

**§3737. Payments to providers**

**1. No payments to recipients.** The department may not make cash payments to recipients for child care services provided under this chapter, except when those payments represent reimbursement for services already provided to the recipient.

[PL 1993, c. 158, §2 (NEW).]

**2. Maintenance of existing options.** The department shall ensure that child care funds are distributed through a range of mechanisms, including, but not limited to, vouchers to recipients and contracts to providers.

[PL 1993, c. 158, §2 (NEW).]

**3. Quality differential.** To the extent permitted by federal law, the department shall pay a differential rate for child care services that meet or that make substantial progress toward meeting nationally recognized quality standards, such as those standards required by the Head Start program or required for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and shall do so from the Child Care Development Fund 25% Quality Set-aside funds or by other acceptable federal practices. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The rules must establish a child care quality rating system with a minimum of 3 steps and must provide for graduated quality differential rates for steps that demonstrate that a child care provider meets or makes substantial progress toward meeting nationally recognized quality standards.

A. [PL 2013, c. 559, §1 (RP).]

B. [PL 2013, c. 559, §1 (RP).]

Nothing in this subsection requires the department to pay a quality differential rate for child care services provided through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant.

[PL 2021, c. 138, §1 (AMD).]

**4. Child care rates.** The department shall establish payment rates for child care services that are up to the 75th percentile of local market rates for the various categories of child care services. The payment rates for child care services for children with special needs may be higher than the 75th percentile of local market rates.

[PL 2017, c. 412, §1 (NEW).]

**5. Payments to providers within 15 days.** The department shall reimburse a provider of child care services provided under this chapter within 15 days after receiving a complete and accurate invoice if the provider has met all the required state procurement and payment requirements.

[PL 2023, c. 412, §5 (NEW).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 1993, c. 158, §2 (NEW). PL 2001, c. 394, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 559, §1 (AMD). RR 2015, c. 1, §21 (COR). PL 2017, c. 412, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 138, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 412, §5 (AMD).

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