

441—170.2(237A,239B) Eligibility requirements. A person deemed eligible for benefits under this chapter is subject to all other state child care assistance requirements including, but not limited to, provider requirements under Iowa Code chapter 237A and provider reimbursement methodology. The department shall determine the number of units of service to be approved.

170.2(1) Financial eligibility. Financial eligibility for child care assistance shall be based on federal poverty levels as determined by the Office of Management and Budget and on Iowa's median family income as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty guidelines and median family income amounts are updated annually. Changes shall go into effect for the child care assistance program on July 1 of each year.

a. Income limits.

(1) For initial eligibility, an applicant family's nonexempt gross monthly income as established in paragraph 170.2(1) "c" cannot exceed the amounts in this subparagraph.

1. 160 percent of the federal poverty level applicable to the family size for children needing basic care; or

2. 200 percent of the federal poverty level applicable to the family size for children needing special-needs care; or

3. 85 percent of Iowa's median family income, if that figure is lower than the standard in numbered paragraph "1" or "2."

(2) For ongoing eligibility, at the time of a family's annual eligibility redetermination as described in subrule 170.3(5), if the family's nonexempt gross monthly income as established in paragraph 170.2(1) "c" exceeds the amounts in subparagraph 170.2(1) "a"(1), the family may continue to be eligible as long as the family's nonexempt gross monthly income does not exceed the amounts in this subparagraph.

1. 225 percent of the federal poverty level applicable to the family size for children needing basic care or special-needs care; or

2. 85 percent of Iowa's median family income, if that figure is lower than the standard in numbered paragraph "1."

(3) For ongoing eligibility, at the time of a family's annual eligibility redetermination as described in subrule 170.3(5), if the family's nonexempt gross monthly income as established in paragraph 170.2(1) "c" exceeds the amounts in subparagraphs 170.2(1) "a"(1) and 170.2(1) "a"(2), the family may continue to be eligible as long as the family's nonexempt gross monthly income does not exceed the amounts in this subparagraph.

1. 250 percent of the federal poverty level applicable to the family size for children needing basic care; or

2. 275 percent of the federal poverty level applicable to the family size for children needing special-needs care.

b. Exceptions to income limits.

(1) A person who is participating in activities approved under the PROMISE JOBS program is eligible for child care assistance without regard to income if there is a need for child care services.

(2) A person who is part of the family investment program or whose earned income was taken into account in determining the needs of a family investment program recipient is eligible for child care assistance without regard to income if there is a need for child care services.

(3) Protective child care services are provided without regard to income.

(4) In certain cases, the department will provide child care services directed in a court order.

(5) Child care services for licensed foster parents who need child care for foster children are provided without regard to income.

c. Determining gross income. Eligibility shall be determined using a projection of income based on the best estimate of future income. In determining a family's gross monthly income, the department shall consider all income received by a family member from sources identified by the U.S. Census Bureau in computing median income, unless excluded under paragraph 170.2(1) "d."

(1) Income considered shall include wages or salary, net profit from farm or nonfarm self-employment, social security, dividends, interest, income from estates or trusts, net rental income and royalties, public assistance or welfare payments, pensions and annuities, unemployment compensation,

workers' compensation, alimony, child support, veterans pensions, cash payments, casino profits, railroad retirement, permanent disability insurance, strike pay and living allowance payments made to participants of the AmeriCorps program. "Net profit from self-employment" means gross income less the costs of producing the income other than depreciation. A net loss in self-employment income cannot be offset from other earned or unearned income.

(2) For migrant seasonal farm workers, the monthly gross income shall be determined by calculating the total amount of income earned in a 12-month period preceding the date of application and dividing the total amount by 12.

(3) When income received weekly or once every two weeks is projected for future months, income shall be projected by adding all income received in the period being used for the projection and dividing the result by the number of instances of income received in that period. The result shall be multiplied by four if the income is received weekly, or by two if the income is received biweekly, regardless of the number of weekly or biweekly payments to be made in future months.

d. Income exclusions. The following sources are excluded from the computation of monthly gross income:

(1) Per capita payments from or funds held in trust in satisfaction of a judgment of the Indian Claims Commission or the court of claims.

(2) Payments made pursuant to the Alaska Claims Settlement Act, to the extent the payments are exempt from taxation under Section 21(a) of the Act.

(3) Money received from the sale of property, unless the person was engaged in the business of selling property.

(4) Withdrawals of bank deposits.

(5) Money borrowed.

(6) Tax refunds.

(7) Gifts.

(8) Lump-sum inheritances or insurance payments or settlements.

(9) Capital gains.

(10) The value of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotment under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

(11) The value of USDA donated foods.

(12) The value of supplemental food assistance under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and the special food program for children under the National School Lunch Act.

(13) Earnings of a child 14 years of age or younger.

(14) Loans and grants obtained and used under conditions that preclude their use for current living expenses.

(15) Any grant or loan to any undergraduate student for educational purposes made or insured under the Higher Education Act.

(16) Home produce used for household consumption.

(17) Earnings received by any youth under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

(18) Stipends received for participating in the foster grandparent program.

(19) The first \$65 plus 50 percent of the remainder of income earned in a sheltered workshop or work activity setting.

(20) Payments from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

(21) Agent Orange settlement payments.

(22) The income of the parents with whom a teen parent resides.

(23) For children with special needs, income spent on any regular ongoing cost that is specific to that child's disability.

(24) Moneys received under the federal Social Security Persons Achieving Self-Sufficiency (PASS) program or the Income-Related Work Expense (IRWE) program.

(25) Income received by a Supplemental Security Income recipient if the recipient's earned income was considered in determining the needs of a family investment program recipient.

(26) The income of a child who would be in the family investment program eligible group except for the receipt of Supplemental Security Income.

(27) Any adoption subsidy payments received from the department.

(28) Federal or state earned income tax credit.

(29) Payments from the Iowa individual assistance grant program (IIAGP).

(30) Payments from the transition to independence program (TIP).

(31) Payments to volunteers participating in the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program.

EXCEPTION: This exemption will not be applied when the director of ACTION determines that the value of all VISTA payments, adjusted to reflect the number of hours the volunteer is serving, is equivalent to or greater than the minimum wage then in effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or the minimum wage under the laws of the state where the volunteer is serving, whichever is greater.

(32) Reimbursement from the employer for job-related expenses.

(33) Stipends from the preparation for adult living (PAL) program.

(34) Payments from the subsidized guardianship waiver program.

(35) The earnings of a child aged 18 or under who is a full-time student.

(36) Census earnings received by temporary workers from the Bureau of the Census.

(37) Payments for major disaster and emergency assistance provided under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 as amended by Public Law 100-707, the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Amendments of 1988.

e. Family size. The following people shall be included in the family size for the determination of eligibility:

(1) Legal spouses (including common law) who reside in the same household.

(2) Natural mother or father, adoptive mother or father, or stepmother or stepfather, and children who reside in the same household.

(3) A child or children who live with a person or persons not legally responsible for the child's support.

f. Effect of temporary absence. The composition of the family does not change when a family member is temporarily absent from the household. "Temporary absence" means:

(1) An absence for the purpose of education or employment.

(2) An absence due to medical reasons that is anticipated to last less than three months.

(3) Any absence when the person intends to return home within three months.

g. Resource limits. For initial and ongoing eligibility, family resources may not exceed \$1 million.

170.2(2) General eligibility requirements. In addition to meeting financial requirements, the child needing services must meet age, citizenship, and residency requirements. Each parent in the household must have at least one need for service and shall cooperate with the department's quality control review and with investigations conducted by the department of inspections and appeals.

a. Age. Child care shall be provided only to children up to age 13, unless they are children with special needs, in which case child care shall be provided up to age 19. When a child reaches the age of 13, or, as applicable, the age of 19, during the certification period, eligibility shall continue until the end of the approved certification period.

b. Need for service. Except for assistance provided under subparagraph 170.2(2)"b"(3), assistance shall be provided to a two-parent family only during the parents' coinciding hours of participation in training, employment, or job search unless one parent is permanently disabled as described in subparagraph 170.2(2)"b"(4). Each parent in the household shall meet one or more of the following requirements:

(1) The parent is in academic or vocational training. Training shall be on a full-time basis. The training facility shall define what is considered as full-time. Part-time training may be approved only if the number of credit hours to complete training is less than that required for full-time status, the required prerequisite credits or remedial course work is less than that required for full-time status, or training is not offered on a full-time basis. Child care services may be provided for the parent's hours of participation in the academic or vocational training and for actual travel time between the child care location and the training facility.

1. Child care provided while the parent participates in postsecondary education leading up to and including a baccalaureate degree program or vocational training shall be limited to a 24-month lifetime limit. A month is defined as a fiscal month or part thereof and shall generally have starting and ending dates that fall within two adjacent calendar months but shall only count as one month. Time spent in high school completion, adult basic education, high school equivalency, or English as a second language does not count toward the 24-month limit. PROMISE JOBS child care allowances provided while the parent is a recipient of the family investment program and participating in PROMISE JOBS components in postsecondary education or training shall count toward the 24-month lifetime limit.

2. Payment shall not be approved for child-care during training in the following circumstances:

- Labor market statistics for a local area indicate low employment potential for workers with that training. Exceptions may be made when the parent has a job offer before entering the training or if a parent is willing to relocate after training to an area where there is employment potential. Parents willing to relocate must provide documentation from the department of workforce development, private employment agencies, or employers that jobs paying at least minimum wage for which training is being requested are available in the locale specified by the parent.

- The training is for jobs paying less than minimum wage.

- A parent who possesses a baccalaureate degree wants to take additional college coursework unless the coursework is to obtain a teaching certificate or complete continuing education units.

- The course or training is one that the parent has previously completed.

- The parent was previously unable to maintain the cumulative grade point average required by the training or academic facility in the same training for which application is now being made. This does not apply to parents under the age of 18 who are enrolled in high school completion activities.

- The education is in a field in which the parent will not be able to be employed due to known criminal convictions or founded child or dependent adult abuse.

- The parent wants to participate in on-line or distance learning from the parent's own home, and the training facility does not require specified hours of attendance.

(2) The parent is employed 32 or more hours per week (28 hours per week if the family includes a special needs child) or an average of 32 or more hours per week (28 hours per week if the family includes a special needs child) during the month. Child care services may be provided for the hours of employment and for actual travel time between the child care location and the place of employment. If the parent works a shift consisting of at least six hours of employment between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. and needs to sleep during daytime hours, child care services may also be provided to allow the parent to sleep during daytime hours.

(3) The parent has a child with protective needs for child care.

(4) The parent is absent from the home due to inpatient hospitalization or outpatient treatment because of physical or mental illness, or is present but due to medical incapacity is unable to care for the child or participate in work or training, as verified by a physician.

1. Eligibility under this paragraph is limited to parents who become temporarily medically incapacitated, or to instances of one parent in a two-parent household being permanently disabled, while eligible for child care assistance based on the need criteria in subparagraph 170.2(2)“b”(1) or 170.2(2)“b”(2).

2. Child care assistance shall continue to be available for up to 90 consecutive days after the parent becomes medically incapacitated. Assistance beyond 90 days may be approved by the service area manager or designee if extenuating circumstances are verified by a physician.

3. The number of units of service authorized shall be determined as follows:

- For a single-parent family, the number of units authorized for the period of incapacity shall not exceed the number of units authorized for the family before the onset of incapacity.

- For a two-parent family where one parent is temporarily incapacitated, the units of service authorized shall be based on the need of the parent who is not incapacitated.

- For a two-parent family, if one of the parents has a permanent disability and is unable to care for the child or participate in work or training, the disabled parent does not need to meet another need for service

requirement. The units of service authorized shall be based only on the need of the parent who is not disabled.

(5) The parent is looking for employment. Child care for job search hours shall be limited to only those hours the parent is actually looking for employment, including travel time. Job search shall be limited to a maximum of 90 consecutive calendar days.

1. For applicants, job search shall be approved for a maximum of 90 consecutive calendar days. If the parent has not started employment within 90 days, assistance shall be canceled.

2. For ongoing participants, job search shall be limited to a maximum of 90 consecutive calendar days and will be treated the same as a temporary lapse in need as described at subparagraphs 170.2(2)“b”(10) and (11).

(6) The parent needs child care services due to participation in activities approved under the PROMISE JOBS program.

(7) The family is part of the family investment program and there is a need for child care services due to employment or participation in vocational training or education. A family who meets this requirement due to employment is not required to work a minimum number of hours. If a parent in a family investment program household remains in the home, child care assistance can be paid if that parent receives Supplemental Security Income.

(8) The parent is employed and participating in academic or vocational training for 32 or more hours per week (28 hours per week if the family includes a special needs child) or an average of 32 or more hours per week (28 hours per week if the family includes a special needs child) in the aggregate, during the month. Child care services may be provided for the hours of employment, the hours of participation in academic or vocational training and for actual travel time between the child care location and the place of employment or training. All of the requirements relating to academic or vocational training found at subparagraph 170.2(2)“b”(1), except for the requirement to be enrolled full-time, apply to the part-time training in this subparagraph.

(9) The parent is a licensed foster parent who needs child care for foster children.

(10) Family eligibility shall continue during an approved certification period when a temporary lapse in need for service for a parent established under this subparagraph occurs. A temporary lapse is defined as:

1. Any time-limited absence from work or a training or education program for a parent due to:

- Need to care for a family member.
- An illness.
- Maternity leave.
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) situations for household members.
- Participation in a treatment/rehabilitation program.

2. Any reduction in employment or education/training hours that fall below the minimum number required at 170.2(2)“b”(1), (2) or (8) as long as the parent continues to work or attend training or education.

3. Any student holiday or break for a parent participating in training or education.

4. Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons.

5. Any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or education program that does not exceed three months.

(11) Family eligibility shall be canceled if the lapse in need is not temporary because the lapse will continue for more than 3 consecutive months.

c. *Residency.* To be eligible for child care services, the person must be living in the state of Iowa. “Living in the state” shall include those persons living in Iowa for a temporary period, other than for the purpose of vacation.

d. *Citizenship.* As a condition of eligibility, the applicant shall attest to the child’s citizenship or alien status by signing Form 470-3624 or 470-3624(S) or Form 470-0462 or 470-0462(S). Child care assistance payments may be made only for a child who:

(1) Is a citizen or national of the United States; or

(2) Is a qualified alien as defined at 8 U.S.C. Section 1641. The applicant shall furnish documentation of the alien status of any child declared to be a qualified alien. A child who is a qualified alien is not eligible for child care assistance for a period of five years beginning on the date of the child's entry into the United States with qualified alien status.

Exception:

The five-year prohibition from receiving assistance does not apply to:

1. Qualified aliens described at 8 U.S.C. Section 1613; or
2. Qualified aliens as defined at 8 U.S.C. Section 1641 who entered the United States before August 22, 1996.

e. Cooperation. Parents shall cooperate with the department when the department selects the family's case for quality control review to verify eligibility. Parents shall also cooperate with investigations conducted by the department of inspections and appeals to determine whether information supplied by the parent regarding eligibility for child care assistance is complete and correct. (See 481—Chapter 72.)

(1) Failure to cooperate shall serve as a basis for cancellation or denial of the family's child care assistance.

(2) Once denied or canceled for failure to cooperate, the family may reapply but shall not be considered for approval until cooperation occurs.

170.2(3) Priority for assistance. Child care services shall be provided only when funds are available. Funds available for child care assistance shall first be used to continue assistance to families currently receiving child care assistance and to families with protective child care needs or licensed foster parents who need child care for foster children. When funds are insufficient, families applying for services must meet the specific requirements in this subrule.

a. Priority groups. As funds are determined available, families shall be served on a statewide basis from a service-area-wide waiting list as specified in subrule 170.3(4) based on the following schedule in descending order of prioritization.

(1) Families with an income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level whose members, for at least 32 hours per week in the aggregate, are employed or are participating at a satisfactory level in an approved training program or educational program, and parents with a family income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level who are under the age of 21 and are participating in an educational program leading to a high school diploma or equivalent.

(2) Parents under the age of 21 with a family income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines who are participating, at a satisfactory level, in an approved training program or in an education program.

(3) Families with an income of more than 100 percent but not more than 160 percent of the federal poverty guidelines whose members, for at least 32 hours per week in the aggregate, are employed or are participating at a satisfactory level in an approved training program or educational program.

(4) Families with an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines whose members are employed at least 28 hours per week with a special-needs child as a member of the family.

b. Exceptions to priority groups. The following are eligible for child care assistance notwithstanding waiting lists for child care services:

- (1) Families with protective child care needs.
- (2) Recipients of the family investment program or those whose earned income was taken into account in determining the needs of family investment program recipients.
- (3) Families that receive a state adoption subsidy for a child.
- (4) Families that are experiencing homelessness.
- (5) Licensed foster parents who need child care for foster children.

c. Effect on need for service. Families approved under a priority group are not required to meet the requirements in paragraph 170.2(2)“b” except at review or redetermination.

170.2(4) Reporting changes. The parent may report any changes in circumstances affecting these eligibility requirements and changes in the choice of provider to the department worker or the PROMISE JOBS worker within ten calendar days of the change.

- a.* If the change is timely reported within ten calendar days, the effective date of the change shall be the date when the change occurred.
- b.* If the change is not timely reported within ten calendar days, the effective date of the change shall be the date when the change is reported to the department office or the PROMISE JOBS office.
- c.* Exceptions. The following changes must be reported:
 - (1) Changes in income when the family's gross monthly income exceeds 85 percent of Iowa's median family income.
 - (2) A lapse in a parent's need for service found in paragraph 170.2(2) "b" that is not temporary.
 - (3) A change in residency outside of the state of Iowa.
 - (4) No eligible child remains in the home.
- d.* The department worker shall disregard any reported changes that are not required to be reported unless the change would cause the authorized units to be increased or the family copay amount to be decreased.

[**ARC 8506B**, IAB 2/10/10, effective 3/1/10; **ARC 9651B**, IAB 8/10/11, effective 10/1/11; **ARC 1525C**, IAB 7/9/14, effective 7/1/14; **ARC 1606C**, IAB 9/3/14, effective 10/8/14; **ARC 2555C**, IAB 6/8/16, effective 7/1/16; **ARC 3092C**, IAB 6/7/17, effective 7/1/17; **ARC 3791C**, IAB 5/9/18, effective 7/1/18; **ARC 4470C**, IAB 6/5/19, effective 7/1/19; **ARC 5035C**, IAB 5/6/20, effective 7/1/20; **ARC 6309C**, IAB 5/4/22, effective 7/1/22; **ARC 6565C**, IAB 10/5/22, effective 10/1/22; **ARC 6965C**, IAB 4/5/23, effective 6/1/23; **ARC 8741C**, IAB 1/8/25, effective 2/12/25]