

## Georgia Department of Human Resources

### SUBSIDIZED CHILDCARE IN GEORGIA

After housing and food, childcare costs are the third largest expense for working families. Thousands of Georgia parents need childcare so they can work or get job training. Because this care in Georgia can cost as much as \$95 per week for one child (more in urban areas), it is beyond the means of many low- and moderate-income families.

The Department of Human Resources helps families afford early childhood and school age care and programs by subsidizing the cost of childcare through its Child Care and Parent Services (CAPS) program. Local Department of Family and Children Services offices determine eligibility for CAPS.

Parents or guardians who have a limited income and are working, attending school, or in job training may qualify for subsidized childcare. Many families enrolled in CAPS are becoming self-sufficient after leaving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (welfare). Children are eligible for CAPS up to age 13, or up to age 18 if they have special needs or have court ordered supervision

Eligible families choose their own childcare providers. They may choose from centers or homes that are licensed by the state; centers that are exempt from licensing by state law (such as school systems providing after-school care); family childcare home providers who are registered with the state's childcare licensing agency Bright From the Start: Georgia Department of Early and Learning; or from informal providers (such as a relative or neighbor). Bright From the Start sees that informal caregivers meet basic health and safety standards.

Most parents or guardians pay a co-payment or family fee based on the family's income and size and the number of children enrolled in the CAPS program. CAPS pays the remainder to the childcare provider, up to a maximum rate based on type of care, age of child, and location. The average monthly payment by CAPS is \$268 per child.

In FY 2007, \$168 million was spent for childcare services for eligible families. Childcare funds are limited which means many must go on their county's waiting list.

In FY 2007, the monthly average number of children receiving subsidized childcare was approximately 59,000. This included nearly 6,000 children whose parents were TANF recipients in training or employment activities. On a whole, 101,155 children were served in 2007.

Quality childcare programs go beyond the minimum health and safety standards required by state agencies. Some of the federal funds allocated to Georgia are used to improve the quality of childcare and offer additional services to parents. The CAPS program collaborates with agencies and individuals and contracts with other agencies to enhance the quality and increase the supply of childcare.

