

Agency	a) Consultation in Development of the Plan	b) Coordination with Service Delivery
State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for:		
State pre-kindergarten programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head Start programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (See guidance):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*** Required.**

For each box checked in Table 2.1.1, (a) identify the agency(ies) providing the service and **(b) describe** the consultation and coordination efforts. Descriptions must be provided for any consultation or coordination required by statute or regulation.

Representatives of local government

- **County directors and county child care licensors participate on the Early Childhood Services State Team. This team consults on regulation, policy, and child care initiatives, such as emergency preparedness, professional development, and early learning guidelines. As the state plan is implemented, members of the ECS State Team also coordinate work efforts to move the plan forward.**
- **County child care licensors coordinate with Early Childhood Services Regional Supervisors (representing state office) in regulating providers.**
- **A work group of eligibility workers, eligibility worker supervisors, and Economic Assistance staff assists the Child Care Subsidy Administrator with policy and making decisions on policy.**
- **Eligibility workers coordinate with Regional Representatives to provide subsidy payments to providers. (Regional Representatives are state employees). Eligibility workers are county workers**
- **Eligibility workers and the county child care licensors coordinate efforts on background checks on potential and current providers**

A minimum of 8 county licensors and 2 county directors serve on the Early Childhood Services State team. Other members of this team include Child Care Resource and Referral staff members from both Lutheran Social Services and Lakes & Prairies. The primary goal of the ECS State Team is to coordinate and blend services between/among licensing (minimum standards) and quality initiatives. We meet in person a minimum of twice a year and may meet two additional times via Polycom/IVN.

In 2007, we began an initiative to have a team of experienced county licensors train new licensors. The ECS State Office, ECS Regional Supervisors, and county licensors successfully coordinated their efforts and developed a credible, realistic, and accepted

training experience for their new peers. We will utilize this new cadre for training again in 2010.

The Child Subsidy work group, consist of the Child Care Subsidy Administrator, an Economic Assistance Regional Representative, and eligibility workers from across the state. The work group reviews existing policy, develops policy based on error findings, and updates the policy manual. The policy manual is updated and maintained by Child Care Subsidy Administrator. The State Plan is discussed and input requested for incorporation into State Plan

Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.

- Lutheran Social Services and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies representatives participate on the Early Childhood Services State Team. This team consults on regulation, policy and child care initiatives, such as emergency preparedness, professional development, and early learning guidelines. As the state plan is implemented, members of the ECS State Team also coordinate work efforts to move the plan forward.
- The CCR&R's/ Faith Based Agency office coordinate with the Early Childhood Services Office in providing North Dakota's child care and training infrastructures. In addition to serving on several state-wide planning committees for early childhood, they also assist with writing portions of the state plan and consult with the Early Childhood Services Administrator in its development.
- The CCR&R's/Faith Based Agency assist the Child Care Subsidy Administrator with the market rate survey.
- The Early Childhood Services Administrator confers on a regular basis with Child Care Resource and Referral staff and the Early Childhood Services Regional Supervisors regarding the current plan and potential initiatives.
- The Dickinson Head Start Director developed a half-day training for area preschool teachers on the 3 to 5 Early Learning Guidelines that included the research base, alignment with other standards, as well as methods for implementation.
- North Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children and North Dakota Child Care Providers Inc. consult on the state plan and are instrumental in coordinating communications on quality initiatives with providers.

Public health

- Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (includes public health personnel) is the entity that guides Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems work in ND. Members of the Alliance consult on ND Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems and Professional Development plans. Quarterly meetings are held to improve the coordination of services at community level. Both Child Care Subsidy and Early Childhood Services Administrators are on the Alliance.
- Public Health Nurses coordinate dissemination of information on immunizations and reportable communicable diseases to early childhood programs with the assistance of

the Early Childhood Services Administrator and the Child Care Resource and Referral Child Care Health Consultants.

- Health Department staff members provide child car safety restraint training to providers, parents and licensors throughout North Dakota.

Employment services / workforce development Part of CCR&R

- Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis Minnesota State Legislators, and the Region VII Early Childhood Intervention and Prevention Task Force sponsored another “Early Childhood is Economic Development” summit in Bismarck on March 2, 2009.
- Lutheran Social Services/Faith Based Agency and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Agency Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies’ Business Services Center assists child care programs and providers in start up and in understanding and streamlining current business practices. Maintains an accurate and up-to-date website at: <http://ndchildcare.org/businessresources/index.htm>.
- During the 2008-2009 CCDF years, the Business Services Center has arranged for four centers, statewide, to develop business plans with community input and to receive a \$5, 000 grant to implement their plan.
- The Business Center helps increase the quality and quantity of child care programs in North Dakota.
- The Business Center Director has served as an important link in coordinating child care needs with economic development at both the state level with the Department of Commerce and in local communities across North Dakota.

Public education

- Department of Public Instruction Title I is coordinating the implementation of the North Dakota Early Learning guidelines ages 3 through 5 in its programs.
- Department of Public Instruction is considering adaption of *North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Ages 3 through 5* as standards for pre kindergarten.
- DPI has representation on Healthy North Dakota’s Early Childhood Alliance and the Early Childhood Professional Development Committee.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program, located in DPI, coordinates/assists in monitoring child care services in the field (and reports suspected violations to licensors), provides nutritional information to child care programs, and offers free training to providers and staff members that are accepted by county licensors as required training hours for licensing.

TANF

- Department of Human Services, Office of Economic Assistance Division, Child Care Subsidy Administrator has responsibility for taking the lead for part 3 and 4 in the CCDF plan the subsidy portion of the Plan, . The Child Care Subsidy Administrator works closely with the TANF/Job Administrator in ensuring that certificates and child care payments work for the different TANF programs and the clients served under the programs.

Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State

- North Dakota Tribal Child Care programs - Child Care Subsidy Administrator provides the Tribes with information on current sliding fee scales and the Excel worksheet.
- Market Rate Survey and results are made available to Tribal members for the administration of Tribal Child Care Program.
- There is Tribal membership on the North Dakota Growing Futures Professional Development Committee. This committee consultant with the Early Childhood Services Administrator on the state plan.
- The Early Childhood Service office consults and coordinates with Spirit Lake and Trenton Tribal Service area representatives on the Program for Infant and Toddler Care training, on increasing the quality and quantity of infant toddler care, through sharing a child care licensing consultant, through the Infant-Toddler Enrichment Program (now funded by DHS), and through serving on the ND Growing Futures Professional Development Plan Committee.
- Tribes received hard copies and web access to *North Dakota Early Guidelines Ages Three through Five* for implementation and have been asked to consult with the Early Childhood Services Administrator on suggestions for making the guidelines culturally consistent for the Tribes. In particular, the Head Start-State Collaboration Administrator hand-carried copies of the 3 to 5 guidelines to Tribal Head Start Programs.
- CCDF ND State Plan hearings were available to the Tribes via Polycom sites that were located in each region in North Dakota.

State Tribal Agency (agencies) responsible for:

- State Pre-kindergarten- Not applicable at time of writing this plan.

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for Head Start programs

- Head Start State Collaboration Office HS-SCO Administrator works hand-in-hand with Early Childhood Services Administrator on most quality initiatives. She assists in the writing of the state plan and also provides feedback on drafts.
- Head Start programs in North Dakota, including tribal, have representation on all early childhood committees and work groups that are consulted in the development of the state plan.

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs

- Representatives serve together on the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA) (ECCS) and Professional Development/Quality Initiatives. We are working to raise awareness and increase knowledge regarding issues of inclusion in our professional development trainings
- The Early Childhood Services Administrator serves on the Interagency Coordinating Council. We are striving to notify and include child care providers and caregivers in trainings that are designed for parents of children with special needs

AND to notify and include early intervention staff members and parents of children with special needs and our cadre that was trained by Zero-to-Three to with child care providers, and others, to reduce the incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect in very young children.

- **The Early Childhood Services Administrator is organizing a diverse group early childhood professionals to adopt or write a child care inclusion document for North Dakota.**

Other

Child Welfare, child abuse and neglect prevention

- **The Early Childhood Services Administrator coordinates with the Child Abuse and Neglect Administrator and the Zero to Three organization State Prevention Partnerships program in North Dakota. Two person teams from across the state were trained in *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care*, a Zero to Three Training Curriculum. One person on each team is an infant/ toddler specialist the other person is a social worker. Team members come from counties, Child Care Resource and Referral, institutions of higher education, Tribes and Early Head Start Programs.**

2.1.2 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Child Care and Early Childhood Programs.

Lead Agencies are encouraged to develop an emergency preparedness and response plan for child care and other early childhood programs operating in the State/Territory. The plan should include provisions for continuity of services and child care assistance payments to families and providers in the event of an emergency or disaster. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of you efforts in this area. **Check only ONE.**

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated and how the plan will be coordinated with other emergency planning efforts within the State/Territory.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. Include the plan as Attachment 2.1.2, if available.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. Include the plan as Attachment 2.1.2, if available.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as Attachment 2.1.2.
- Other. Describe:**

a) Describe the progress made by the State/Territory in planning for an emergency or disaster event with regards to the operation of child care and early childhood education programs.

A committee of the ND Early Childhood Services State Team was formed to begin exploring issues related to early childhood program emergency preparedness. Key areas identified include: provider resources; provider

training; planning partners; communication strategies between CCR&R's, licensing staff members and providers; administrative rules; administrative policies; data collection; and uses of data.

The committee gathered numerous resources for internal as well as provider use.

In the spring of 2009, North Dakota was inundated with statewide flooding. The resources gathered were timely. For several months, CCR&R's posted flooding resources for providers on their joint website following the progression of flooding. Topics included flood preparation and flood recovery—both for the facility/house and emotional support for children and families. They also posted Early Childhood Services forms related to the disaster. The CCR&R's contacted all providers in flooded areas to learn of their status, plans, and assistance they might need.

b) Describe provisions the Lead Agency has in place for the continuation of core child care functions during and after a disaster or emergency.

The Child Care Subsidy program has a contingency plan to ensure the continuation of core child care functions during and after a disaster or emergency. This plan was developed and utilized during the flooding in eastern North Dakota 1997. The same plan was in place in the event of a Y2K disaster of 2000.

- The plan contains information about the contingency organization, scope of the plan, purpose of the plan, objective, assumptions, (scenarios), risk assessment process/results, prioritized listing of identified critical business processes/ functions, background information on each critical business process/function, contingency reporting procedures, maintenance procedures, distribution plan and communications plan.**
- A specific action plan is also included in the contingency plan.**

The Early Childhood Services Office has developed a contingency plan to ensure the continuation of core child care functions during and after a disaster or emergency:

- In consultation with county child care licensors, ECS Regional Supervisors and CCR&R staff members, the ECS Administrator developed policy and a provisional license agreement to be used to continue the operation of licensed child care programs before, during, and after a disaster**
- In order to operate a child care program immediately before, during and/or after a disaster that impacts their geographic area, the provider must verify to county licensing staff the following:**
 - Electricity (Portable generator may be used on a temporary basis)**
 - Approved water source (Potable water such as bottled water may be used)**

- Sewage disposal (“port-a-potty” acceptable)
- Heat or cooling (if applicable)
- No immediate health or safety risks (e.g., mold, structure/foundation, etc.)
- Staff members/volunteers with unverified background checks are not left alone with child/children.
- **Verification of the above can be made by proof of purchase or proper authority sign offs. The information then must be forwarded by the county licensor to the Early Childhood Services Regional Office for final approval to provide care.**
- **If, due to a disaster, a licensing, building, fire, and/or health visit/inspection is not possible, the department, may issue a three-month provisional license upon the self attestation of the provider that all of the above conditions are and shall continue to be met. This provisional license will state, for example, “Provisional – Regarding Post Tornado Recovery – see agreement.” The provisional license agreement will state unmet requirements, such as, but not limited to, licensing, fire, department, and/or building inspections were unable to be completed due to the (enter type of disaster) in (month, year) .**
- **With Department permission, child care programs may operate at over capacity as long as Early Childhood Services Administrative Code (rule) staff-child ratio’s are maintained.**
- **Within reason, square footage requirements may also be exceeded as long as Early Childhood Services Administrative Code (rule) staff-child ratio’s are maintained.**
- **Provisional license agreements in connection with a disaster may be signed by the licensee and county licensor, however it is expected that the county licensor will consult with their Early Childhood Services Regional Supervisor, or their designee, as part of the decision making process.**

c) Describe efforts the Lead Agency has undertaken to provide resources and information to families and child care providers about ways to plan and prepare for an emergency or disaster situation.

- **Several resources have been identified to prepare child care providers for emergencies. Some of these resources are posted on <http://www.ndchildcare.org> . Emergency preparedness and response training has been offered in the past and being revised by the CCR&R’s as part of the development of the Learning Paths.**
- **New administrative code (rule) has been proposed for all licensing chapters. Information for emergency preparedness and response in rules will be general and the committee has recommended that the CCR&R’s assume the responsibility for emergency preparedness and response as a training and consultation piece.**

d) Describe how the Lead Agency is coordinating with other State agencies, private, and/or non-profit charitable organizations to ensure that child care and early childhood programs are included in planning, response, and recovery efforts.

- **During the statewide flooding, both North Dakota CCDF Administrators worked state-wide with Regional Supervisors and Representatives; CCR&R staff members, including their Child Care Health Consultants; Head Start/Early Head Start representatives; the Department of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response Liaison; and ACF Child Care Bureau and Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Staff.**
- **On-going efforts will continue with both CCDF Administrators. The ECS plans thus far are focused on preparation and response to flooding. Future work will include other disasters and emergency situations, but will utilize the work completed thus far. Next steps will include, but are not limited to:**
 - **additional partners;**
 - **understanding potential emergency assignments for county licensors during a disaster;**
 - **assigned responsibilities, e.g., for CCR&R staff members, licensors, ECS Regional Supervisors;**
 - **an initiative to motivate child care providers to register their business with the local emergency entity;**
 - **revising forms to include signed permission to share information in order to store on a database;**
 - **continue search for resources for providers related to other disasters; and**
 - **develop flows charts which illustrate authority, processes, and other related matters.**

2.1.3 Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination. Lead Agencies are encouraged to develop a plan for coordination across early childhood programs. **Indicate** which of the following best describes the current status of your efforts in this area. **Note: Check only ONE.**

- Planning.** Are there steps under way to develop a plan?
 - Yes, and **describe** the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
 - No.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. Include the draft as **Attachment 2.1.3** if available.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. Include the plan as **Attachment 2.1.3** if available.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. Include the plan as **Attachments 2.1.3**.
 - 2.1.3.1. ND ECCS Global Logic Model 2009-2012**
 - 2.1.3.2. ND ECCS Logic Models for Five Components 2009-2012**

Other (describe):

a) **Describe** the progress made by the State/Territory in planning for coordination across early childhood programs since the date of submission of the 2008-2009 State Plan.

Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA) was created to achieve the goals of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant. HNDECA oversees the ECCS process to ensure implementation of federal guidelines, coordination across early childhood programs, and good stewardship of the planned funds. Comprised of over 90 partners representing state and local, public and private entities, family advocates, and community members, HNDECA facilitates enhanced communication, develops a shared knowledge base regarding North Dakota early childhood programs, and identifies common goals and challenges for change. The matrix, labeled as Attachment 2.1.3.a. ND ECCS stakeholder chart 2009, identifies HNDECA partners, identified the service integration activities that currently exist in North Dakota regarding early childhood intervention, and the status and capabilities of those services.

Five HNDECA subcommittees relate to the five priority areas of the ECCS grant. These subcommittees develop objectives and strategies to ensure implementation success and foci on strategic planning, public relations, evaluation and sustainability. Subcommittee members build on existing strengths and integrate, rather than duplicate, current initiatives and services. HNDECA seeks to strengthen early childhood service collaborations and partnerships to support families and communities.

ECCS funding afforded HNDECA the opportunity to engage in state-wide strategic planning and partnership building required to develop a comprehensive early childhood system.

HNDECA Stakeholders convened a strategic planning initiative in spring of 2009 to reflect upon accomplishments and to redefine priorities to develop a comprehensive road map for further program implementation.

To conceptualize the ECCS program goals, objectives, activities, resources, and outcomes the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA), stakeholders refer to the five component specific logic models. The ECCS program recently updated its logic models and, in 2008, the five HNDECA (component) subcommittees reviewed and updated their work plans. The HNDECA program evaluation contractor developed the HNDECA logic models based upon the subcommittee work plans. The logic models will strengthen understanding and assure that subcommittees implement the identified work activities to result in the desired goals.

An evaluation contractor was secured and assigned to study HNDECA committees, work plan, and outcomes. HNDECA will continue to support the evaluation efforts of the ECCS program. Updates will be provided to HNDECA twice each year.

In order to secure sustainability with stakeholders and partners, the HNDECA contracted with an epidemiologist to coordinate surveillance functions; oversee the systematic collection; analyze and report data; track and monitor performance on all measures; track trends; and identify duplication, unmet needs, and disparities in data and programmatic activities. The epidemiologist will develop and implement a statewide data surveillance plan and report survey findings. The epidemiologist will also provide technical assistance and consultation to HNDECA and its members on the meaning and use of early childhood data and findings. HNDECA and its members are responsible for identifying next step activities and making mid-course corrections when needed. It has been determined that the evaluation component will be conducted in two basic stages.

In April 2008, a number of HNDECA Steering Committee members expressed their interest in the framing early childhood messages to educate and promote the importance of the early childhood years to the public. HNDECA sought one message or set of messages that all stakeholders could agree upon and support, wanted to incorporate brain research, and had several “audiences” it wished to reach. HNDECA led a collaboration of nine partner organizations to fund and sponsor a two day training event in August 2008. Over 50 participants gathered in Bismarck for Strategic Frame Analysis training. The mission of the FrameWorks Institute, based in Washington, DC is to advance nonprofit sector communications by identifying, translating and modeling relevant scholarly research for framing the public discourse on social problems.

Training participants learned the process for framing messages successfully and applied this to framing educational messages for use in the 2009 legislative session. The training was well received and peer review of framed messages has become an integral part of the HNDECA.

b) Indicate whether there is an entity that is, or will be, responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. Indicate the four or more early childhood programs and/or funding streams that are coordinated and describe the nature of the coordination.

HNDECA has established strong partnerships which began the systems building process in North Dakota. Given the rural nature and small population of North Dakota, committee work can sometimes be a challenge. However; active participation in HNDECA along with the increase in partnerships has shown a commitment to early childhood and has been valuable in the implementation of the ECCS and CCDF state plans.

Evidence that the work of the HNDECA has increased awareness on the importance of early care and education can be seen in the bills that were passed, with appropriations, in the North Dakota 2009 Legislative Session which ended in May.

For example:

- The establishment of the Early Childhood Advisory Council represents the early implementation of Goal 1 in the HNDECA work plan “Develop a state level entity for early care and education that builds a statewide network and assures agency collaboration.”
- The establishments of a state grant program to develop new childcare programs, expand existing programs, and provide technical assistance such as the development of business plans.
- Revisions in standards relating to licensing and registration of early childhood service providers, investigation of early childhood service providers, denial or revocation of early childhood services provider licensure or registration, and an increase in penalties.
- The expansion of Early Childhood Services Growing Futures: Professional Development in the areas of training, business consultation, and child development technical assistance.

In April 2009, the HNDECA Stakeholder group agreed that they share the following value about the whole of its work:

HNDECA, while recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of all children and families, will focus upon getting services to the children identified as most vulnerable.

It was also agreed that the four following high-level, cross-cutting, visionary goals will lead HNDECA through the next three to five years:

1. HNDECA will promote the development of a seamless and integrated early care and education system for children ages 0 – 8.
2. HNDECA will promote comprehensive health care coverage for all North Dakota children.
3. HNDECA will promote connectivity and information for all of the early childhood community across North Dakota.
4. HNDECA will promote services and education for children, prenatal through age 3, and their families.

c) **Describe** the results or expected results of this coordination. Discuss how these results relate to the development and implementation of the State/Territory's early learning guidelines, plans for professional development, and outcomes for children.

The “ECCS Integration Work Plan as of December 2008” for all components is attached as: 2.1.3.c.1. ND ECCS Work plan 12-08.

The Early Care and Education sub-committee work plan, including details on progress, is attached as 2.1.3.c.2. ND ECCS EC&E work plan.

Objective 1.1. Develop a state level entity for early care and education that builds a statewide network and assures agency collaboration.

Once established, as legislated, it is hoped that the North Dakota Early Childhood Education Council will promote early care and education system building and integration of current systems. That it will, as stated in the Enrolled Bill:

1. Review the delivery of early childhood education in this state;
2. Conduct a needs assessment;
3. Review early childhood education standards and propose revisions to the standards as needed;
4. Review opportunities for public and private sector collaboration in the delivery of early childhood education in this state;
5. Develop a comprehensive plan governing the delivery of early childhood education in this state; and
6. Provide a biennial report regarding its activities to the governor and the legislative council.

Objective 1.2. Increase school readiness through the development and implementation of policies that promote high quality early care and education.

This objective includes Early Learning Guidelines B-3 and 3-5, the professional development system, a quality rating and improvement system, early childhood health consultants, and training for early childhood service providers.

HNDECA has provided meeting facilitation, morale, and fiscal support for all of these activities in the past. It is hoped that support continues as early childhood initiatives move forward. Please see attachment 2.1.3.c.2. ND ECCS EC&E work plan for planned activities.

Objective 1.3. Establish critical pathways, including checks and balances for licensure standards and practices to assure uniformity of delivery statewide.

This objective includes licensor caseload, statewide consistency in licensing practices, a peer review quality assurance, licensor training and on-going professional development, examining the current state supervised, county administered structure.

Counties are in the process of reviewing the duties, etc. of all personnel—caseload is one of many aspects that will be examined. We continue to seek consistency in licensing practices through annual all-county child care licensor trainings, including ECS regional supervisors. Whenever possible, National Association for Regulatory Agencies Curriculum and Trainers are brought in. We also seek consistency through monthly conference calls with ECS regional supervisors and the ECS Administrator. Occasional inconsistencies in practice are noted as we discuss revising rules

d) Describe how the State/Territory's plan supports, or will support, continued coordination among the programs. Are changes anticipated in the plan?

HNDECA will continue to fund, develop, and maintain of an early childhood surveillance system to measure its progress. HNDECA may be the sole source for valid, reliable, consolidated North Dakota early childhood data collection and analysis. The surveillance system findings will provide the basis for evidence-based decision-making, will guide North Dakota to develop a more integrated early childhood services delivery system, and will improve the lives of young children. The decision to have an early childhood surveillance system has been a unifying feature for HNDECA stakeholders. Charting progress, discussing the intersections of services provided, and the dream of becoming more efficacious for children and as stewards of North Dakota's resources has brought us closer to our unspoken goals of additional braided funding and blended services for young children and their families.

This HNDECA service will be of particular value as the North Dakota Early Childhood Education Advisory Council works on its duties as stated in Century Code, including an assessment of the current status of early childhood in our state.

Development of the HNDECA work plan has been an opportunity for program providers and stakeholders to communicate effectively, develop a shared knowledge about early childhood programs in North Dakota, and identify common challenges and goals for change. HNDECA will continue to develop infrastructure designed to integrate program delivery. As we move forward with the systems building process, turf issues are fading and new relationships have been formed.

HNDECA outcomes and indicators will be used to track the progress of the goals and action steps in the work plan. Careful consideration has been given to what resources would be needed to implement each action step. These have been a starting point; and as HNDECA continues implementation, it will identify the specific data needed to effectively evaluate progress on the work plan. In particular, this will challenge programs to evaluate activities and collaboration efforts to improve services for children and families.

HNDECA is exploring ways to continue to build relationships and seek sources of funding to sustain the systems building work in North Dakota. The need for a matrix of current and potential HNDECA partners and resources to aid HNDECA in strengthening partnerships and utilizing resources in a wise manner has become clear. HNDECA has identified state government documents that include information related to the actual, budgeted, and recommended expenditures for children and family programs in state agencies.

Other funding options are explored through sharing and reviewing grant announcements with HNDECA stakeholders. Potential funders include the Dakota Medical Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, A. Bush Foundation, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota. By seeking additional funding together, relationships with HNDECA partners are strengthened. North Dakota will continue to unify and strengthen its early childhood systems to promote the development and health of all children.

The HNDECA Work Plan is a fluid document. Sub-committees for the five components meet to review and make adjustments to their plans. Changes are anticipated in this work as the need arises.

2.2 Public Hearing Process

Describe the Statewide/Territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan.

(658D(b)(1)(C), §98.14(c)) At a minimum, the description must provide:

- a) Date(s) of notice of public hearing:
The notice for the public hearing will go out the first week in May for the June 2, 2009 hearing.
- b) Manner of notifying the public about the public hearing:
The notice of the meetings will be in seven – ten newspapers in April 2009.
- c) Date(s) of public hearing(s):
The public hearing will be held June 2, 2009.
- d) Hearing site(s):
Child Care staff will be in Bismarck and will use IVN to go to seven other sites where persons can gather to talk about the Child Care Program. The hearings are scheduled and will be conducted at the following locations:
 - **Bismarck State College, Vocational Technical Center, Room 228**
 - **Dickinson State University, North Campus, Room 104**
 - **Williston State College, Main Building, Room 120**
 - **Minot State University, Administration Building, Room 158**
 - **Lake Region State College, Administration Building, Room 171**
 - **University of North Dakota, Gamble Hall Room 120, Grand Forks**
 - **North Dakota State University, E. Morrow Lebedeff (EML) Bldg, Room 170, Fargo**
 - **Valley City State University**
- e) How the content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s):
Paper copies of this proposal were available in the eight Human Service Regional offices, the Tribal Chairpersons had them, one was available in the Children and Family Services Division and one was available at the Economic

Assistance Division services at the Capitol. An electronic version was placed on the DHS website on <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/childcarepub.html>. It was on the child care web site with links to the Child Care Assistance Home Page, the Department's home page, and the Early Childhood Services and the Child Care Subsidy's Q and A section.

f) **Attach** a brief summary of the public comment process as **Attachment 2.2.****

2.3 Public-Private Partnerships

Does the Lead Agency conduct or plan to conduct activities to encourage public-private partnerships that promote private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs?

- Yes. If yes, **describe** these activities or planned activities, including the results or expected results. See guidance – public awareness private sector part of effort?? Outreach???
- **As the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) work moves forward, the work plan grid requires the identification of both government and private entities for every activity needed to reach the objectives under each goal.**
 - **Please see 2.1.3 Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination for the ECCS work of Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (HNDECA).**
 - **During North Dakota's January 2009 Legislative Session, several bills related to early learning and care became law. Several members of HNDECA believe that this is due, in part, to Frameworks Institute training, which enabled many HNDECA members to develop a shared vision for children in North Dakota. Members also learned how to frame and deliver messages to the public using the frames North Dakotans were most likely embrace.**
 - **Through HNDECA meetings and other early childhood work group and committee meetings, HNDECA members expect to recruit additional partners and work more closely—including the braiding of funding to provide blended services for children and their families.**

No.

PART 3 CHILD CARE SERVICES OFFERED

3.1 Description of Child Care Services

3.1.1 Certificate Payment System. Describe the overall child care certificate process, including, at a minimum:

- a) a description of the form(s) of the certificate (§98.16(k)):
The North Dakota Child Care Certificate consists of 4 pages back to back. There are two copies, one for the client and one for the provider. The front of the first page lists: client's name and address; the children for whom child care will be paid; the certificate time period; the state's percentage; the client's percentage and family maximum payment; and the current allowable activity.

The front of the second page lists the Mandatory Reportable Changes during the certificate period. Other information included: that providers must be licensed, registered, self certified, or an approved relative; the charges over the allowable maximum charges is the client's responsibility, and CCAP is not responsible for unpaid bills.

Lines are located on the page for the county eligibility worker to notify the client of other items such as: the provider's license expires in three months, that a child will no longer be eligible for child care in two months because the child is turning thirteen, et cetera. The county eligibility worker's name and telephone number are also listed so the client can easily contact the county eligibility worker.

The back of the first page lists the allowable maximum rates listed for all provider types, ages, and the hours of care. The back of the second page contains the client's right to appeal.

There are several steps from a client requesting an application to receiving the certificate:

- **Client calls or goes to the local county social service office, and requests an application, or goes on line to the North Dakota web site and prints a copy of the application. Clients can also pick up applications at Head Start Programs, child care centers, Child Care Resource and Referral office.**
- **The application is to be returned to the county office either by mailing it, or dropping the form at the local county social service office. The client also can schedule an appointment with a county eligibility worker.**

- The application is accepted by the county and date stamped when it is received in the office.
- If the verification of income is included with the application and if the client is in an allowable activity, the county eligibility worker will issue a certificate based on the application's information.
- If the information is incomplete, the county eligibility worker will send a pending notice to inform the client what information is needed to determine eligibility for the CCAP.
The county eligibility worker will also let the client know when the information should be returned so the application is not denied.
- Once all the information is received the county eligibility worker can determine based on income and family size if the client is eligible for child care subsidy services. The client must be in an allowable activity such as school, working or in job search.
- Before any bills are paid for the client the percentage that the client is eligible for and the maximum family payment is determined.
- When the maximum family payment is determined, the client's percentage is determined and the county eligibility worker has confirmed that the client is in an allowable activity then the two sets of certificates are sent to the client.
One set of the certificates the client keeps for her/his records. The client sends another set of certificates to the provider that the client has chosen to care for her/his children.

Client activities determine the length of the certificate. Three-month certificates are issued for:

- Job search, clients may not exceed eight weeks within the three month certificate; and
- A client, who does not have a current employment history to determine hours and income and will be or has started employment.

Note: For three-month certificates, the worker can use either the income for the month prior to the first month of the certificate or the first month of the certificate month to determine the client's percentage and maximum family payment.

Exception: if IF the job search client or the client beginning employment had child care for the month prior to application, the certificate will be for four months.

Six month certificates will be issued for:

- TANF, Diversion Assistance and Transition Assistance (for SSI children in the family) clients;
- Allowable students; and
- Employed households.

Note: The certificate for TANF, Diversion Assistance and Transition Assistance (for SSI children in the family) will always have the client's percentage as zero

and the family maximum payment as zero of the allowable maximum payment. This certificate could include the month before application if the client needs child care in the month before application. The client's prior month child care will be paid with the client's percentage zero and the family maximum payment as zero of the allowable maximum payment as this is the amount on the certificate.

Redetermination forms are automatically generated from the system one month prior to the end of the client's certificate. 'The certificate will be sent the 25th of the month (or the first working day after the 25th if the 25th is not a working day) During the last month of the current certificate, the update information will be used to determine if another certificate will be issued and sent.

(b) a description of how the certificate permits parents to choose from a variety of child care settings by explaining how a parent moves from receipt of the certificate to choice of the provider; (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), §98.2, §98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2))

The certificate permits the parents/caretakers to select providers that will meet their child care needs. Such as center-base care, group home care, family child care, or relative provider care. Both the client's copy and the provider's copy of the certificate are mailed to the client. The client takes the provider's copy to any licensed, registered, self-certified provider, or an approved relative provider. Since CCAP pays the same percentage of the allowable maximum for any provider type, the client has the option of taking the certificate to any provider who meets the CCAP requirements.

(c) if the Lead Agency is also providing child care services through grants and contracts, **estimate** the proportion of §98.50 services available through certificates versus grants/contracts (this may be expressed in terms of dollars, number of slots, or percentages of services), and **explain** how the Lead Agency ensures that parents offered child care services are given the option of receiving a child care certificate. (§98.30(a) & (b)).

Not applicable as all child care subsidy payments are processed using certificates.

Attach a copy of your eligibility worker's manual, policy handbook, administrative rules or other printed guidelines for administering the child care subsidy program as **Attachment 3.1.1.**

Note: If these materials are available on the web, the Lead Agency may provide the appropriate Web site address in lieu of attaching hard copies to the Plan.

- **The Child Care Assistance Program policy manual may be found at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/childcare.htm/>**

- **The EW Technology Team website provides helpful information on all programs for eligibility workers including the child care program. <http://www.ewtechteam.com/>**
- **The North Dakota Department of Human Service website provides information on the Child Care Assistance Program at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/>**

3.1.2 In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency also have grants or contracts for child care slots?

- Yes, and **describe** the type(s) of child care services available through the grant or contract, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts: (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b))
- No.

3.1.3 Are child care services provided through certificates, grants and/or contracts offered throughout the State/Territory? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

- Yes.
- No, and **identify** the localities (political subdivisions) and services that are not offered:

3.1.4 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use. Does the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

- Yes, and the limits and the reasons for those limits are (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv)):

In-home child care is limited as it becomes more expensive for the family, as the family is responsible to ensure minimum wage is paid to the provider, plus other benefits as an employer. In-home care, by a provider residing outside the child's home, is allowed for seriously ill children and for children with disabilities so serve, it is risky to the child to be out of the home. Parents/caretakers are notified that they are responsible for minimum wage and the benefits as an employer. When the provider and the child reside in the same house, the house is considered by each to be their home. These child care providers (such as grandparents, but not a parent) must meet the same requirement as any other licensed, register, approved relative or self-certified provider. In-home child care will be allowed for the following instances and paid under the program:

1. Sick child care for days when a child is too ill to take to the regular day care provider; or
2. A child who is severely disabled and it is a hardship for the child and the family to take the child out of the home to a day care facility or home.

These situations must receive approval from the State Administrator prior to the care being provided. A family who chooses in-home care in these situations will be eligible for payment for Child Care Assistance based on the same criteria as other families who have out-of-home providers. If the provider and the child live in the same home, the care is considered to be provided in the provider's home.

No.

3.2 Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

3.2.1 Provide a copy of your payment rates as **Attachment 3.2.1**. The attached payment rates were or will be effective as of:

These rates as of July 1, 2009.

3.2.2 Are the attached payment rates provided in Attachment 3.2.1 used in all parts of the State/Territory?

Yes.

No, and other payment rates and their effective date(s) are provided as **Attachment 3.2.3**.

3.2.3 Provide a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that the attached rates are sufficient to ensure equal access to comparable child care services provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive child care assistance under the CCDF and other governmental programs. Include, at a minimum:

a) The month and year when the local market rate survey(s) was completed (§98.43(b)(2)):

The local market rate survey was completed December 2008.

A copy of the **Market Rate Survey instrument** and a **summary of the results** of the survey are provided as **Attachment 3.2.3**. At a minimum, this summary should include a description of the sample population, data source, the type of methodology used, response rate, description of analyses, and key findings.

Attached is a summary of the results from the Market Rate Survey completed December 2008.

3.2.4 Does the Lead Agency use its **current** Market Rate Survey (a survey completed within the allowable time period –10/1/07 -9/30/09) to set payment rates?

Yes.

No.

The Market Rate survey was completed December 2008 which is long after the Department of Human Services builds biennial budgets. The Market Rate survey completed in January 2007 along with information from Child Care Resource and Referral were used to build the Department’s budget which was approved in the Legislation session of 2009. Once the budget has gone through the approval process in the state, rates cannot be adjusted unless the result is cost neutral because the state is not experiencing a surplus in Child Care Assistance funds. The State continues to strive to set CCDF State rates to ensure equal access for parents/cartakers.

3.2.5 At what percentile of the **current** Market Rate Survey is the State payment rate ceiling set?

Note: If you do not use your current Market Rate Survey to set your rate ceilings or your percentile(s) varies across categories of care (e.g., type of setting, region, or age of children), **describe** and provide the range of variation in relation to your current survey.

Our rates for center and group based child care are set at 75% percentile, as demonstrated by the market rate survey completed December 2008. Infant care for center and group based child care is at 76% of the market rate survey. Infant, toddler care, preschool and school age care in all other settings is above 76% of the market rate survey. The range of percentiles start at 76% for center and group based child care for infants up to 100% for toddlers in center, group or non-relative family care.

3.2.6 Describe the relationship between the attached payment rates and the market rates observed in the current survey, including at a minimum how payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers based on the results of the above noted local market rate survey: (§98.43(b))

North Dakota's rates for licensed, self-certified, registered, or an approved relative is at 76% percentile of the market rate survey for infant care in a center and group setting. The market rate survey demonstrated the most expensive care is in a center and group care for infants. This is the category of providers that received a slight increase in July 1, 2009. This increase is the result of the legislators approving the governor's budget with the increase to center/group care. The increase further enhances access for low-income families and TANF families for center and group care along with the licensed family, self certified and approved relative care.

North Dakota does not limit access to any of the categories of child care provided in communities throughout the state.

3.2.7 Does the Lead Agency consider any additional facts to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access? (§98.43(d))

Yes. If, yes, **describe**. Yes. If, yes, **describe**.

No.

3.2.8 Does the State have any type of tiered reimbursement or differential rates?

Yes. If yes, **describe**:

No.

3.2.9 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that payment rates do not exceed the amount paid by the general public for the same service. (§98.43(a))

The Child Care Billing Report, that must be completed and signed by the provider and the parent/caretaker, includes the statement, "I certify that I have not billed this parent more than I billed private pay clients." Child Care Assistance policy manual includes a provision that providers may not charge families receiving assistance more than private pay families. The Child Care Assistance Program Provider Handbook includes this provision as well. The handbook is given to every provider that receives subsidy payments under the program.

If the Child Care Administrator discovers a provider is charging a family receiving subsidy more than private pay clients, a letter is sent informing the provider the practice is not allowed and the practice must stop.

3.3 Eligibility Criteria for Child Care

3.3.1 Age Eligibility

Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (658E©(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

- Yes. If yes, **define** physical and mental incapacity in Appendix 2, and **provide** the upper age limit

The upper age limit is 19 years of age according to Child Care poli-y - Eligible Children 400-26-10-01. Once a teen turns age 19, they are no longer eligible under the program.

- No) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 6©(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))
- Yes, and the upper age is 18
- No.

3.3.2 Income Eligibility

Complete columns (a) and (b) in Table 3.3.2 below based upon initial entry into the CCDF program. Complete Columns (c) and (d) **ONLY IF** the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI.

Table 3.3.2 Income Eligibility

			IF APPLICABLE	
			Income Level, lower than 85% SMI, if used to limit eligibility	
Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	(c) \$/month	NA
1	NA	NA	NA	58.7
2	3396	2887	1994	58.7
3	4196	3567	2463	58.7
4	4994	4245	2933	58.7
5	5793	4924	3402	58.7

Note: Table 3.3.2 should reflect maximum eligibility upon initial entry into the CCDF program.

a) Does the Lead Agency have “tiered eligibility” (i.e., a separate income limit for remaining eligible for the CCDF program)?

Yes. If yes, **provide** the requested information from Table 3.3.2 and **describe**. **Note:** This information can be included in a separate table, or by placing a “/” between the entry and exit levels.

No.

b) If the Lead Agency does not use the SMI from the most current year, **indicate** the year used:

The SMI utilized is from FY 2008 from the prior State Plan continues to be used for the current State Plan which is from October 2008.

c) These eligibility limits in column (c) became or will become effective on:
October 2003

d) How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility?
Provide the Lead Agencies definition of “income” for purposes of eligibility determination. (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

Gross income is the income before deductions for taxes, social security, or any other items. The gross income, earned and unearned, of all household members parent/caretaker, stepparent, and unmarried couples where paternity of the child in common is acknowledged or adjudicated will be used for the Child Care Assistance Unit.

The types of income listed below are illustrations of earned income:

- **Wages, salaries, commissions, bonuses, or profits received as a result of holding a job or being self-employed;**
- **Only bonuses that occur on a monthly basis will be countable.**
- **Earnings from on-the-job training provided by Workforce Investment Act (WIA);**
- **Earnings from student employment, which is different from work study;**
- **Income from internships or stipends, teaching assistanceships, or fellowships which require work participation to receive the income;**
- **Earnings of recipients employed by schools as teachers' aides, under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act;**
- **Wages received from sheltered workshop employment;**
- **Compensation for jury duty;**

- **Tips.** If tips are not shown on wage stub, the recipient's statement as to the amount of tips received each month is adequate if consistent with place, kind of employment and number of hours worked;
- **Income from boarders;**
- **Income from room rentals;**
- **Earned income in kind.** This is in-kind that is in lieu of wages, and the person has to do something to earn it (it is counted if the earned income in kind is voluntary or involuntary) (Example: individual working as an apartment manager receives a \$330 deduction from the rent):
- **Earned income from census work;**
- **Veteran Administration Benefits for maintenance needs; these are benefits not specifically earmarked for other needs; and**
- **Department of Defense (DOD) Subsistence Supplemental Allowance for Members of the Armed Forces.**

Unearned income is income not gained by current labor, service, or skill. Most unearned income is the result of past labor, services, or investments, which have enabled the individual to receive a current benefit or pension. Deductions are allowed for any expenses necessary to maintain the source of the unearned income. This includes but is not limited to: property taxes, interest on mortgage loans, and insurance premiums for coverage of potential loss.

The types of income listed below are illustrations of unearned income and must therefore be considered available in their entirety to meet need (unless it is determined to be a nonrecurring lump sum):

- **Alimony payments and child support payments; child support and court ordered spousal support received in month prior to the application month or the application month if using income that month's income is counted.**
- **Currently received benefits such as social security, veterans benefits, pensions from all sources such as railroad, North Dakota Old Age and Survivors Insurance System, private pensions, worker's compensation, unemployment benefits, union compensation during strikes, mineral leases, military allotments, etc.;**
- **Sick leave pay or loss-of-time private insurance paid for the loss of employment due to illness;**
- **Rents paid without an appreciable amount of personal involvement and effort provided as a service to the tenant, mineral lease rentals, bonus payments and royalties, dividends and interest paid from investments, and insurance;**
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of children and adults;**
- **Disability benefits;**
- **Individual Indian Monies - first \$2,000 per year from the lease of land is exempt;**
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments;**
- **Alaskan Dividend payment;**

- **Veteran Benefits for maintenance needs (when the benefit is not designated for a specific purpose such as tuition, fees, books, et cetera, it is considered to be for maintenance);**
- **Fund raising for individual tragedies if the family does have access to the funds; and**
- **Funds received from the donation of blood or plasma.**

e) Is any income deducted or excluded from total family income (e.g., work or medical expenses; child support paid to, or received from, other households; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments)?

Yes. If yes, **describe** what type of income is deducted or excluded from total family income.

If anyone in the Child Care Assistance Unit is paying child support or court ordered spousal support, that amount paid or the amount that is court ordered is used, whichever is less, can be used as a deduction.

Individuals, who are paid weekly or bi-weekly every third month, receive either a fifth or third check during the month. The fifth check in the month for a person receiving weekly checks and the third check in a month for a person receiving bi-weekly check are disregarded.

See Attachment 3.3.2 listing of the other specific income exclusions.

No.

f) **Describe** whose income is excluded for purposes of eligibility determination. **All earned income from the children in the CCAP unit is excluded.**

3.3.3 Work/Job Training or Educational Program Eligibility

a) How does the Lead Agency define “working” for the purposes of eligibility? **Describe** the specific activities that are considered “working” for purposes of eligibility determination, including minimum number of hours. (§§98.16(f)(6), 98.20(b))

For families who are involved in required work or training activities through the State Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) or Native Employment Works (NEW) programs as required by TANF, work may or may not be defined as earning a wage. For families who have transitioned off TANF and other low income families, working is defined as earning a wage. Self-employment is also defined as work and income is a factor for determining eligibility. Working also means, when a state has been determined to have a major disaster, individuals who are residing in the disaster area and are involved in unpaid work activities

(including the cleaning, repair, restoration, and re-building of homes, businesses, and schools.)

Job Search is considered work and is defined as job interviews, contacting a potential employer by direct contact at their facility, email to their place of business, and telephone contact to potential employer to seek out employment. Job Search Child Care Assistance benefits are limited to twenty hours a week. Job Search is allowed for up to twelve weeks within a calendar year

b) Does the Lead Agency provide CCDF child care assistance to parents who are attending job training or an educational program?

- Yes. If yes, how does the Lead Agency define “attending job training or educational program” for the purposes of eligibility? **Describe**, the specific activities that are considered “job training and/or educational program”, including minimum number of hours. (§§98.16(f)(3), 98.20(b)) This means going to and participating in one of the activities listed in job training and education program.

Education or training activities may include high school, basic remedial educations programs, trade schools, vocational training at colleges and universities, or other activities designed to help the participant achieve basic literacy or training needed to secure employment or retain employment. Traditional high school attendance means: taking 4 or more classes; part time is less than 4 classes. Alternative high school attendance means: the definition prescribed by the alternative education setting. “Full time” for vocational or colleges is 12 or more credit hours per semester or quarter for universities attendance. Part-time are less than 12 credit hours per semester or quarter. Vocational and trade schools will provide documentation as to what is full time or part-time.

- No.

3.3.4 Eligibility Based Upon Receiving or Needing to Receive Protective Services

a) Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children in protective services? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

- Yes. If yes, **provide** a definition of “protective services” in Appendix 2. Does the Lead Agency waive, on a case-by-case basis, the co-payment and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

- Yes.

No.

No.

b) Does the Lead Agency provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities? (§§98.20(a)(3)(ii), 98.16(f)(7))

Yes. (**NOTE:** This means that for CCDF purposes the Lead Agency considers these children to be in protective services.)

No.
Not applicable. CCDF-funded child care is not provided in cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services.

3.3.5 Additional Conditions for Determining CCDF Eligibility

Has the Lead Agency established any additional eligibility conditions for determining CCDF eligibility? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

Yes, and the additional eligibility conditions are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

Children, who are in families on TANF or Diversion Assistance, young parents participating in Crossroads are part of the Department's priority list, are also eligible for 100% of the allowable maximum costs needed for the parents/caretakers to participate in the allowable activities

No.

3.4 Priorities for Serving Children and Families

3.4.1 At a minimum, CCDF requires Lead Agencies to give priority for child care services to children with special needs, or in families with very low incomes. **Complete** Table 3.4.1 below regarding eligibility priority rules. For columns (a) through (c), **check** only one box if reply is "Yes". Leave blank if "No". **Complete** column (e) only if you check column (d).

Table 3.4.1 Priorities for Serving Children

	How does the Lead Agency prioritize the eligibility categories in Column 1?			CHECK ONLY IF APPLICABLE	
	CHECK ONLY ONE			(d)	(e)
Eligibility Categories	(a) Priority over other CCDF-eligible families	(b) Same priority as other CCDF-eligible families	(c) Guaranteed subsidy eligibility	Is there a time limit on the priority or guarantee?	How long is time limit?
Children with special needs*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Children in families with very low incomes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Families <u>receiving</u> Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Families transitioning from TANF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Families at risk of becoming dependent on TANF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

* **Required**

3.4.2 Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes service for the following CCDF-eligible children: (a) children with special needs, (b) children in families with very low incomes, and (c) other. Terms must be defined in Appendix 2. (658E(c)(3)(B))

If the State would have to develop a waiting list, the following children would be served before any others on the waiting list:

TANF children would be the first priority because they have to be served.

- 1. Children who are in families on TANF or Diversion Assistance;**
- 2. Children of young parents participating in Crossroads;**
- 3. Children whose single parent families are at risk of becoming dependent on an assistance program; and**
- 4. Special Needs Children.**

3.4.3 Describe how CCDF funds will be used to meet the needs of: (a) families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), (b) those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and (c) those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF. (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4))

3.4.1 The county social services offices administer both the TANF and CCDF at the local level. The payments for TANF and TANF Diversion Assistance clients are entered just like payments for any other CCAP client. The CCAP pays approximately \$6 million during a biennium for TANF clients.

Previously, the CCAP paid three months of Pro-Work for TANF clients transitioning off TANF. The State Legislature in the past legislative process enacted SB 2186, which mandated that six months of child care be paid to the transitioning TANF clients using the TANF debit card, which is funded with TANF funds. These clients must continue working and must have lost eligibility due to earned income. This is replacing the three-month Pro-Work Program.

North Dakota does not have a waiting list nor is there a limit to the amount of time a client can be on CCAP. Our sliding fee scale, with the addition of the maximum family payment as part of the determination of the client's co-pay, insures that clients who are at risk of becoming dependent can access child care through the CCAP.

3.4.4 Has the Lead Agency established additional priority rules that are not reflected in the table completed for Section 3.4.1? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

- Yes, and the additional priority rules are: **(Terms must be listed and defined in Appendix 2)**
- No.

3.4.5 Does the Lead Agency serve all eligible families that apply?

- Yes.
- No.

3.4.6 Does the Lead Agency have a waiting list of eligible families that they are unable to serve?

- Yes. If yes, **describe**. At a minimum, the description should indicate:

- a) Whether the waiting list is maintained for all eligible families or for certain populations?
- b) Whether the waiting list is maintained for the entire State/Territory or for individual localities?
- c) What methods are employed to keep the list current?

No.

3.5 Sliding Fee Scale for Child Care Services

3.5.1 The statute and regulations require Lead Agencies to establish a sliding fee scale that varies based on income and the size of the family to be used in determining each family's contribution (co-payment) to the cost of child care (§98.42).

- a) **Attach** the sliding fee scale as **Attachment 3.5.1**.
- b) **Describe** how the sliding fee scale is administered, including how the family's contribution is determined and how the co-payment is assessed and collected:

The sliding fee scale is used to determine each family's contribution to the cost of their care. It is a scale in which a family's share and provider payments are determined based on family size and income. Co-pay or family share is the difference between what the program will pay of the maximum allowable and what the provider charges for services. c) The attached sliding fee scale was or will be effective as of October 2003.

- d) Does the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

Yes, and **describe** those additional factors:

The co-pay amount is first determined using family size and income. That amount is compared to the maximum family payment for the family size and income. The family pays the lesser of the two amounts. In addition, the family will pay the difference between what the provider charges and the maximums allowed under the program.

The maximum family payments assist families who have large child care bills. These families usually have a number of very young children or have large families with a number of children in child care.

No.

3.5.2 Is the sliding fee scale provided as Attachment 3.5.1 used in all parts of the State?
(658E(c)(3)(B))

- Yes.
- No, and other scale(s) and their effective date(s) are provided as **Attachment 3.5.2.**

3.5.3 The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size, (§98.42(c)), and the poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is: \$1,525.83

The Lead Agency must **select ONE** of these options:

- ALL families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.
- ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.
- SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee. **Describe** these families:

**TANF clients;
Diversion Assistance clients; and
Crossroads clients are young parents who have not completed high school.**

3.5.4 Does the Lead Agency allow providers to charge parents the difference between the maximum reimbursement rate and their private pay rate?

- Yes.
- No.

3.5.5 Describe how the co-payments required by the Lead Agency's sliding fee scale(s) are affordable: (§98.43(b)(3))

The co-pays, which are determined by the sliding fee scale, are a percentage of the allowable child care billing by the provider. Based on the family size and gross income, the state pays a percentage of the allowable charges with the remainder being the responsibility of the family. The co-pay graduates upward with the increase income of the family.

The family cap payment is the second factor to ensure that the co-pays are affordable for families. The family cap usually is used to set the client's co-pay when the family has high child care expenses when there are larger than average number of children or, a number of children under the age of six. After the family's co-pay is determined based on the sliding fee scale, it is compared to the family cap. The family pays the lower of the two amounts. The sliding fee scale includes the cap amount for each family size along with the percentage on the sliding fee scale.

A family of three has a gross income of \$1,400. Based on the sliding fee scale, CCAP would pay 55% of the allowable costs. If there were two children with an allowable costs of \$360, based on the sliding fee scale the family would pay \$324, which would be 23% of the family income. Because of the family maximum payment, the family would pay \$212, which is 15% of their income.

PART 4 PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Application Process / Parental Choice

4.1.1 Describe the process for a family to apply for and receive child care services (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §98.16(k), 98.30(a) through (e)). At minimum, describe:

- a) How parents are informed of the availability of child care services under CCDF (i.e., parental choice of child care services through a certificate or grant of contract)

The brochure “DN 861, Child Care Assistance Program “ is available in the all county social service offices and various locations such as Head Start Programs, clinics, hospitals, grocery stores, child care centers, and CCR&R’s. A copy of the brochure is on the North Dakota Human Service web site at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/>. The brochure states parent/caretakers have the right to choose their own provider, whether the provider is a non-profit or profit, sectarian or relatives.

The parent/caretaker may choose an approved relative, self-certified, family home, group home, or center to provide the care. There is also a section on the brochure titled, “Help Find Child Care,” which lists the telephone number of the CCR&R offices. The CCR&R offices can assist the parent/caretaker in finding the type of child care the parent/caretaker is seeking in the location that the parent/caretaker needs child care.

In addition, “DN 108, Comparison of Licensed and Unlicensed Child Care” lists the differences between the basic requirements for licensed providers and the legally non-licensed providers.

- b) How parents can apply for CCDF services

Child Care Assistance Program clients can apply without an interview by completing an application and returning to their local county social service office. Individuals can access an application on the Child Care web site or on the State e-forms web site. Applicants can also pick up an application from the county or have the county social service office mail one to them. Child care providers and Head Start offices keep application on hand at their facilities. The applicant can then mail or bring the application to their local county social service offices.

- c) What documentation parents provide as part of their application to determine eligibility

Parents/caretakers must provide all required documentation of earned income for the adults in the CCAP household unit and unearned income for all CCAP

household members from the month prior to the application. If the household is claiming a deduction for child support and court ordered spousal support paid for individuals outside of the CCAP household there must be verifications. There are three types of verification of child support paid that can be used:

1. Eligibility worker receives information from an interface for child support which all eligibility workers have access to.
2. The applicant provides a notice from child support verifying the amount they are deducting from their income.
3. Pay stubs may be used to verify the deductions.

If the child's citizenship or resident alien status is questionable, the parent/caretaker may be asked to submit proof of the child's citizenship or alien status.

In North Dakota, if the client is on another Economic Assistance Program, the eligibility worker may have this information as it may have already been submitted for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Health Care Coverage Programs including Medicaid, or Healthy Steps.

d) How parents who receive TANF benefits are informed about the exception to individual penalties as described in 4.4

Both the eligibility workers and the employment contractors for the JOBS Program notify the client of this exception by mailing notices to the client or explaining the penalties to the client during the initial interview and subsequent meetings with the client.

e) What steps the Lead Agency has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

The on-line access to the application provides greater access for the clients. In addition, the clients do not have to come to the county social services offices to apply or submit needed verification. All the contacts with the eligibility workers can be by phone, email, fax or mail.

Once the client is eligible for the subsidy assistance and continues to meet all the Program requirements, they can continue to participate in the Program for an unlimited time as long as all program requirements are met.

f) **Attach** a copy of your parent application for the child care subsidy program as **Attachment 4.1.1.**

4.1.2 Is the application process different for families receiving TANF?

Yes, and **describe** how the process is different:

The client may apply for CCAP and TANF using the same application at the same county social service office. The TANF program requires that a new applicant has an interview with an eligibility worker.

No.

4.1.3 What is the length of eligibility period upon initial authorization of CCDF services?

The certificate length varies based on activity/programs. There are three-month certificate for job search and for new employment if the client is not already in a work activity and a mother that has been on maternity leave. A four-month certificate is issued for Diversion Assistance. A six-month certificate is issued for TANF recipients, allowable students, and employed household. A certificate for Crossroads will be the length that the State Office Crossroads Program Administrator authorizes in the Crossroads approval letter.

If the client needed and utilized child care the month prior to the application month, an additional month is added to the length of the certificate.

a) Is the initial authorization for eligibility the same for all CCDF eligible families?

Yes.

No

4.1.4 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that parents are informed about their ability to choose from among family child care and group home child care, center-based care and in-home care, including faith-based providers in each of these categories.

Parents may either call Child Care Resource and Referral at their toll-free number or go to their website for referrals and the consumer education information below which was retrieved from: <http://www.ndchildcare.org/main/parents.htm>

“Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions that parents make.” Finding child care, however, can be challenging. You, and only you, know your child’s needs and the kind of care most appropriate for your child. Taking the time to find good child care will result in peace of mind while you are away from your child, knowing she will be safe, having fun, and learning. Contact CCR&R’s referral specialists for any of your child care questions.

Child Care Resource and Referral has prepared resources to help you understand child care in North Dakota.

- [A Parents Guide to Selecting Child Care](#) (PDF)
- [Child Care Checklist](#) (PDF)

- **Child Care Financial Assistance Program**
<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/childcare.html>
- [Licensing Rules and Regulations](#)
- [Child Care Costs](#)

CCR&R refers families to all licensed programs. Although on site child care sponsored by a religious entity is not required to be licensed, they may choose to be licensed, thereby allowing CCR&R to share their program's information with parents.

Having the referral service and consumer information available on line has increased parental access to child care.

The pamphlet "DN 861, Child Care Assistance Program" is available in the county social service offices and various locations such as the Head Start Programs where parents are likely to be. In the pamphlet it states that parents have the right to choose their own provider, whether the provider is a non-profit or profit, sectarian or relatives. The parent can choose an approved relative, self-certified, family home, group home, or center to provide the care. In addition, there is a section "Help Find Child Care" which lists the telephone number of the CCR&R offices. The CCR&R offices can assist the parent in finding the type of child care the parent is seeking in the location that the parent needs child care.

In addition, "DN 108, Comparison of Licensed and Unlicensed Child Care" lists the differences between the basic requirements for licensed providers and the legally non-licensed providers. DN 108 will be provided to all clients that apply for Child Care.

4.1.5 Describe how the Lead Agency reaches out and provides services to eligible families with limited English proficiency, including how the Lead Agency overcomes language barriers with families and providers.

The CCR&R programs at Lutheran Social Services/faith based agency and Lakes and Prairies Community Action have a service access plan, which documents how the agency will ensure meaningful access to program information and services for all persons, including those with limited English language proficiency or people with disabilities. This includes working with bilingual staff, contracting for interpretive services, and using relay services.

County child care licensing staff members also have strategies to overcome language barriers with families and providers. The approaches used to assist with parent-licensor and provider-licensor discussions regarding child care options and rules vary across the state depending upon demographics, languages spoken, and resources available in and to each county. They include but are not limited to: requests for translators; working with friends, family members or neighbors; using a website for translation (such as <http://www.freetranslation.com/>); using the language translation software available through Microsoft©. For hearing impaired clients/providers, licensors may write their conversations out, use relay North Dakota for telephone contacts, or contact the ND

School for the Deaf for resource support. If an individual is visually impaired the ND School for the Blind may be contacted for resource support. In all cases, the appropriate releases for information would be completed as the initial step in order to protect confidentiality.

The eligibility workers have access to translators that will assist them in interviewing the clients according to confidentiality rules.

4.2 Records of Parental Complaints

Describe how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints about providers and makes substantiated parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32))

The SFN 1269, Child Care Concern Form, which may be accessed on the Department of Human Services' web site at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/>, was developed to document child care concerns and complaints. Child Care Resource and Referral staff; food program sponsors; and county, regional, or central office licensing staff can initiate this form. The process may also be initiated by parents or concerned individuals. Licensed and self-certified providers must notify parents about how to file concerns and complaints. (NDCC 50-11.1-07.2) A sample form is available for providers to share with parents and employees to illustrate how to make a report.

Complaints/concerns from parents, neighbors or any citizen regarding licensed and self-certified providers are directed to the appropriate county social service office. The county licensor investigates all concerns and complaints and provides a summary of the investigation on the 1269 form. Substantiated complaints/concerns that result in a determination that a licensure rule has been violated are subject to corrective action by the provider. The county social service office has the responsibility to issue correction orders. When the county office determines that a complaint merits further corrective action, the 1269 form is routed to the Department of Human Services Early Childhood Services regional offices.

The Early Childhood Services Regional Supervisor reviews the complaint and consults with the Early Childhood Services Administrator when considering the issuance of a denial, revocation, or suspension. The regional office is responsible for informing the provider of the final decision/corrective action and of possible penalties associated with continued operation in violation of the denial, revocation, or suspension.

County social service offices and regional early childhood offices maintain lists containing all licensed and self-certified providers who have been subject to a corrective action based upon a substantiated complaint and shall make the lists/information available to the public upon request.

4.3 Unlimited Access to Children in Child Care Settings

Provide a detailed description of the Lead Agency procedures for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds. (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31))

The child care licensing administrative rule regarding parents’ unlimited access to their children states, “Parents are provided unlimited access and opportunities to observe their children at any time while in care, and are provided regular opportunities to meet with caregivers before and during enrollment to discuss their children’s needs.”

As part of the parent/consumer component, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies provide parents/caretakers with a hand book, *Finding and Using Child Care in North Dakota*, which contains information regarding unlimited parental access to their children while in care.

The “DN 861, Child Care Assistance Program” brochure given to parents and caretakers, has a section stating that parent/caretaker must be given unlimited access to their children and to the providers, who are providing care, during the operating hours of the child care facility.

The “DN 357, Child Care Assistance, Provider Handbook” states “Parents must be given unlimited access to the child(ren) and providers caring for the child(ren) during normal hours of operation.”

The Child Care Assistance certificate allows the parent/caretaker to select a provide of their choosing and does not restrict their options.

The Child Care Subsidy Manual in section “400-26-30-10, Parental Access” also addresses this issue.

4.4 Criteria or Definitions Applied by TANF Agency to Determine Inability to Obtain Child Care

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care:

NOTE: The TANF agency, not the Child Care Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record. The TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions is:

North Dakota Department of Human Services.

- "appropriate child care": **The inability to obtain appropriate child care which includes licensed center-based provider, licensed family home child care providers, self-certified home child care provider under North Dakota Century Code 50-11.1, or relative child care providers who are not required to be licensed or registered.**
- "reasonable distance": **Child Care is unobtainable at a location such that the usual commuting time from the parent's home to the location at which child care is provided, or on to the parent's worksite, is one hour or less.**
- "unsuitability of informal child care": **The client must show that the unavailability or unsuitability of informal care is not an option with either a relative or other legally non-licensed provider.**
- "affordable child care arrangements": **Child Care is unobtainable, from a child care provider licensed or self-certified under North Dakota Century Code Chapter 50-11-1, at a rate equal to or less than 1.1 times the market survey average rate for child care provider to children of the age of the Parent's child in the region in which the parent lives.**

PART 5
ACTIVITIES & SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF
CHILD CARE

5.1 Quality Targeted Funds and Set-Asides

Federal appropriations law has targeted portions of the CCDF for quality improvement and for services for infants and toddlers, child care resource and referral (CCR&R) and school-age child care. For each targeted fund, provide the following information.

5.1.1 Infants and Toddlers: Needs amendment and compare to guidance

Note: For the infant and toddler targeted funds, the Lead Agency must **provide** the maximum age of a child who may be served with such targeted funds (not to exceed 36 months).

a) **Describe** the activities provided with these targeted funds

The Infant-Toddler (I-T) targeted funds support the increase of quality care to children in child care ages 0-36 months. CCR&R provides statewide Program for Infant Toddler Care© (PITC) training to I-T caregivers and I-T directors and supervisors using trainers that have been certified by PITC. (Professional development for PITC trainers was supported by the A. Bush Foundation.)

In November of 2008, the Department of Human Services elected to fund the Infant-Toddler Quality Improvement Project (QIP) initiative. The Department's decision was to fund QIP for the balance on the current fiscal year (December 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) and to continue to fund QIP for the next biennium (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011).

CCR&R continues to manage I-T QIP works with 30 I-T center classrooms and 24 family/group child care providers on an annual basis. Programs participating in the program receive quality improvement grants, intensive training at no charge, and monthly on-site technical assistance visits from an early childhood specialist and child care nurse consultants. CCDF supports the administrative costs for this program and training. State dollars support direct costs, which include consultation and technical assistance salaries and quality improvement grants).

b) **Identify** the entities providing the activities

**Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral
Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral**

c) **Describe** the expected results of the activities.

The quality of infant-toddler child care in programs participating in QIP has increased. Using the *Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale*®, and *Family Child Care Environmental Scale*®, CCR&R measures the quality of care when a program comes into the QIP and again upon completion. Programs that have participated in QIP realize a 15% increase in the quality of their care over a six month period. Programs participating for 12 months have averaged a 30% increase in the quality of their infant-toddler care.

The CCR&R's will continue to deliver PITC and The Zero to Three *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care* curriculum training in classroom settings and will continue to convert the content into online training formats to include self-study options as well as interactive learning options.

5.1.2 Resource and Referral Services:

a) **Describe** the activities provided with these targeted funds

Parent and Consumer Education

The CCR&R's maintain an up-to-date database of licensed public and private child care services using NaccrraWare. The CCR&R's assist families in their search for quality child care by supplying families with individualized referrals via phone, e-mail, on-line, and in person, to all types of licensed child care as well as resources to help parents evaluate and choose appropriate care for their children.

Since July 2007, CCR&R's helped 9,552 families find child care for 16,227 children. Ninety-nine percent of families completing a follow-up survey indicated that they would recommend CCR&R to other people.

These agencies will continue to offer referrals via phone, e-mail, on-line (www.ndchildcare.org) or in-person. The on-line option has been promoted by Job Service sites (including tribal), county and other social service agencies, Chambers of Commerce, and employers to support parental choice of child care with quality consumer education information and child care options.

Resources developed to promote the availability of CCR&R to help parents find child care that meets their needs, such as *Finding and Using Child Care in North Dakota* and the *Child Care Checklist*, are available on line and are disseminated at social services agencies, parenting centers, schools, public health, real estate offices, housing offices on college and university campuses.

CCR&R also helps parents determine if they might be eligible for child care assistance and then connects them to their county social service agency.

Community Services

The two CCR&R's work in partnership to facilitate communication between the child care community and relevant community services. They recruit licensed providers as

needed based upon community assessments and collect, compile and disseminate child care data.

In 2008, these agencies provided support to 243 new child care programs, increasing the capacity of child care in North Dakota by 434. A “State of Child Care in North Dakota” report was compiled and disseminated to community and policy leaders.

CCR&R’s represent child care interests by working with United Way; state level and local Chambers of Commerce; state-level, county, and local Economic Development entities; and social service collaborations.

The CCR&R’s partnered with the county licensing agents and ND now delivers a consistent, statewide child care center orientation and start-up process. Information has been posted on-line at <http://www.ndchildcare.org> and <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/>. CCR&R completed a center manual, specific to starting a child care center in ND, *Starting and Expanding a Child Care Center*. This manual can also be found at <http://www.ndchildcare.org>.

b) Identify the entities providing the activities

**Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral
Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral**

a) Describe the expected results of the activities.

- Families have increased access to resources for choosing child care.
- The number of quality child care slots increases.
- Communities have a better understanding of the role of child care in economic development.
- Centers will start-up or expand with proper guidance thereby making the best use of their resources.
- The child care program retention rates will increase

5.1.3 School-Age Child Care:

a) Describe the activities provided with these targeted funds.

The CCR&R’s continue to deliver training relevant to school-age care programs including Jump Start basic training and Keys to Quality School-Age Care, including training for school-aged center directors. Delivery of this training will continue in both classroom settings as well as online formats.

Technical assistance on program start-up and operations is available through CCR&R’s.

Outreach to unlicensed school-age providers is initiated by county licensors.

b) Identify the entities providing the activities

- **Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral**
- **Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral**
- **County Child Care Licensors**

c) Describe the expected results of the activities.

- **The availability and quality of school-age child care increases.**
- **Professional development relevant to caring for school age children is more accessible.**

5.1.4 The law requires that not less than 4% of the CCDF be set aside for quality activities. (658E(c)(3)(B), 658G, §§98.13(a), 98.16(h), 98.51) The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount and percentage will be used for the quality activities (not including targeted funds) during the 1-year period: October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010:

\$1,240,669 (11%)

5.1.5 Check each activity in Table 5.1.5 that the Lead Agency will undertake to improve the availability and quality of child care (include activities funded through the 4% quality set-aside as well as the targeted funds for quality activities). (658D(b)(1)(D), 658E(c)(3)(B), §§98.13(a), 98.16(h)). **CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.**

Table 5.1.5 Activities to Improve the Availability and Quality of Child Care

Activity	Check if undertaking/ will undertake	Name and type of entity providing activity	Check if non-governmental entity
Comprehensive consumer education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ND Department of Human Services contractor to be determined ND Department of Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Child care licensors employed by North Dakota County Social Service Boards Early Childhood Services	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES IN: North Dakota
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/09 – 9/30/11

Activity	Check if undertaking/ will undertake	Name and type of entity providing activity	Check if non-governmental entity
		Regional Supervisors employed by the state Early Childhood Services Administrator Child and Adult Care Food Program contractors	
Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities to support a Quality Rating System	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Early Children Services Professional Development Committee, Quality Rating and Improvement Sub Committee Core and Design Workgroups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Activities to promote inclusive child care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Early Childhood Services Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lakes and Prairies Community Action Child Care Resource and Referral Lutheran Social Services of ND Child Care Resource and Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Early Childhood Services Office will determine who the contractor(s) will be via the Request for Proposal process	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.1.6 For each activity checked in Table 5.1.5, a) **describe** the expected results of the activity.
b) If you have conducted an evaluation of this activity, **describe the results**. If you have not conducted an evaluation, **describe** how you will evaluate the activities.

Comprehensive consumer education:

Please see 5.1.2.a. above for a) and b)

Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards: Clean up

Activity: The Infant Toddler Quality Improvement Project Initiative

Department of Human Services decision:

In November of 2008, the Department of Human Services elected to fund the Infant-Toddler Quality Improvement Project (QIP) initiative. The Department's decision was to fund QIP for the balance fiscal year that just ended (December 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) and to continue to fund QIP for the next biennium (July 1, 2009 through June 30th, 2011).

Department of Human Services decision:

In November of 2008, the Department of Human Services elected to fund the Infant-Toddler Quality Improvement Project (QIP) initiative when the A. Bush Foundation of St, Paul, MN changed its mission and foci and declined their continued funding for this initiative. The Department's decision was to fund QIP for the balance fiscal year that just ended (December 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) and to continue to fund QIP for the next biennium (July 1, 2009 through June 30th, 2011).

Results:

Twenty-four family child care providers and 30 center-based infant-toddler classrooms will participate in the quality improvement projects. Programs receiving funds are able to increase their Environmental Rating Scale scores by an average of 15 percent.

Evaluation:

The Child Care Resource and Referrals provide quarterly reports to the Early Childhood Services Administrators. Environmental Rating Scale scores are compiled, aggregated by subcategories and analyzed to determine the extent to which grants support quality improvements.

Activity: Quality Improvement and Professional Development-Quality Grants to Providers

New legislation: Quality Improvement and Professional Development

This initiative, with an effective date of August 1, 2009, authorizes the Department of Human Services to spend North Dakota's anticipated CCDF BG ARRA funds to support expansion of professional development and quality. With this change to North Dakota Century Code (state statute for Early Childhood Services), the Department of Human Services, through the Early Childhood Services Administrator, will issue a Request for Proposal to solicit vendors to support cohorts of family/group programs and cohorts of centers through an additional quality initiative that will involve entire programs and/or centers. The initiative includes initial and concluding assessments,

incentives to be used to meet quality standards, full scholarships for CDA's, early childhood specialist consultation, child care health consultation, child care business plan consultation, and low-cost/no-cost provider training.

New legislation: Quality Improvement and Professional Development

ND Early Childhood Services HB 1418 enrolled version:

<http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/61-2009/bill-text/JATN0400.pdf>

ARRA: With an effective date of August 1, 2009, the North Dakota 2009 Legislative Session passed and signed into law House Bill 1418. This authorizes the Department of Human Services to spend North Dakota's anticipated CCDF BG ARRA funds (3.6 mil) to support expansion of professional development and quality initiatives. With this change to North Dakota Century Code (state statute for Early Childhood Services), the Department of Human Services, through the Early Childhood Services Administrator, will issue a Request for Proposal to solicit vendors to support cohorts of family/group programs and cohorts of centers through an additional quality initiative that will involve entire programs and/or centers. The initiative will include initial and concluding assessments, incentives to be used to meet quality standards, full scholarships for CDA's, early childhood specialist consultation, child care health consultation, child care business plan consultation, and low-cost/no-cost provider training.

Results:

It is anticipated that child care programs participating in this initiative will increase their environmental assessment scores an average of 20% over the course of the project, thereby increasing the quality of child care available to low-income families in North Dakota. This initiative will also preserve and create additional positions, including child care health consultants, child care business consultants, and early childhood consultants. As child care staff members are among the lowest paid workers in North Dakota, the low-cost/no-cost training in this initiative will serve to minimize financial barriers to training.

Evaluation:

The contracted awarded this work will provide quarterly reports to the Early Childhood Services Administrators. Environmental Rating Scale scores will be compiled, aggregated by subcategories and analyzed to determine the extent to which grants support quality improvements.

Activity: Business Planning and Capacity Building Grants-funded with state general funds through the Department of Commerce

New Legislation authorizes the Department of commerce to fund child care business planning, infrastructure, and child care capacity building grants, and will fund some administrative expenses with state general funds.

Results:

The intent of this new legislation is to increase the capacity and quality of child care available to families.

Evaluation:

This initiative is housed in the Department of Commerce; therefore the Early Childhood Services Administrator will not be evaluating this activity. The Department of Commerce has been asked to collaborate on this work with the CCR&Rs by the legislature.

Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements:

Activity: Compliance and consistency in licensing processes

North Dakota County Social Service Boards employ child care licensors to monitor compliance. County directors are the immediate supervisors of the county licensors. On a quarterly basis, the Early Childhood Services (ECS) Administrator convenes the State Early Childhood Services Team consisting of 8 county licensors, 2 county directors, the 5 ECS regional supervisors (employed by the state), CCR&R directors, select CCR&R staff members, and others, to clarify regulatory requirements, to support licensing compliance, and to strengthen communication between licensing and R&R staff members.

Child and Adult Care Food Program Department of Public Instruction contractors assist the counties with monitoring for compliance with licensing requirements. Representatives for the Child and Adult Care Food Program visit the child care programs enrolled their reimbursement program approximately three times each year. When they witness a questionable practice or note that a provider is “over numbers” they will notify that county’s licensor.

The “All Licensor” Training was held in March of 2009. Presentations included:

- The Impact of Trauma on the Developing Child: Implications for Child, Family, and Community, Dr. Bruce Perry
- Integrating Developmentally Appropriate Practice into Licensing Practice, Dr. JoAnne Yearwood
- Integrating Early Learning Guidelines into Licensing Practice, Dr. Linda Jagielo and Amy Jenkins, licensor
- National Association for Regulatory Agencies Curriculum: Balancing the Use of Authority, Mitzi Lee, NARA trainer
- National Association for Regulatory Agencies Curriculum: Ethics in Licensing Practice, Mitzi Lee, NARA trainer

In addition to all county child care licensors, all Tribal child care licensing and registration staff members, all ECS State Team members, and all CCR&R staff members were invited.

Results:

Child care programs are monitored in a consistent fashion and receive common messages from staff from counties, regions, the state and CCR&Rs. Information gleaned from monitoring and supervision is used to determine needs for licensor training and potential policy, rule, and statutory revisions. Review of licensing violations helps CCR&Rs to determine provider training and technical assistance foci.

Evaluation:

ECS Regional Supervisors review the documentation collected by county licensors for licensure, self certification affidavits, and in-home providers and represent the State of North Dakota in making the approval or denial decision. ECS Regional Supervisors also supervise county licensors programmatically.

The Early Childhood Services Administrator supervises the Early Childhood Services Regional Supervisors programmatically. The Early Childhood Services Administrator assists in decision making with licensors and regional supervisors on all possible suspensions, denials, revocations, and provisionals for all early childhood services provider types.

Activity: Early Childhood Services Advisory Board

New legislation authorizes the Department of Human Services to establish a seven-member Early Childhood Services Advisory Board for the purposes of reviewing and making recommendations on the Early Childhood Services Administrative Code (child care rules) and is effective July 1, 2009. With this change to North Dakota Early Childhood Services Century Code (state statute), the Department of Human Services is developing policies and procedures for board membership and operation. The board will be composed of providers from diverse geographic locations in North Dakota and diverse provider types will be represented. Reimbursements for board member travel expenses are provided.

Results:

It is expected this process will engage the provider community early-on in reviewing proposed Early Childhood Services rules. The Early Childhood Services Advisory Board is to “make recommendations to the department regarding changes and revisions to the early childhood services rules. The recommendations, the goal of which is to streamline and improve the quality of the early childhood services process, must seek to balance the need for rules that ensure safe quality child care with the need to revise or eliminate rules that create unnecessary barriers for early childhood service providers.”

Evaluation:

The Department will be developing policies and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the Early Childhood Services Advisory Board.

Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance:

Activity: Professional Development

The Early Childhood Services Administrator contracts with CCR&R’s to provide training to North Dakota child care personnel in a variety of formats: in-person, correspondence, self-paced on-line distance learning (asynchronous) and instructor-led on-line distance learning (synchronous).

Using North Dakota’s Growing Futures Professional Development Plan as a guide, CCR&R developed a cohesive approach to workforce training based on a learning paths model that supports progressive knowledge and skill development. The learning paths

integrate North Dakota Core Competencies, North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines, national professional development initiatives, and evidence-based best practices. For example, the core knowledge block includes: ND Licensing Statute and Rules, Early Learning Guidelines, Health and Safety (sanitation, injury prevention, SIDS, Shaken Baby, emergency preparedness), Environments, and Establishing Relationships. Please see attachment 5.1.6 xx ND Learning Paths Planning Guide.

The North Dakota CCR&R Child Development Associate (CDA) distance learning program is offered as both a for-credit course in partnership with NDSU Distance and Continuing Education and as a non-credit course available through CCR&R with open and ongoing online registration.

CCR&R contacts all new providers to offer an on-site technical assistance visit and makes available TA services (phone or on-site) to all providers as requested on topics including licensing, zoning, health and safety, facility design and arrangement, staff management, child development, program and budget development, and assistance in finding information from other sources. The CCR&R's also maintain the Child Care Business Center to provide technical assistance and consultation, and to form partnerships and attract investments to improve the business and financial practices of child care programs.

Results:

Early childhood personnel will have increased access to professional development. North Dakota child care personnel will also share a foundation of core knowledge and competencies.

North Dakota Early Childhood Services Professional Development System, Growing Futures, will have a strong/sturdy/stable/robust/enduring/ and well defined training infrastructure.

Evaluation:

Since July, 2007, 51 individuals have taken the CDA course to complete the 120 hour training requirements for the national CDA Credential. The on-line training registry was launched in March 2008. This includes a real-time online calendar of CCR&R training events, on-line registration and secured credit card payment, and on-line management of personal training data.

The number of individuals who register for CCR&R training on-line continues to increase daily as people access the system and create personal profiles. In 2008, CCR&R delivered 257 trainings (992 hours) for the early childhood workforce in which there were 4,324 participants.

Newly designed reporting for CCR&R's training will be used for evaluation in the areas of preferred topics, formats, the training assessment process, and what learning occurred.

Activity: Quality Improvement and Professional Development-technical assistance and trainings for providers

ARRA: see initiative description- Page 66

The initiative includes initial and concluding assessments, incentives to be used to meet quality standards, full scholarships for CDA's, early childhood specialist consultation, child care health consultation, child care business plan consultation, and low-cost/no-cost training.

This contract will also support the continued implementation of North Dakota's Growing Futures Professional Development Plan including additional trainings via distance learning formats at a lower cost to all child care staff members and providers.

Results:

It is anticipated that child care programs participating in this training over the course of the project will improve their care giving techniques and early learning facilitation skills, thereby increasing the quality of child care available to low-income families in North Dakota. This initiative will also preserve and create additional training positions. As child care staff members are among the lowest paid workers in North Dakota, the low cost no cost training will assist them financially.

Evaluation:

The contractor will deliver quarterly reports to the Early Childhood Services Administrator. Reports will include, but are not limited to, the following information:

- Number of programs that increased their environmental assessment scores an average of 20% over the course of the project.
- Anecdotal reports of participants related to their experience in the project (what worked, what didn't, how to improve, etc.);
- Number of positions for child care health consultants, child care business consultants, and early childhood consultants that were retained or created;
- The number of child care providers and staff members working toward and/or completing their CDA's; and
- Overall cost savings attributed to additional training delivered to child care providers and staff members participating in this initiative.

Activities to support a Quality Rating System:

Activity: Continuing the implementation of a Quality Improvement System

The Early Children Services Professional Development Committee, Quality Rating and Improvement Sub Committee Core and Design Workgroups, with funding from Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (ECCS grant), completed extensive planning work on a QRIS in North Dakota that integrated prior work and plans for recommendation to the Department of Human Services for adoption. Please see attachments:

5.1.6. xx ND QRIS Activities 2008

5.1.6.xx ND QRIS visual overview of integration

5.1.6. xx ND QRIS background & overview

5.1.6. xx ND QRIS standard categories, levels, and benchmarks

5.1.6. xx ND QRIS supports and incentives

The Department of Human Services, through the Early Childhood Services Administrator, will issue a Request for Proposals to solicit vendors to support cohorts of family/group programs and cohorts of centers through this additional quality initiative that will involve entire programs and/or centers. This initiative includes initial and concluding assessments, incentives to be used to meet quality standards, full scholarships for CDA's, early childhood specialist consultation, child care health consultation, child care business plan consultation, and low-cost/no-cost training for providers.

Results:

It is anticipated that child care programs participating in this initiative will increase their environmental assessment scores an average of 20% over the course of the project, thereby increasing the quality of child care available to low-income families in North Dakota. This initiative will also preserve and create additional positions, including child care health consultants, child care business consultants, and early childhood consultants. As child care staff members are among the lowest paid workers in North Dakota, the low-cost/no-cost training in this initiative will assist them financially.

Evaluation:

Contractor will provide the Early Childhood Services Administrator with monthly reports.

Activity: Supporting of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development

The CCR&Rs deliver training opportunities which include Care to Read, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum, and Safe Active Play.

The Early Childhood Services Office will continue to roll-out North Dakota's new Birth to Three Early Learning Guidelines with assistance from the CCR&Rs.

Results:

Child care providers have access to professional development opportunities that provide information on school readiness activities.

Evaluation:

CCR&R's provide the Early Childhood Services Administrator with quarterly reports of their activities and an annual report of the state of child care in North Dakota.

Activity: Promoting inclusive child care

The CCR&R's continue to deliver training opportunities which include Project Exceptional training to assist providers in the identification, referral, support and inclusion of children with developmental concerns. Child care health consultant nurses from the CCR&R's assist caregivers in developing special care plans for children with

special needs. The expulsion survey was completed to determine the extent to which children are asked to leave child care settings.

Results:

Parents and providers have access to specialized information to make informed decisions about accommodating children with special needs in child care settings.

Evaluation:

CCR&R provides the Early Childhood Services Administrator with quarterly reports of their activities.

Activity: Promoting the social and emotional development of children (Healthy ChildCare America)

CR&R's employs 2.5 FTE nurses as Child Care Health Consultants. They provide specialized child care health and safety information through training, technical assistance and consultation in child care settings, including diapering, hand washing, sanitation, illness exclusion, immunizations, health policies, infant sleep, feeding and nutrition.

Results:

Child care programs, licensers and community health professionals are familiar with the standards outlined in Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care Program.

Evaluation:

The CCR&R's provide the Early Childhood Services Administrator with quarterly reports of their activities.

5.2 Early Learning Guidelines and Professional Development Plans

5.2.1 Status of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop, implement, or revise research-based early learning guidelines (content standards) for three-to-five year-olds. **NOTE: Check only one box that best describes the status of your State/Territory's three-to-five-year-old guidelines.**

- Planning.** The State is planning for the development of early learning guidelines. Expected date of plan completion: If possible, respond to questions 5.2.2 through 5.2.4.
- Developing.** The State is in the process of developing early learning guidelines. Expected date of completion: If possible, respond to questions 5.2.2 through 5.2.4.
- Developed.** The State has approved the early learning guidelines, but has not yet developed or initiated an implementation plan. The early learning guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1, if available.**

- Implementing.** In addition to having developed early learning guidelines, the State has embarked on implementation efforts which may include dissemination, training or embedding guidelines in the professional development system. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1.a.**
- Revising.** The State has previously developed early learning guidelines and is now revising those guidelines. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1.**
- Other. Describe:**

a) Describe the progress made by the State/Territory in developing, implementing, or revising early learning guidelines for early learning since the date of submission of the 2008-2009 State Plan. Efforts to develop early learning guidelines for children birth to three or older than five may be described here.

Since submission and amendments to ND's 2008-2009 State Plan, the Early Childhood Services Administrator has focused on distribution of the Three through Five Years document and conducted training, with a county licensor, for all child care licensors addressing the integration of the guidelines within their licensing work. The CCR&R's have been integrating Early Learning Guidelines into all the modules that comprise the Learning Paths.

The Minnesota Indicators of Progress for Ages Birth to Three document was adapted to North Dakota during the spring of 2009 and 4000 copies were printed before the end of state fiscal year on June 30, 2009. Copies were distributed to all Early Head Start Programs and the majority of the copies were supplied to the North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral network for distribution to their trainer network, Infant-Toddler Quality Improvement Project participants (in Right from the Start and the Quality Enhancement Project) and participants in relevant trainings (such as language development, math, creativity, etc.). They were also distributed to members of the North Dakota Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium for inclusion in relevant early childhood development and teacher education courses. Part C Early Intervention partners and practitioners also received copies for integration into their current and future practice.

b) If developed, are the guidelines aligned with K-12 content standards or other standards (e.g., Head Start Child Outcomes, State Performance Standards)?

- Yes. If yes, **identify standards: Head Start Child Outcomes Framework**
- No.

c) If developed, are the guidelines aligned with early childhood curricula?

- Yes. If yes, **describe: Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum**
- No.

d) Have guidelines been developed for children in the following age groups:

- Birth to three. Guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1.b.**
- Birth to five. Guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1**
- Five years or older. Guidelines are included in **Attachment 5.2.1.a.**

North Dakota's 3-5 Early Learning Guidelines include age five, e.g., ages three through five, to age six.

If any of your guidelines are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (guidelines must still be attached to Plan):

North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Ages Three through Five are located at:

<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/cfs/nd-early-learning-guidelines-for-ages-3-thru-5.pdf>

North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Birth to Age Three will soon be located on the Dept of Human Services website at:

<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/family.html>

5.2.2 Domains of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Do the guidelines for three-to-five-year-olds address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts?

- Yes.
- No.

a) Do the guidelines for children three-to-five-year-olds address other domains such as social/emotional, cognitive, physical, health, or creative arts?

- Yes. If yes, **describe.**
- No.

North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Ages Three through Five Domains:

- 1. Health and Physical Development**
- 2. Social and Emotional Development**
- 3. Approaches to Learning**
- 4. Expressive Arts and Creative Thinking**
- 5. Language and Literacy**
- 6. Mathematics and Logical Thinking**
- 7. Science and Problem Solving**
- 8. Social Studies**

5.2.3 Implementation of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines.

a) **Indicate** which strategies the State used, or expects to use, in implementing its early learning guidelines.

Check all that apply:

- Disseminating materials to practitioners and families
- Developing training curricula
- Partnering with other training entities to deliver training
- Aligning early learning guidelines with licensing, core competencies, and/or quality rating systems
- Other. **Describe:**

b) **Indicate** which stakeholders are, or are expected to, actively support(ing) the implementation of early learning guidelines:

Check all that apply:

- Publicly funded (or subsidized) child care
- Head Start
- Education/Public pre-k: **Title I Pre-K**
- Early Intervention
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Higher Education
- Parent Associations
- Other. **Describe: Military child care in North Dakota, Minot Air Force Base in particular**

c) **Indicate** the programs that mandate or require the use of early learning guidelines

- Publicly funded (or subsidized) child care
- Head Start
- Education/Public pre-k
- Early Intervention
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Higher Education
- Parent Associations
- Other. **Describe:**

d) **Describe** how cultural, linguistic and individual variations are (or will be) acknowledged in implementation.

Suggestions for addressing individual variations related to special needs are in a draft document on inclusion that is incomplete. The Early Childhood Services Administrator is organizing a diverse group early childhood professionals to adopt or write a child care inclusion document for North Dakota.

The Early Childhood Services Office and the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (ECCS) Early Care & Education Committee has not yet developed the rest of this portion of the plan.

e) Describe how the diversity of child care settings is (or will be) acknowledged in implementation.

The Early Childhood Services Office and the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (ECCS) Early Care & Education Committee has not yet developed the rest of this portion of the plan.

Materials developed to support implementation of the guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.3**. If these are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (guidelines must still be attached to Plan):

Integrated implementation materials are under development and will be incorporated into the learning path's modules being designed by the CCR&R's.

The North Dakota Early Childhood Services and Head Start-State Collaboration Administrators held one meeting in July 2008 with key stakeholders on "rolling out" the Early Learning Guidelines. Several entities are developing in-person and on-line trainings for implementing the Early Learning guidelines and will then deliver these trainings throughout the state.

5.2.4 Assessment of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. As applicable, describe the State's plan for:

a) Validating the content of the early learning guidelines

An initial validation of the content of the Ages Three through Five early learning guidelines was completed as part of the writing process. ND ELG's were compared to those of other several other states in our region and the national database of the states' early learning standards that was housed at NIEER: <http://www.NIEER.org> . Our guidelines consistently aligned with those of other states in both depth and breadth or we adapted them to align.

b) Assessing the effectiveness and/or implementation of the guidelines

The Early Childhood Services Office and the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (ECCS) Early Care & Education Committee have not yet developed this portion of the plan.

It is anticipated that the Quality Rating and Improvement System, if funded and implemented, will provide information on the effectiveness of the professional development initiative. Research-based, on-site environmental and interaction assessments will be used to evaluate.

c) Assessing the progress of children using measures aligned with the guidelines

The Early Childhood Services Office and the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (ECCS) Early Care & Education Committee have not yet developed this portion of the plan. The ND Department of Public Instruction requires districts to do Pre-Kindergarten screenings, however each district may choose a valid and reliable assessment tool. Collecting data at this point under the current system will be challenging.

d) Aligning the guidelines with accountability initiatives

The Early Childhood Services Office and the Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance (ECCS) Early Care & Education Committee have not yet developed this portion of the plan. It is anticipated that the Quality Rating and Improvement System, if funded and implemented, will provide information on the effectiveness of the professional development initiative. Research-based, on-site environmental and interaction assessments will be used to evaluate.

Written reports of these efforts are included as **Attachment 5.2.4**. If these are available on the web, **provide** the appropriate Web site address (reports must still be attached to Plan):

Not applicable

5.2.5 Plans for Professional Development. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the Lead Agency's efforts to develop a professional development plan for early childhood providers that includes all the primary sectors: child care, Head Start, and public education. **NOTE: Check ONLY ONE box that best describes the status of your State's professional development plan.**

- Planning.** Are steps underway to develop a plan?
- Yes, and **describe** the entities involved in the planning process, the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- No.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft or planning documents are included as **Attachment 5.2.5**, if applicable.
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 5.2.5**, if applicable.
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented, or has been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 5.2.5**. **It is also available on the web at:**

<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/cfs/growing-futures-prof-dev-plan-7-06.pdf>

- Revising.** The State previously developed a professional development plan and is now revising that plan, or has revised it since submitting the 08-09 State Plan. The revisions or the revised plan are included as **Attachment 5.2.5**.
- Other. Describe:**

a) **Describe** the progress made by the State in planning, developing, implementing, or revising the professional development plan since the date of submission of the 2008-2009 State Plan.

Gradual implementation of North Dakota’s Growing Futures Professional Development Plan continues. This work is guided by a statewide, broad-based professional development committee, convened by the Early Childhood Services Administrator.

Progress includes:

- **CCR&R launched the training clearinghouse, or registry, with new software which allows early childhood practitioners to search for professional development opportunities, register for them on-line, and access their training record.**
- **The Training and Trainer approval subcommittee has developed criteria and forms for the approval of training content and trainer qualifications. Once the process for approval is defined, all approved trainings may be posted to the registry.**
- **The Higher Education Consortium has approved the articulation of the CDA credential, using one university as the common entry point, and identifying two common courses (3 credits each) in the current statewide articulation agreement that the CDA coursework will fulfill.**
- **Early childhood advocates worked with legislators to pass legislation to expand implementation of a strong training delivery system including on-line training, trainer and practitioner registries as outlined in Growing Futures and the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.**
- **Implementing professional development plan components has highlighted the need to update the original plan to reflect the more detailed work that has resulted from ongoing committee work.**

b) If developed, does the plan include (Check EITHER yes or no for each item):

	Yes	No
Specific goals or desired outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A link to Early Learning Guidelines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuum of training and education to form a career path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation from one type of training to the next	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of trainers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of training content	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A system to track practitioners' training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Credentials – Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors' credential, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c) For each **Yes** response, **reference** the page(s) in the plan and briefly **describe**.

Specific goals or desired outcomes – page 4 and 6

The goal of *Growing Futures* is quality care and education for all of North Dakota's children – a goal that promotes the healthy development and success of the future workforce while at the same time providing the infrastructure necessary to support today's workforce.

A link to Early Learning Guidelines – page 7

The core competencies are closely linked to North Dakota's Early Learning Guidelines, which define the expected developmental outcomes for children birth to age six.

Continuum of training and education to form a career path – page 14

A career pathway of high school to CDA/Apprenticeship to Associate Degree to Bachelors Degree is laid out.

Articulation from one type of training to the next – page 8

Training articulation establishes links among training systems such as community-based training organizations, higher education institutions, Head Start, and so on. Training articulation supports care providers in their ongoing personal and professional growth by providing specific training that builds towards more advanced levels of preparation.

Quality assurance through approval of trainers – page 8

A trainer registry establishes a process by which trainers who deliver workforce training are qualified to provide the training recognized by the *Growing Futures* Professional Development system. It includes a database of qualified trainers, credentialing and credential renewal process, and a trainer recognition system. The trainer approval process establishes standards and qualifications for trainers and instructors to ensure they are knowledgeable of the most current research and theory in their subject area. Trainers must be able to represent their content area well to diverse groups of adult learners. The process also ensures that trainers meet the requirements of various training and education systems, such as those set nationally for CDA training or by higher education institutions to issue CEU credits.

--New legislation: Quality Improvement and Professional Development
ARRA: This initiative, with an effective date of August 1, authorizes the Department of Human Services to spend North Dakota's anticipated CCDF

ARRA funds to support expansion of professional development coordination, the continued implementation of North Dakota’s Growing Futures Professional Development Plan Trainer Approval process as recommended by the ECS Professional Development Committee, and additional registry implementation with verifications.

Quality assurance through approval of training content – page 8

A curriculum approval process ensures that the materials used for workforce training are research-based and representative of best practices, and that training content clearly links practice to research and theory. A curriculum approval process reviews training materials to ensure that all training applied toward professional development is of good quality, and that it addresses core knowledge areas, is leveled for different skills and interests, and is appropriate to the many specializations in the field.

***--New legislation:* Quality Improvement and Professional Development
ARRA: This initiative, with an effective date of August 1, 2009, authorizes the Department of Human Services to spend North Dakota’s anticipated CCDF ARRA funds to support expansion of professional development and quality. These funds will support professional development coordination, the continued implementation of North Dakota’s Growing Futures Professional Development Plan Training Approval process as recommended by the ECS Professional Development Committee, and additional registry implementation with verifications.**

A system to track practitioners’ training – page 7

A training registry is a central clearing house of information to track and verify qualifications for various roles in the field. A registry also recognizes professional achievement and attainment. The registry keeps records of an individual’s training and education, and issues transcripts that document an individual’s completed training.

Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness – page 12, 15-16

It is anticipated that the Quality Rating and Improvement System, when adopted by the Department of Human Services and then implemented, will provide information on the effectiveness of trainings. On-site competency assessments upon completion of standardized courses and on-going evaluation will provide information on the effectiveness of the coursework.

State Credentials – Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors’ credential, etc.) – page 8, 15-16

Specialized certificates and credentials support the qualifications for career categories by providing in-depth content knowledge in specialized areas, such as infant toddler care, special needs, and program administration. Specialized credentials are awarded based on training and assessment of demonstrated knowledge and skill in a particular focus area.

Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers

This group of providers has not been addressed in the professional development plan; however the Early Childhood Services and Child Care Subsidies Administrators have included strategies in the CCR&R request for proposals for the next two years. Although not written in the professional development plan at this time, a brief newsletter is distributed quarterly to FFN caregivers who are receiving child care subsidies but are not licensed.

d) For each **No** response, **indicate** any plans the Lead Agency has to incorporate these components.

Not applicable.

e) Are the professional development opportunities described in the plan available:

Note: Check either yes or no for each item):

	Yes	No
Statewide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Center-based Child Care Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Group Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Family Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To In-Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe): Preschools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

f) **Describe** how the plan addresses early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.

In the Learning Paths being implemented by CCR&R, the Child Development Block includes Physical and Cognitive Development, and Development of Young Children’s Language and Literacy.

g) Are program or provider-level incentives offered to encourage provider training and education?

Yes. **Describe**, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.

No. **Describe** any plans to offer incentives to encourage provider training and education, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts?

Incentives are proposed in the design of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). If funded and implemented the incentives include: access to free training to meet the QRIS criteria, which includes the Child Development Block, and monetary incentives to individuals at

the completion of the three blocks of the Learning Paths and attainment of the CDA credential.

h) As applicable, does the State assess the effectiveness of its professional development plan, including the achievement of any specified goals or desired outcomes?

- Yes. **Describe** how the professional development plan's effectiveness/goal is assessed.
- No. **Describe** any plans to include assessments of the professional development plan's effectiveness/goal achievement.

Each of the three Growing Futures EC Prof Dev sub-committees-- Career Development, Professional Recognition, and a Quality Rating And Improvement System--have quality assurance as one of their tasks.

It is anticipated that the Quality Rating and Improvement System, if funded and implemented, will provide information on the effectiveness of the professional development initiative. Research-based, on-site environmental and interaction assessments will be used to evaluate.

Early Childhood Services Century Code (state statute) was revised by the ND Legislature in the spring of 2009. Please see attachments: 5.1.b. .xx ND Early Childhood Services HB 1418 enrolled version Or go to: <http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/61-2009/bill-text/JATN0400.pdf>

The bill allows for financial incentives. The Early Childhood Services Administrator is in the process of developing, with key stakeholders, which portions of the original QRIS work will be included in the roll-out of this legislation.

i) Does the State assess the effectiveness of specific professional development initiatives or components?

- Yes. **Describe** how specific professional development initiatives or components' effectiveness is assessed.
- No. **Describe** any plans to include assessments of specific professional development initiatives or components' effectiveness.

Each of the three Growing Futures EC Prof Dev sub-committees-- Career Development, Professional Recognition, and a Quality Rating System--has quality assurance as one of their tasks.

It is anticipated that the Quality Rating and Improvement System, if funded and implemented, will provide information on the effectiveness of the professional development initiative. Research-based, on-site environmental and interaction assessments will be used to evaluate.

j) As applicable, does (or will) the State use assessment to help shape or revise its professional development plan?

- Yes. **Describe** how assessment informs the professional development plan.
- No. **Describe** any plans to include assessment to inform the professional development plan.

Each of the three Growing Futures EC Prof Dev sub-committees-- Career Development, Professional Recognition, and a Quality Rating System— will utilize assessment information to increase quality in their area as one of their tasks.

It is anticipated that the Quality Rating and Improvement System, if funded and implemented, will provide information on the effectiveness of the professional development initiative. Research-based, on-site environmental and interaction assessments will be used to evaluate.

PART 6 HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS

(Only the 50 States and the District of Columbia complete Part 6.)

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRCHSCC) of DHHS's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports a comprehensive, current, on-line listing of the licensing and regulatory requirements for child care in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Note: This database typically contains information on licensing requirements for meeting State or local law to operate (§98.40). This database does not contain *registration* or *certification* requirements specific only to participation in the CCDF program.

In lieu of requiring a State Lead Agency to provide information that is already publicly available, ACF accepts this compilation as accurately reflecting the States' licensing requirements.

The listing, which is maintained by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>.

CCDF regulations (§98.2) define the following categories of care:

- **Center-based child care provider:** Provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work.
- **Group home child care provider:** Two or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child, in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work.
- **Family child care provider:** One individual who provides child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child, as the sole caregiver, in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)'s work.
- **In-home child care provider:** Individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

6.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41, §98.16(j))

- 6.1.1 Are all center-based providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law per the NRCHSCC's compilation? **Note:** Some States use the term certification or registration to refer to their licensing regulatory process. Do not check "Yes" if center-



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based providers simply must *register or be certified* to participate in the CCDF program separate from the State regulatory requirements.

In North Dakota this category includes group child care provided in a non residential setting.

- Yes. Answer 6.1.2, skip 6.1.3, and go to 6.2
- No. **Describe** which center-based providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.
--Child care provided by any educational facility, whether public or private, for children in grade one or above.

6.1.2 Have center licensing requirements as relates to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2)&(3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

6.1.3 For center-based care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for

a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

Child care provided in educational facilities is subject to the requirements of the Department of Public Instruction found in NDCC 15.1-06-13 regarding Health, safety, and sanitation requirements and NDCC 23-07-16 regarding immunizations and contagious or infectious disease. All Century Community Learning Center programs must sign and adhere to the General Assurances in SFN 53515: Application for 21ST Century Community Learning Center Grants which is found at: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/forms/word/sfn53515.doc>.

b) Building and physical premises safety

Child care provided in educational facilities is subject to the requirements of the Department of Public Instruction found in NDCC 15.1-06-13 regarding Health, safety, and sanitation requirements and NDCC 18-12 regarding Fires and Fire prevention. All Century Community Learning Center programs must sign and adhere to the General Assurances in SFN 53515: Application for 21ST Century Community Learning Center Grants which is found at: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/forms/word/sfn53515.doc>.

c) Health and safety training

Child care provided in educational facilities is subject to the requirements of the Department of Public Instruction found in NDCC 15.1-06-13 regarding Health, safety, and sanitation requirements. All Century Community Learning Center



programs must sign and adhere to the General Assurances in SFN 53515: Application for 21ST Century Community Learning Center Grants which is found at: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/forms/word/sfn53515.doc>.

d) Other requirements for center-based child care services provided under the CCDF

6.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Child Care Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.2.1 Are all group home providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? **Note:** Some States use the term certification or registration to refer to their licensing regulatory process. Do not check "Yes" if group home child care providers simply must *register* or *be certified* to participate in the CCDF program separate from the State regulatory requirements.

Yes. Answer 6.2.2, skip 6.2.3, and go to 6.3.

No. **Describe** which group home providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

N/A. Group home child care is not a category of care in this State. Skip to Question 6.3.1

6.2.2 Have group home licensing requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

6.2.3 For group home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for

NOT APPLICABLE

a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

b) Building and physical premises safety

c) Health and safety training

d) Other requirements for center-based child care services provided under the CCDF

6.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Child Care Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.3.1 Are all family child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? **Note:** Some States use the term certification or registration to refer to their licensing regulatory process. Do not check "Yes" if family child care providers simply must *register* or *be certified* to participate in the CCDF program separate from the State regulatory requirements.

Yes. Answer 6.3.2, skip 6.3.3, and go to 6.4.

No. **Describe** which family child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

Providers who care for five or fewer children or three or fewer infants (up to 24 months) are exempt from licensure by state statute, however if the provider wishes to receive CCDF Child Care Assistance they must self certify compliance with standards through an Affidavit of Standard Compliance.

6.3.2 Have family child care provider requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

6.3.3 For family care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

Relatives, who are approved child care providers, are exempt from health and safety requirements. It is recommended to them that they follow the safety standards as set forth for the Affidavit of Standard Compliance providers. Affidavit of Standard Compliance providers, who care for fewer than 4 infants or less than 6 children, self-certify compliance with standards, as they are not required to be licensed.

a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

Affidavit of Standard Compliance providers self-certify annual checks of the immunization records of children in their care.

b) Building and physical premises safety

Affidavit of Standard Compliance providers self-certify protection of children in their care.

- c) Health and safety training

Affidavit of Standard Compliance providers complete approved CPR and first aid training during first year.

- d) Other requirements for center-based child care services provided under the CCDF

6.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Child Care Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

Note: Before responding to Question 6.4.1, **check** the NRCHSCC's compilation of licensing requirements to verify if **in-home child care** as defined by CCDF and your State is covered. If not, **check** no for 6.4.1. Do not check "Yes" if in-home child care providers simply must *register or be certified* to participate in the CCDF program separate from the State regulatory requirements.

- 6.4.1 Are all **in-home** child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under the State law reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation?

Yes. Answer 6.4.2, skip 6.4.3, and go to 6.5.

No. **Describe** which in-home child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

Providers who care for five or less children or three or less infants (up to 24 months) in the child's home are exempt from licensure by state statute, however if the provider wishes to receive Child Care Subsidy they must register with the state and self certify compliance with standards.

- 6.4.2 Have in-home health and safety requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

No.

- 6.4.3 For in-home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

In-home care is registered care in ND.

a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

This care is provided in the child's home. In-home providers self-certify proper health care and protection.

b) Building and physical premises safety

This care is provided in the child's home. In-home providers self-certify protection for children.

c) Health and safety training

This care is provided in the child's home. In-home providers self-certify participation in specialized training.

6.5 Exemptions to Health and Safety Requirements

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care) may be exempted from health and safety requirements. (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A))

Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 6.1 - 6.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- Some or all** relative providers are subject to different health and safety requirements from those described in sections 6.1 - 6.4. The following a) describes those requirements and b) identifies the relatives they apply to:

6.6 Enforcement of Health and Safety Requirements

6.6.1 Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) **Describe** how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced, including at a minimum:

a) Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

- Yes, and **indicate** the provider categories subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

Licensed family, group, and center child care programs are subject to one unannounced visit per year to ensure that licensed providers are in compliance with all applicable health and safety requirements.

No.

b) Are child care providers subject to background checks?

Yes, and **indicate** the types of providers subject to background checks and when such checks are conducted:

All licensed, in-home registered, self-certified affidavit providers, child care staff members, and household members 12 and over in child care homes are checked against the North Dakota Child Abuse and Neglect Index and files and the North Dakota Attorney General’s list of “Convicted Sex Offender and Offenders Against Children.”

In addition to the above, North Dakota regional offices may elect to perform checks against the North Dakota District Court Case information for Criminal, Traffic, and Civil case types (website: <http://www.ndcourts.gov/publicsearch/contactsearch.aspx>) on licensed, in-home registered, self-certified affidavit providers, child care staff members, and household members 12 and over in child care homes.

For border communities, such as in Region IV, the out-of-state child abuse/neglect background records and the Minnesota convicted offenders list are checked if provider or child care staff member indicates they ever have lived in Minnesota. If public records indicate that a provider or child care staff member may have lived in another state, the out-of-state child abuse/neglect background records and the convicted offenders list are checked.

The background checks above are initiated prior to being licensed to provide child care or approved as an in-home registered provider, a self-certified affidavit provider or a child care staff member and annually thereafter.

Legislation, effective July 1, 2009 authorizes the Department of Human Services to conduct fingerprint-based criminal background checks in North Dakota (BCI) and nationwide (FBI) for all new applicants for license, in-home registration, and self-declared document holders, new employees in licensed programs, and new

household members in home-based settings certified affidavit and well as all new employees in licensed programs.

No.

c) Does the State require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? (Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

Yes, and **describe** the State's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

- **Licensed family, group and center programs have this requirement. The program should report to the county licensor within 24 hours of the incident. The licensor completes an SFN 383 Death/Serious Accident/Illness or Injury Report Form. All ECS Regional Supervisors contribute toward maintaining a database of all SFN 383's on a shared drive that is housed at the state capitol. Reports include a death, a serious accident, or an illness requiring hospitalization of the child while in child care or attributable to child care received.**
- **However, there are no similar requirements for approved relative, in-home registered, or self certified affidavit child care.**

No.

d) Describe any other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

- **On-site monitoring visits, such as the yearly announced and unannounced inspections by county child care licensors in licensed programs ensure that health and safety requirements are enforced.**
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program personnel often share health and safety violations they observe when making their thrice yearly visits with programs on the Child and Adult Care Food Program. County child care licensors follow-up such reports with an on-site visit.**
- **Parents are informed by their child care provider about the process for reporting suspected licensing violations. County child care licensors follow-up such reports with an on-site visit.**
- **When violations of Early Childhood Services Administrative Code (rules) are observed by licensors, an immediate correction order or 20 day correction order is issued. After notified that the correction has been completed, the licensor makes an unannounced visit to re-inspect. For serious or repeated violations, the licensor will discuss the situation with their Early Childhood Services (ECS) Regional Supervisor (RS). Resolution may be reached at this level. If the violation rises to a higher level, the ECS RS will contact the ECS**

Administrator to determine the form of action to take, such as intent to revoke, a revocation, or an immediate suspension of business.

- **North Dakota is working toward increased consistency in the enforcement of ECS standards through annual training that is conducted by members of the National Association for Regulatory Agencies and is based upon their nationally recognized curriculum.**

6.7 Exemptions from Immunization Requirements

The State assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The State exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

PART 7 HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES

(Only the Territories complete Part 7)

CCDF regulations (§98.2) define the following categories of care:

- **Center-based care:** Provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work.
- **Group home child care provider:** Two or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child, in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work.
- **Family child care provider:** One individual who provides child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child, as the sole caregiver, in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)'s work.
- **In-home child care provider:** Individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

7.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers in the Territories

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

7.1.1 For all center-based care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- b) Building and physical premises safety
- c) Health and safety training
- d) Other requirements for child care services provided under the CCDF

7.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Child Care Providers in the Territories

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

7.2.1 For all group home child care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- b) Building and physical premises safety
- c) Health and safety training
- d) Other requirements for child care services provided under the CCDF

7.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Child Care Providers in the Territories
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

7.3.1 For all family child care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- b) Building and physical premises safety
- c) Health and safety training
- d) Other requirements for child care services provided under the CCDF

7.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Child Care Providers in the Territories
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

7.4.1 For all in-home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- a) The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- b) Building and physical premises safety
- c) Health and safety training
- d) Other requirements for child care services provided under the CCDF

7.5 Exemptions to Territorial Health and Safety Requirements

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives may be exempted from health and safety requirements: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care). (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A)). Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- Some or all** relative providers are subject to **different** health and safety requirements from those described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 and the following describes those different requirements and the relatives they apply to:

7.6 Enforcement of Territorial Health and Safety Requirements

7.6.1 Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) **Describe** how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced, including at a minimum:

a) Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

- Yes, and **indicate** the provider categories subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:
- No.

b) Are child care providers subject to background checks?

- Yes, and **indicate** the types of providers subject to background checks and when such checks are conducted:
- No.

c) Does the Territory require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? (Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

- Yes, and **describe** the Territory's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):
- No.

d) Describe any other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

7.7 Exemptions from Territorial Immunization Requirements

The Territory assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the Territorial public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The Territory exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

APPENDIX 1
CCDF PROGRAM ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The Lead Agency, named in Part 1 of this Plan, assures (§98.15) that:

- (1) upon approval, it will have in effect a program that complies with the provisions of the Plan printed herein, and is administered in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended, Section 418 of the Social Security Act, and all other applicable Federal laws and regulations. (658D(b), 658E(a))
- (2) the parent(s) of each eligible child within the State who receives or is offered child care services for which financial assistance is provided is given the option either to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of the service; or to receive a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)(i))
- (3) in cases in which the parent(s) elects to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practicable. (658E(c)(2)(A)(ii))
- (4) the child care certificate offered to parents shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract. (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))
- (5) with respect to State and local regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates, and registration requirements, State or local rules, procedures or other requirements promulgated for the purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund will not significantly restrict parental choice among categories of care or types of providers. (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(p), §98.30(g), §98.40(b)(2), §98.41(b), §98.43(c), §98.45(d))
- (6) that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))
- (7) that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant, State general revenue funds for child care assistance for low-income families. (P.L. 109-149)

The Lead Agency also certifies that:

- (1) it has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund afford parents unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the normal hours of operations and whenever such children are in the care of such providers. (658E(c)(2)(B))
- (2) it maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C))

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- (3) it will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices. (658E(c)(2)(D))
- (4) it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided in the State. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (5) there are in effect within the State (or other area served by the Lead Agency), under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children; these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the Child Care and Development Fund. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (6) procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(G))
- (7) payment rates under the Child Care and Development Fund for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the State or sub-State area that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs. (658E(c)(4)(A))

APPENDIX 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY TERMINOLOGY

For purposes of determining eligibility and/or priority for CCDF-funded child care services, Lead Agencies must **define** the following *italicized* terms. (658P, 658E(c)(3)(B))

- *in loco parentis* – A **legal guardian who is physically caring for the child in his or her home or another person (relative and non-relative) physically caring for the child for an indefinite period of time.**
- *physical or mental incapacity* (if the Lead Agency provides such services to children age 13 and older) – **If a child is incapable of self-care because of verified physical or mental incapacity, the child may be eligible for child care. A qualified medical professional must verify in writing that incapacity exists.**
- *protective services* – CCDF is not used for this population
- *residing with* - **Means a child or children who are physically present in the home for periods expected to last 30 or more days.**

special needs child **Is a child incapable of providing self-care, as medically verified by a physician or a Developmental Disabilities case manager due to physical and/or mental incapacity, and is 13 up to age 18.**

<i>very low income</i> – Family Size	Income
2	\$0-399
3	\$0-493
4	\$0-587
5	\$0-680

These are the figures that are used on the sliding fee scale for those individuals who are at the Level 1 and who are paying 20% on the sliding fee scale. This is 15% of the 2000 Monthly Median Income.

The 2000 Monthly Median Income was used to develop the complete sliding fee scale. The upper limit in each level increases an additional 10 percent over the previous level. At Level 7 the upper limit was 75% of the 2000 Monthly Medium Income.

This level has not changed since September 2000. It is not anticipated that it will change in the future due to lack of funds. This is not used in other programs.

List and define any additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility and/or

- *Diversion assistance* - **Diversion assistance is a TANF funded program that helps prevent needy families from becoming dependent on continuing government benefits by providing support services to qualified families.**

- ***Crossroads*** - Crossroads is a program that assists with child care for teenage parent, male or female, married or unmarried, who is twenty years old or younger and who has the primary responsibility for the care of his/her child, is pursuing high school, a GED or alternative high school. The no fee payment includes assistance with child care while attending school and work.

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

CCDF Regulations 45 CFR §98.13(b)(2)-(6) require the following certifications.

1. **Assurance of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:**
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/ps690.pdf>
2. **Certification regarding debarment:**
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/debar.htm>
3. **Definitions for use with certification of debarment:**
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/debar.htm>
4. **HHS certification regarding drug-free workplace requirements:**
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/drugfree.htm>
5. **Certification of Compliance with the Pro-Children Act of 1994:**
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/tobacco.htm>
6. **Certification regarding lobbying:**
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/lobby.htm>

These certifications were obtained in the 1997 Plan and need not be collected again if there has been no change in Lead Agency. If there has been a change in Lead Agency, these certifications must be completed and submitted with the Plan