

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING DIVISION
Workforce Programs
Technical Assistance Bulletin 317

Keywords: Child Care

Subject: 12-Month Eligibility and Authorization of Child Care Services

Date: May 5, 2025

This Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin provides Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with guidance on establishing minimum eligibility and authorization periods for Child Care Services.

Background

Pursuant to 45 CFR [§98.21\(a\)\(3\)\(i\)](#), states must establish a minimum 12-month authorization period for eligible families receiving child care assistance.

Texas implements this requirement through the Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Part 20, §809.42 (b), which requires Boards to ensure that eligibility for child care services is not redetermined sooner than 12 months following the initial determination or most recent redetermination.

12-Month Authorization Overview

TWC provides the following guidance to help Boards determine the correct process that ensures each eligible child is guaranteed a minimum of 12 months of child care services to align with current policy.

Child Care Services Term	Defined
Eligibility Determination	Eligibility Determination begins when the parent is notified of the determination of eligibility.
12-Month Authorization	The 12-month Authorization begins with the start of care . For family with <i>one child</i> , if the child does not need care immediately (such as they are waiting for a spot to open in their choice of child care provider and/or in cases that a child only needs holiday and/or summer care), the child may start Voluntary Suspension until care begins. The 12-month authorization will begin with the start of care, not with the start of Voluntary Suspension This is to ensure the child may receive a full 12-months of care. If there are <i>multiple children</i> in the family at the time of Eligibility Determination, and they do not all need care immediately (such as in cases that a child only needs holiday and/or summer care), the 12

Child Care Services Term	Defined
	months starts when the first child begins care . The other children in the family are considered eligible but Voluntarily Suspended while care is not needed.
Eligibility Period	<p>Eligibility determination date + 12 months from the start of care.</p> <p>If there are <i>multiple</i> children in the family at time of eligibility determination, and they do not all need care immediately, the eligibility period follows the eligibility determination date + 12 months from the start of care for the children who need care. If another child in the family is on Voluntary Suspension because they do not need care, they are still considered eligible during the Voluntary Suspension and starting care later does not affect the family's eligibility period.</p>
Recertification Date	The Recertification Date is the day after the last day of the 12-month Authorization Period. The date cannot occur before 12 months from the Eligibility Determination, Start of Care, or previous Recertification Date, whichever is later.
Voluntary Suspension	With concurrence of the parent, a Board may suspend care for a child if they do not need care for a period of time. This means the family's case will be open and the parent will need to inform the Board when the child is ready to begin care.

General FAQ

Question	Answer
Can a child be on Voluntary Suspension before a provider is selected?	Yes, if a child does not need immediate care (such as if a child only needs summer and/or holiday care).
Does Voluntary Suspension count toward the 12-month authorization period if it is before care begins?	Yes, but only in cases with <i>multiple children</i> where at least one child begins care immediately and at least one child is placed on Voluntary Suspension because they do not need immediate care (such as if a child only needs summer and holiday care).
If a family is on Voluntary Suspension and receives care (such as during summers and holidays only), do they qualify for redetermination?	Yes.
If a family on Voluntary Suspension never received care during their 12-month authorization	No. To prevent a Recertification Notice from automatically going to the parent, a case worker may

period, do they qualify for redetermination?	authorize the Discontinuation Notice before the Recertification Notice is sent.
If a parent qualifies for Initial Job Search, when should their recertification date be?	Families that qualify for Initial Job Search must be determined eligible for 12 months of care. Therefore, the family's Recertification Date should be the day after the last day of the 12-month Authorization Period. If a family fails to meet the work requirements when the three-month Initial Job Search period ends, their eligibility is terminated early.
If a child is born into the family or added to the family after the 12-month Authorization Date, do we extend the family's Eligibility Period?	Yes, the family's Eligibility Period will be extended by 12 months from the first day of care of the child added to the family. This ensures the child that was added to the family by birth or otherwise receives a full 12 months of care.
Is Voluntary Suspension at the beginning of a child's case required?	No. The decision to put a child on Voluntary Suspension may be made by the parent or the Board with the parent's concurrence but is not required. Boards may use the following language in the notice notes that is sent to parents: <i>Since you do not need child care right now, your child is on Voluntary Suspension (a hold status). Please contact the Board when you are ready to start child care.</i>
Do I need to track Voluntary Suspension?	Boards should enter a case note to reflect Voluntary Suspension, including noting if only some of the children in the family have suspended care and what the 12-month authorization period(s) are if they differ among children in the household. The Recertification Notices will be sent to families on Voluntary Suspension so they will have the opportunity to recertify if needed.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) FAQ

Question	Answer
Is there ever a time when it is not appropriate to roll over to Former DFPS?	If the General Protective authorization ends before the end of the 12-month eligibility period, there should be a Former DFPS eligibility available for the remainder of the eligibility period. The children would be in a suspension status during this time if care is not needed. Children referred by DFPS for foster care or relative/kinship care do not receive Former DFPS. These families may apply for low-income child care.
Is the General Protective program to be classified under the Former DFPS category for the rest of the 12-month eligibility, thus stopping	Correct. If the children do not need child care, suspend the case under the Former category for the remainder of the 12-month period. Parents and caregivers will need to request child care for the next holiday break themselves.

referrals until the next holiday break? Will parents then be responsible for calling Boards for holiday break assistance?	If DFPS sends a new Form 2054, Service Authorization to authorize another General Protective period, continue using the original 12-month eligibility period.
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References

[Child Care Development Fund, 45 CFR 98.21\(a\)](#)

[Texas Workforce Commission Child Care Services Guide](#) (D-102)

[Title 40, Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\), Part 20, Chapter 809, Child Care Services rule §809.42 \(b\)](#)