

1.0 Background/Context

Many parents rely on their natural supports or community child care providers to care for and supervise their children while they work and study. Families can experience challenges finding child care for their children. Parents with children with disabilities can experience additional challenges that others do not encounter due their children's disability-related needs that may prevent them from arranging or retaining child care.

1.1 Definitions

Employment-Related Activities: Part-time and full-time employment, including self-employment, as well as education and training programs, including placements, practicums and employment readiness programs.

2.0 Policy

Children's disABILITY Services (CDS) may provide time limited support with child care on an exceptional basis to families who are unable to arrange or retain child care due to disability-related circumstances that place parents at risk of disengaging from their employment-related activities in order to provide care and supervision to their child.

Supports may be delivered by service providers managed by families, the department or an agency to provide care and supervision of children. Supports are intended to meet families' individually assessed disability-related needs in a basic and adequate manner. Supports are provided on a temporary basis until parents can arrange child care for their child.

This support is **not** intended to:

- Meet needs that all families may experience, whether their children have disabilities or not;
- Compensate for a lack of available child care in the community; or
- Meet child care needs that can be met through programs which support the inclusion of children with disabilities and special health needs in child care programs.

2.1 Assessment Criteria

The following criteria must be assessed in order for support with child care to be considered:

- Parents are unable to arrange or maintain child care for their child, ages 0 to 11, because of disability-related circumstances. Disability-related circumstances may include expulsion from child care or not being able to access child care due to behaviours or needs associated with the child's disability.
- Parents have explored formal and informal care options (e.g., licensed and unlicensed child care, family, friends, neighbours, etc.) to meet their child care needs.
- Parents are engaged in employment-related activities that they would not be able to maintain without care and supervision for their child (i.e. parents face resigning, taking a leave of absence or dismissal from their employment, or withdrawing from their studies to provide care and supervision to their child).
- Parents' work or school schedules and/or locations cannot be modified to meet their child's care needs.

In most cases, families are expected to pursue making care child arrangements for their child as a condition for receiving this support. Families' efforts may include placing their child on waitlists with care providers, contacting care providers directly to inquire about upcoming vacancies, and inquiring among their social networks about potential care providers.

2.2 Support for Emergent Non-Employment Related Care

Support for emergent non-employment related child care may be approved on an exception basis where:

- The care need is temporary;
- The care needs of the child exceeds a typical level of care required for children of a similar age; and
- The parents are unable to arrange child care due to disability-related needs of the child.

Consultation with and approval from the CDS Leading Program and Practice Specialist is required for all requests for emergent non-employment related child care.

2.3 Regular Review of Need

As support is intended to be time-limited, case managers will review families' circumstances and service plans every three months or more often if required. During these reviews, case managers will assess progress with making other child care arrangements and provide service navigation support to assist the family with arranging

child care. Case managers will review the adequacy of the family's current service plan to meet their disability-related child care needs and modify the service plan.

Service plans may be reviewed, modified or cancelled as families' circumstances change (e.g. change of employment status, hours and locations, successful child care arranged,). Reviews may be initiated by case managers and on the request of families. Families are required to inform their case manager of changes of circumstances that affect their need for support such as a change of employment status, hours and location of work or school, as well as when they have arranged child care.

2.4 Parental Contribution

Despite the cost of child care being a parental responsibility, CDS does not require parents to contribute towards the cost of child care funded under this policy, as child care funded under this policy is intended to meet an additional disability-related need that is not experienced by families with typically developing children.

2.5 Transportation

The transportation of children are the responsibilities of parents and, where applicable, school divisions. Thus, CDS does not provide funding for transportation during CDS-funded child care support.

2.6 Siblings

Supports funded under this policy are intended to meet the care needs of the child for whom they were assessed and approved. Child care supports do not extend to other children in the household such as siblings. Responsibility for arranging and funding child care for other children in the household remain the responsibility of parents.

2.7 Children with Special Health Care Needs

Children with special health care needs, including those who are immunocompromised, may be supported to safely attend licenced child care settings by [Unified Referral and Intake System \(URIS\)](#). Therefore, CDS does not fund child care for children with special health care needs who do not meet the assessment criteria in [Section 2.1 – Assessment Criteria](#) or [Section 2.2 – Support for Emergent Non-Employment Related Care](#).

3.0 Standards

3.1 Service Navigation

Prior to recommending families for child care supports, case managers will provide service navigation support to families to assist them to problem-solve their child care

situations. Service navigation includes providing information on and exploring child care related resources as well as assisting families to have discussions with child care providers to mitigate any concerns child care providers may have about the CDS-eligible child. Where applicable, case managers shall make referrals appropriate for the family's situation, such as for behavioural supports and to programs like [URIS](#) and the [Children's Therapy Network of Manitoba](#).

3.2 Assessment

Case managers shall assess families' situations to evaluate if they meet the criteria outlined in [Section 2.1 – Assessment Criteria](#) of this policy. Case managers shall complete the *Child Care Exceptions Assessment Tool* and provide the tool to their supervisor to support their recommendation for child care supports.

3.3 Plan Development

Case managers will develop service plans in collaboration with families. Plans are developed to determine how the family will meet their immediate and ongoing child care needs. Service plans are intended to meet families' needs in a basic and adequate manner.

Service plans for child care supports shall not exceed three months in duration, unless the family has been exempted from seeking other child care arrangements by the CDS Leading Program and Practice Specialist per [Section 3.5 – Exemption from Seeking Child Care Arrangements](#).

3.4 Notification of Parental Responsibilities

Case managers shall advise families of their responsibility to pursue ongoing child care arrangements and to notify their case managers of changes to their circumstances that may affect their assessed need for this support.

3.5 Exemption from Seeking Child Care Arrangements

Families may be exempted from the requirement to seek long-term child care arrangements in the following situations:

- the child will meet the eligibility criteria for adolescent care (employment support) within nine months' time; or
- it is assessed that arranging child care is not feasible due to the extraordinary nature of the child's disability-related needs.

CDS Leading Program and Practice Specialist approval is required to exempt a family from the requirement to seek child care.

Service plans may exceed the three month time limit for families exempted from seeking child care arrangements.

4.0 Tools and Resources

- [Child Care Exceptions Assessment Tool](#)
- [Child Care Exceptions Scenarios](#)
- [Child Care Resources](#)