



CDSS

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GOVERNOR

July 29, 2008

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO: 1-47-08

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CHILD CARE COORDINATORS
ALL WELFARE-TO-WORK COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS
(CalWORKs) CHILD CARE AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND
ON-LINE COURSES

REFERENCES: MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP)
SECTIONS 42-711.8, 47-220.22, 47-220.21-.213, 47-401.51

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to provide guidance to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) regarding the inclusion of on-line courses in a Welfare-to-Work (WTW) plan and when it is appropriate to provide CalWORKs supportive services for individuals participating in approved on-line courses. This ACIN does not address study time.

On-line courses are a form of education, which can be provided for in the WTW plan based on an individualized assessment of the participant's employment and training needs. The plan must specify the activities to which the participant will be assigned and the supportive services to be provided. In assigning an on-line course as an activity, consideration must be given to the specific circumstances of the activity, such as the requirement of in-person examinations. A participant must maintain satisfactory participation as defined in MPP Section 42-711.8.

CWDs must allow on-line courses as an activity if they are consistent with the participant's assessment and participation can be verified. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) encourages counties to work with local education providers to establish procedures to obtain any necessary verification. However, if the assigned activity is available in more than one format, counties may adopt a policy of requiring one over another. For example, if a participant's WTW plan includes a course of study at a local Regional Occupational Center that is available in both classroom and on-line formats, the county may require the participant to attend the classroom session if it does

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

not conflict with the participant's schedule and is otherwise appropriate (for example, transportation difficulties or disability needs may render the in-person course unavailable or inappropriate).

MPP Section 11-501.3 requires CWDs to have written policies when CDSS regulations authorize CWDs to adopt standards which affect a recipient's WTW activity, including supportive services. CWDs must apply their on-line course policies equitably to all participants. For example, a county may not deny an on-line course as part of an approved WTW plan based solely on concerns that an individual participant would not maintain satisfactory participation, while granting it to others (MPP Section 42-711.8).

CalWORKs participants assigned to on-line courses are eligible for supportive services including transportation, ancillary expenses, and child care. For example, transportation would be needed for attending in-person examinations, and individuals may need to purchase books or software required by the on-line course.

Participants who take on-line courses and request subsidized child care services for the time they are completing their on-line coursework may be eligible for child care services provided that the on-line course is part of the approved WTW activity (MPP Section 47-220.21-.213). Child care services shall be provided based on the individual's need for the services, taking into account scheduling and other factors. The following scenarios are examples of when CalWORKs Stage One Child Care services may or may not be provided:

- A) A participant requests child care while taking an on-line course that must be taken during a specific day(s) and time(s) and there is no able and available member of the assistance unit to provide care during that time. In this scenario, child care services may be provided (MPP Section 47-220.22).
- B) A participant requests child care for a school-age child while taking on-line courses that can be taken anytime. Under this scenario, child care services may not be provided unless there is good cause for the participant to take the on-line course(s) while the child is not in school (MPP Section 47-401.51).

This determination would be based on other WTW activities, transportation, disabilities, and other factors that may render it necessary to take the on-line course at a time other than during school hours.

CWDs cannot deny child care on the basis that the course could be taken during night hours when the children are sleeping. Recipients may not be able to reliably participate in the course, and may have personal home and sleep needs during evening hours. A

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parent in the home who is not assigned or participating voluntarily in other work or training activities is considered able and available.

CDSS will provide additional guidance in the near future on acceptable methods of on-line course enrollment verification and how to account for recipient activity hours.

If you have any child care questions, please contact Usman Amin, Child Care Programs Bureau, at (916) 657-2144. If you have any CalWORKs employment related questions contact Andrew Wilson, Employment Bureau, at (916) 654-2137.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

VENUS GARTH, Chief
Child Care and Refugee Programs Branch

Original Document Signed By:

KÄREN DICKERSON, Chief
Employment and Eligibility Branch

c: CWDA