

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Deeming Income Eligibility for Child Care Services through the Food and Nutrition Services Program Department of Health and Human Services

- 1. Are counties always required to use the income information from the Food Stamp Information System (FSIS) screen instead of actual paystubs or other source documents?**

The first step is always to go to FSIS and use the income that is shown. If the client voluntarily provides more current income information, that new income must be verified and used to determine income eligibility and calculate parent fees. The child care worker cannot require the applicant to provide additional income information.

- 2. How should we handle the application process for someone applying for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) and child care services at the same time, but their income information is not yet available through FSIS?**

If FSIS does not reflect an active case at the time of application for child care services, the child care case worker will follow the same application process that has always been used for the Subsidy Program. FSIS information which is added later can be used for periodic reviews for child care.

- 3. If a client is receiving FNS, does that mean they always automatically get child care services too?**

No. The new deeming process only applies to income eligibility. Deeming can only occur when an FNS case is coded as an active case on the FSIS screen. Once a client is found to be income eligible through deeming, the child care worker still has to follow standard procedures during the interview process to establish need before approving the application and issuing a voucher.

- 4. FNS uses a different multiplier to convert weekly or bi-weekly income to monthly income. How does this affect us?**

We are changing subsidy policy to use the same multiplier that FNS and the other programs use, i.e., weekly X 4.3 and bi-weekly X 2.15. Effective August 1, 2010, child care staff will implement this change as applications are completed for new cases. This change will be made at reviews or redeterminations for parents who are currently receiving child care services and will not be retroactive.

- 5. How does deeming income eligibility affect our waiting list?**

Deeming income eligibility does not affect your local waiting list policy. Potential applicants who are income eligible would either be served or added to your waiting list according to the waiting list priorities in your county. However, deeming income eligibility may increase the awareness of child care subsidy among FNS families. Consequently, this may result in an increased number of children added to your waiting list.

- 6. When calculating the parent fee, how can I tell which individuals or which income from the FSIS screen should be included in the gross monthly income for the child care income unit?**

FSIS shows sources of all gross countable income and to whom this income belongs. The child care worker defines the income unit for child care purposes. Then the income that belongs specifically to that income unit is determined according to subsidy guidelines,

subtracting what is not needed and adding what is needed to determine eligibility and calculate the parent fee. The child care worker does not verify the income information in FSIS. If there are still questions about relationships of household members or sources of income, the child care worker will clarify by asking the applicant during the interview process.

**7. If check stubs are not collected, are we to accept the applicant's statement for verification of work hours?**

Yes. As part of the process of determining need during the interview, the child care worker will clarify the work schedule through conversation with the applicant. This information will be documented in the case record and used to determine the plan of care.

**8. FNS counts military income (BAH/BAS/Deployment pay) differently than Child Care. How is this to be addressed?**

We are not changing our policies on military income. (See DCD Administrative Letter No. 1-06, issued July 24, 2006.) While you are unable to see source documents on the FSIS screens, you will be able to identify the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) because they are listed as unearned income.

In order to determine income and to identify children from eligible active duty military families as Category Code 070 or Category Code 071, the child care worker will have to ask the applicant if the member of the United States Armed Forces is serving in a combat zone as all combat military pay is excluded in the Subsidy Program from gross family income.

**9. How do we handle the prorated income of non-citizen families who are not legal residents that is reported on the FSIS screens?**

If an un-documented resident family needs child care to support developmental needs, the family must be income eligible. When screen 2 of FSIS does not provide the income information that is needed, the child care worker will verify and calculate the gross monthly income to determine eligibility.

A child born in the United States to parents who are not citizens or legal residents may receive child care services to support any need category if all other eligibility criteria are met. The child care worker will determine the gross monthly income, if required, as above. Refer to Chapter 4 for additional information.

Income for an un-documented resident is pro-rated for the FNS household in order to determine the benefit amount. For example, a 5 person household includes 1 un-documented resident who has monthly income of \$500.00. The total gross income of the individual is divided by the number in the household. In this example, \$500 would be divided by 5 for \$100 per person. Then since there are 4 eligible individuals FNS would multiply \$100 x 4 and would count \$400 in the FNS budget.

**10. Will child care staff who are conducting quarterly reviews be expected to reduce frequency of reviews to align with the FNS six month guideline?**

No. Counties should continue periodic reviews. When conducting a quarterly review, the information available on the FSIS screens is always to be used as the first tool of reference. However, if there is a change voluntarily reported by the parent, the child care worker is expected to act on the most current information. Child care cannot be terminated during a periodic review if the FNS family does not submit check stubs.