

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CAN'T MEET YOUR WORK REQUIREMENTS BECAUSE APPROPRIATE CHILD CARE IS NOT AVAILABLE?

If you are a single parent who takes care of a child under age six who lives with you and you do not comply with your work requirement because you cannot get child care for one or more of the reasons outlined in the boxes below, your Work First benefits may not be terminated.

You do not have appropriate child care because:

- ◆ Your child care is not in a regulated child care center or family child care home that has a license, or
- ◆ Your child care is in an informal child care arrangement that does not meet the minimal health, safety and criminal record check standards required of informal providers for reimbursement through North Carolina's child care subsidy program.
- ◆ You do not have child care options that have hours of operation that mesh with your work schedule and meet any special needs of the child(ren).

Your child care is not within a reasonable distance:

In evaluating "reasonable distance," the county will consider the total time it takes you to travel one-way from home to the child care provider then to work or work-related activity. The county will also consider whether you have a working vehicle or other transportation options.

You have unsuitable informal child care:

An informal child care provider may be considered "unsuitable" for your family if:

- ◆ The informal child care arrangement does not meet the health, safety, and criminal record check standards required of informal providers to receive subsidy reimbursements from the State of North Carolina.
- ◆ You do not want your child(ren) cared for by the informal child care provider.

Your worker will evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis.

Your child care arrangement is not affordable:

If you are eligible for a child care subsidy, the child care is considered affordable. Therefore, this circumstance only applies if a child care subsidy is not available to your family.

### **How Do I Prove My Inability to Get Child Care?**

It is your responsibility to prove that you cannot get child care for one or more of the reasons defined above. You must immediately inform your Work First worker that you can't get child care and explain the reason. You will have to provide proof. Based on this information, your Work First worker will determine if you have proved that you can't get child care.

If your Work First worker determines you can't get child care as described above, a sanction will not be applied to your Work First benefits for not meeting your work requirement as long as you are unable to get child care for these reasons.

If your Work First worker determines that you can get child care that is appropriate, suitable, and within a reasonable distance, your Work First benefit will be sanctioned. If you think the county has made the wrong decision, you have the right to a hearing. Your hearing rights are described on the notice you will receive regarding the sanction.

### **If I Prove I Can't Get Child Care, Does My Time Clock Stop?**

No. Your 60-month time limit for receiving Work First payments does not stop even though you are unable to get child care.

**For further information, contact your Work First worker.**

The North Carolina Division of Social Services does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age in the admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.