



Engaging in the CCDF Planning Process: Messaging Guidance and Templates for Families and Providers

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Guidance on Drafting Your Testimony

Whether you are preparing your comments to testify verbally at a public hearing or planning out your comments to submit them in written form, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Begin your comments with an opening statement that introduces yourself and your role in the child care system
- Include your personal experiences
- Emphasize the messages and key points that matter most to you at the beginning of your testimony

Sample Messages: The 2025-2027 CCDF Plan includes 10 sections that focus on different policy topics. You can review what each section focuses on in [CCAoA's 2025-2027 CCDF State Plan Summary](#). While states are required to complete all these sections, you may notice some of these sections stand out more to you than others. CCAoA has created sample messaging for a few sections that you may want to include in your testimony.



Section 2: Child and Family Eligibility and Enrollment and Continuity of Care: This section includes what policies the state will use to reduce barriers to subsidy enrollment for families.

*Especially relevant for families with children in child care

For this section it will be helpful to:

1. Describe any challenges you encountered applying for and enrolling in child care subsidy.
2. Explain the impact on your family of the process being simplified.

You might say:

- “I encountered many challenges trying to enroll in subsidy, like (list the challenges). Going through all these challenges, on top of the process of finding affordable, high-quality care, made things very difficult for our family.”
- “Making the process to enroll in child care subsidy simpler will make a major difference for my family. It would mean (describe the impact) for us.”

Section 3: Child Care Affordability: This section includes how the state will determine family copayments, including capping payments at 7% of a family’s income.

*Especially relevant for families with children in child care

For this section it will be helpful to:

1. Talk about your family’s current copayment and any barriers this copayment amount has caused to affording child care
2. Talk about the impact of having your copayment capped at 7% of family’s income.

You might say:

- “My current copayment is \$X. This has been a challenge for me because (describe the challenges).”
- “Capping my copayment at 7% of my household income (or less) will have such a positive impact for our family. It will mean (describe the impact).”



Section 4: Parental Choice, Equal Access, Payment Rates and Payment Practices: This section includes information on how states are implementing sufficient payment practices and setting adequate reimbursement rates that help ensure families have a wide range of options for child care arrangements.

*Especially relevant for child care providers

For this section it will be helpful to:

1. Explain your state's current subsidy payment practices – if it is based on enrollment or attendance, and if you receive prospective payments or retroactive payments.
2. Describe the impact on your program if your state paid based on enrollment instead of attendance.
3. Describe the impact on your program if your state paid in advance of serving children instead of retroactively.

You might say:

- “The state currently pays me based on my program’s attendance. This has been challenging for me because (describe the challenges, include specific examples you may have); If the state changed its payment practices and paid me based on enrollment, it would mean (describe the impact) for my program.”
- “The state currently pays me after I provide services for subsidy-eligible children. This has been challenging for me because (describe the challenges, include specific examples you may have). If the state paid me based on my program’s overall enrollment, it would mean (describe the impact) for my program”

OR (if your state currently bases rates on enrollment and/or pays prospectively):

- “The state currently pays me in advance of providing services. This has made a positive impact on my program because (describe the impact, include specific examples you may have)”
- “The state currently pays me based on my program’s overall enrollment. This has made a positive impact on my program because (describe the impact, include specific examples you may have)”



Section 5: Health and Safety of Child Care Settings: This section covers state health and safety requirements, licensing requirements and comprehensive background checks. This includes ratios, group sizes, provider qualifications and the posting of monitoring and inspection reports online that are in plain language so parents can easily understand them when they are deciding on a child care provider.

*Especially relevant for families with children in child care and child care providers

For this section it would be helpful to:

1. Explain if your state has recently increased ratios and group sizes or rolled back requirements around provider qualifications.
2. Share if your state's full monitoring and inspection reports that include areas of compliance and non-compliance are widely available on the state agency's consumer education website.

You might say:

- Our state recently (increased allowable group sizes and ratios OR rolled back teacher qualification requirements). Appropriate standards for ratios, group size limits and provider qualifications help ensure a safe and healthy child care environment. Efforts like this to undermine health and safety won't solve the long-term child care supply and affordability crisis, but they will... (describe the impact, include specific examples you may have)
- Our state does not currently post the full monitoring and inspection reports online. It is critical for parents to have this information easily accessible so they can make an informed decision when finding child care (describe additional impact, include specific examples you may have)

** If you aren't sure if your state has changed its policies or where the monitoring and inspection reports are located, reach out to your CCR&R. If you are not already in contact with your CCR&R, you can find one in your area [here](#).



Section 6: Support for a Skilled, Qualified and Compensated Child Care Workforce: This section requires states to address efforts to support the child care workforce, including professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support and strengthening providers' business practices.

*Especially relevant for child care providers

For this section it would be helpful to:

1. Explain the challenges you have faced with professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support and strengthening your business practices.
2. Describe the impact of those challenges.
3. Explain what kind of supports would help you with professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support and strengthening your business practices.
4. Describe the impact those supports would have on you and your program.

You might say:

- "I have faced challenges with (choose one - professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support, business practices) and this has made things harder for me because (explain the challenge). It has impacted me and my program by (give example of impact)."
- I would like to see more support for (choose one - professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support, business acumen). Receiving more support on this would make a positive impact for me and my program because (give example of the impact of more support)."



Templates: The templates below include some of the key areas and sample messaging above. Please customize these templates to fit your personal experiences and what is relevant for your state. Include any additional messaging you believe is important for your testimony.

These templates are written to be comprehensive and serve as foundations for submitting written testimony. If you are presenting verbal testimony in a public hearing, please use these templates as a guide as they may be too long for the time allotted for your verbal testimony.

Template for Families with Children in Child Care

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is [your name] and I am here today to provide comments on [state's] CCDF Plan. As a [child care provider/parent/other role], I am an advocate for a child care system that serves all children, their families and early childhood educators. Child care provides critical development and enrichment opportunities for children of all backgrounds and is a vital building block of our state's economy.

[Add a sentence or two about your personal experience and connection to child care here.]

I appreciate the opportunity to offer input on our state's CCDF Plan, and I would like to begin by addressing the policies the state will use to reduce barriers to subsidy enrollment for families. **[CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE:** I encountered many challenges trying to enroll in subsidy, such as [list the challenges]. Going through these challenges, on top of the process of finding affordable, high-quality care, made things very difficult for our family. Simplifying the process to enroll in child care subsidy will make a major difference for my family. It would mean [describe the impact] for us.]

I would also like to address the copayments families have to pay for child care, specifically the policy of capping copayments at 7% of a family's income. **[CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE:** My current copayment is \$X. This has been a challenge for me because [describe the challenges]. Capping my copayment at 7% of my household income (or less) will have such a positive impact for my family. It will mean [describe the impact].]

Child care is so important for our family. We rely on child care to work, and we depend on the program we use to be a healthy and safe environment for our child. **[CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE:** Our state recently [increased allowable group sizes and ratios OR rolled back teacher qualification requirements]. Appropriate standards for ratios, group size limits and provider qualifications help ensure a safe and healthy child care environment. Efforts like this to undermine health and safety won't solve the long-term child care supply and affordability crisis, but they will... [describe the impact, include specific examples you may have]. Additionally, our state does not currently post the full monitoring and inspection reports online. It is critical for parents to have this information easily accessible so they can make an informed decision when finding child care [describe additional impact, include specific examples you may have].]



Finally, I would like to address the importance of the child care workforce, specifically efforts to support them, including professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support and supporting them as business owners. Child care workers are the workforce behind the workforce; I would not be able to work if I was not able to rely on my child care provider. They deserve our support.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on our state's CCDF plan.

[Your Name]

[Your role: child care provider/parent/other role]

[Your City, Your State]

Template for Child Care Providers

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is [your name] and I am here today to provide comments on [state's] CCDF Plan. As a [child care provider/parent/other role], I am an advocate for a child care system that serves all children, their families and early childhood educators. Child care provides critical development and enrichment opportunities for children of all backgrounds and is a vital building block of our state's economy.

[Add a sentence or two about your personal experience and connection to child care here.]

I appreciate the opportunity to offer input on our state's CCDF Plan, and I would like to begin by addressing our state's policies for payment practices and setting adequate reimbursement rates. **[CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE:** "The state currently pays me based on my program's attendance. This has been challenging for me because [describe the challenges, include specific examples you may have]; If the state changed its payment practices and paid me based on my program's overall enrollment, it would mean [describe the impact] for my program. The state currently pays me after I provide services for subsidy-eligible children. This has been challenging for me because [describe the challenges, include specific examples you may have]. If the state paid me in advance of providing child care services, which is similar to how payment practices of serving private-pay families work, it would mean [describe the impact] for my program.]

Also, our state recently **[CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR STATE: increased allowable group sizes and ratios OR rolled back teacher qualification requirements]**. Appropriate standards for ratios, group size limits and provider qualifications help ensure a safe and healthy child care environment. Efforts like this to undermine health and safety won't solve the long-term child care supply and affordability crisis, but they will [describe the impact, include specific examples you may have].



Finally, I would also like to address our state's efforts to support the child care workforce, including professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support and strengthening providers' business acumen. **[CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE: I have faced challenges with (choose one - professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support, business practices) and this has made things harder for me because (explain the challenge). It has impacted me and my program by (give example of impact). I would like to see more support for (choose one - professional development, workforce recruitment and retention, compensation, access to benefits, mental health support, business acumen). Receiving more support on this would make a positive impact for me and my program because (give example of the impact of more support).]**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on our state's CCDF plan.

[Your Name]

[Your role: child care provider/parent/other role]

[Your City, Your State]

Follow Up with Us: For any questions or to let us know about your experience participating in the CCDF State Planning Process, email takeaction@usa.childcareaware.org.