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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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DSS-4037EL (Rev. 9/89)

Transmittal No: 94 LCM-122

Date: October 6, 1994

Division: Services and
Community
Development

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Transitional Child Care: Practices to Increase Utilization

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A - Transitional Benefits Flyer and
TCC Application (available on-line)
Attachment B - Sample Case Make-Up Inquiry Screen Print
(not available on-line)

Nationally, utilization of the Transitional Child Care (TCC) program has been lower than anticipated when it was implemented. A study by the federal General Accounting Office suggests that only 20 percent of families eligible for Transitional Child Care actually receive such services. In New York State during FFY 1992-1993, a monthly average of 2,133 children received TCC with annual expenditures totaling \$7,577,755. The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to provide social services districts with a "best practices" model which may be duplicated to increase usage of Transitional Child Care.

Examination of claims data indicates that 2025 children in upstate New York received TCC services during the month of June 1994. Of these, 486 children (24%) were receiving TCC services through the Monroe County Department of Social Services (MCDSS). As the result of a review of the policies and procedures of MCDSS, the Department has identified factors which contribute to the agency's success in increasing its usage of the TCC program. This LCM describes the practices which have resulted in a higher usage of TCC in Monroe County than in the rest of the state.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONROE COUNTY TCC MODEL

In 1993, MCDSS opened a monthly average of 25 new TCC cases each month. In May, 1994 it opened over 60 new TCC cases. A primary factor contributing to

this increased utilization of TCC is a strong recognition throughout the agency of the importance of child care to employed parents. This recognition is accompanied by a commitment to helping parents maintain employment which begins at the highest administrative levels and has been communicated effectively to all agency staff.

Monroe County Department of Social Services has translated its commitment into a number of activities designed to increase use of Transitional Child Care. These activities fall into three major categories:

1. targeted marketing efforts;
2. multiple points of client access to TCC; and
3. a modified application and authorization process.

Below is a description of the specific activities that MCDSS conducts in each of these categories.

Marketing Efforts: Marketing efforts were targeted to a number of different populations. First, MCDSS educated its employees about the availability of TCC. Other benefits, such as medical assistance, food stamps, and HEAP, which are available to help recipients transition off public assistance also were identified. The benefit of linking recipients to such services at the time of case closing was promoted. Determination of eligibility for transitional benefits is viewed as part of a worker's responsibility when closing a public assistance case. Workers realize that in the long-term they personally benefit because families are more likely to avoid future dependency, thus reducing caseloads.

Income maintenance workers receive frequent feedback regarding their efforts to increase utilization of TCC. This feedback takes a variety of forms including charts and memos highlighting current achievements. Annually, the agency presents an award to the income maintenance team with highest number of referrals to TCC.

Second, MCDSS targets marketing of transitional benefits to public assistance recipients. Posters have been hung in reception areas, community agencies and at day care centers. Clients are told verbally about TCC at application, recertification, orientation and assessment for JOBS and at other times when they have contact with district staff. The agency has designed several client-oriented brochures and flyers to promote the use of transitional benefits.

Third, MCDSS targets information about TCC to former public assistance recipients. A flyer about TCC is sent with all case closing notices. In addition, using computer generated labels, a special mailing is sent to all AFDC cases closed due to employment. This mailing includes a simple flyer and application for TCC.

Fourth, MCDSS conducts community outreach activities. In addition to posters, flyers and brochures, an informal "speakers bureau" composed of district staff has been established. These speakers attend meetings of community organizations to publicize the availability of transitional services to assist individuals who are leaving public assistance.

Multiple points of client access: Monroe County Department of Social Services has established four points of entry for clients wishing to access Transitional Child Care. These entry points are in: Temporary Assistance (Income Maintenance); CEOSC; CAP; and Services Day Care. A supervisor from the Services Day Care unit trained Temporary Assistance, CEOSC and CAP workers on establishing a services family unit, calculating parent fees and using services codes.

Temporary Assistance workers are responsible for identifying clients with child care needs whose cases are being closed for earned income and referring such cases to designated workers. It is the sole responsibility of these designated workers to determine whether referred clients are eligible for TCC and to open cases for eligible families. Similarly, a designated CEOSC caseworker helps CEOSC clients access TCC services when their cases are closing. CAP staff determine eligibility and open TCC cases for the clients on their own caseloads. The Services Day Care Team assesses eligibility for TCC and opens the case whenever an individual applies for income-eligible child care services. In addition, the Services Day Care Team assists the Temporary Assistance workers in opening TCC cases, as needed.

TCC cases that are opened by CEOSC, CAP and Temporary Assistance units are transferred to the Services Day Care Team who assume responsibility for undercare activities (on-going payment; monitoring attendance; processing changes; redeterminations). The following documentation is forwarded to the Services Day Care Team with a transferred case:

- o the application for TCC;
- o documentation of the income used to calculate eligibility and weekly fee (for cases closed within the last month the ABEL budget may be used as documentation of income);
- o the WMS Case Make-Up inquiry screen print (WINQ07)
- o the WMS Case Comprehensive - Screen 1 print (WINQ19);
- o a Day Care Request form (a local equivalent of the enrollment forms for unregulated caregivers), if applicable;
- o the DSS-2970 Authorization and SFED/T; and
- o a copy of the Notice of Decision.

When a case is transferred to the Services Day Care unit, the supervisor reviews the accompanying documentation to ensure that eligibility has been established correctly.

Establishing multiple points of entry has provided clients with ready access to transitional services. Clients are able to apply for TCC without making additional phone calls or appointments to request an application. Clients are not required to provide information duplicative of that which they have given their Temporary Assistance, CAP or CEOSC workers already. In

addition, since determining TCC eligibility is part of the case closing process, breaks in service are avoided. The availability of TCC through the Services Day Care Team provides a "safety net" to catch those families who slip by the other entry points.

Modified application and authorization process: With Department approval, the district has implemented use of a simple one-page Transitional Child Care Application (Attachment A). Since it has an established case, the district already has documented the household composition, wages and other income data. The Transitional Child Care Application provides additional information needed to authorize child care services. If the application for TCC is being made within a month of the time ineligibility for public assistance is determined, the ABEL budget is used to determine income and the client is not required to submit new income verification. Similarly, if the parent is continuing an existing child care arrangement which the social services district previously has determined to be eligible for payment, it is not necessary to obtain additional information from the child care provider.

Data entry of the TCC case follows standard practices with the exception that a different document is used to initiate the process. Data entry is initiated via a print of the case make-up inquiry screen (WINQ07). This document, in conjunction with data on the WMS Case Comprehensive - Screen 1 (WINQ19), provides the worker with information regarding the household composition, reason for public assistance case closing and length of receipt of public assistance. In addition, the worker uses blank space on the page to document the calculation of income and parent fee.

Before the WINQ07 screen print is sent to data entry, the worker writes the date TCC services are to begin and their worker/unit number on the top. In addition, the worker whites out the status and relationship information which appears on each line after the client identification number (CIN). The worker then writes all the WK2 information, except the eligibility code, which is required to open a Services case in this space. The WK2 information is comprised of those WMS/Services codes which the services worker normally writes in the shaded area of page five of the DSS-2921. These codes are provided in the "WMS/Services Coding Guide," WMS/SVC-80 (Rev. 7/94). Attachment B provides a sample of a WINQ07 screen print that has been prepared for data entry.

The completed screen print is sent to data entry where a clearance is generated. The clearance is forwarded to the worker who checks it, enters the eligibility code and returns it to data entry.

Upon receipt of the reviewed clearance, data entry generates a SFED/T which goes to the worker. The worker completes the POS line(s), service type and goals. The supervisor reviews and signs the SFED/T. The signed SFED/T is returned to data entry where a DSS-2970 Authorization is generated. At this point, cases opened outside of the Services Day Care unit are ready to be transferred as described on the previous page.

MCDSS does not attribute the increased usage of TCC to the availability of a modified application as much as to their marketing efforts and the establishment of multiple points of entry. They do believe, however, that

the modified application is of symbolic value for clients. Its use indicates that they have entered a new phase in their lives and no longer have to complete the "PA application." In addition, the use of the Case Make-Up inquiry screen print (WINQ07) for data entry has produced an unanticipated benefit - a reduced error rate due to the fact that it is easier for data entry operators to read than the handwriting of some workers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES DISTRICTS

Access to safe, healthy and reliable child care services is a primary factor contributing to the ability of families to secure and maintain employment. Social services districts are encouraged to evaluate their current policies and procedures relative to the provision of TCC to determine whether those practices create unintentional barriers to self-sufficiency for former public assistance recipients. The practices described in this LCM, or a variation thereof, may be duplicated by social services districts which want to promote increased utilization of TCC.

Any social services district choosing to duplicate the "Monroe County TCC Model" or to otherwise modify its TCC policies and procedures should notify the Department of its intent. The Department is prepared to work with individual social services districts to adapt the "Monroe County TCC Model" to address district-specific issues. The Department also is willing to consider other suggestions for changes in its policies, forms and procedures which will assist social services districts in using TCC more fully.

Social services districts implementing the "Monroe County TCC Model," or a variation thereof, may continue to use the common application [DSS-2921/DSS-2921(NYC)]; the modified application provided in Attachment A; or may submit a local equivalent for Department approval. Attachment A is intended for use only as part of an overall plan to increase TCC utilization.

Questions regarding LCM or requests for assistance may be directed to Dee Woolley, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, at 1-800-343-8859, extension 4-9324 or dial direct (518) 474-9324. Ms. Woolley also may be contacted on-line, Userid #89a800.

Frank Puig
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Services and Community
Development

(Print this page on your agency letterhead.)

TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS

If you have children and you lose your public assistance because your earnings are too high you may still be able to receive:

TRANSITIONAL CHILD CARE

for up to 12 months if your family received cash assistance in 3 of the last 6 months before your case closed and you were closed because your earnings were too high. Complete the application on the back of this notice if you need help paying for child care or call the number at the bottom of this page for more information.

TRANSITIONAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

for 6 months if your family received cash assistance in 3 of the last 6 months before your case closed, there is a child under 21 years living with you and your case closed because your earnings were too high. Also, you may be eligible for an additional 6 months if your income remains below certain levels.

FOOD STAMPS

Many families who lose their public assistance benefits because their earnings are too high are still eligible for Food Stamps.

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS, CALL

(insert local number)

(OVER)

APPLICATION FOR TRANSITIONAL CHILD CARE
 _____ County Department of Social Services

Name:		
Address:		
Phone Numbers: Home -	Work -	
Social Security Number:	PA Case Number:	Date Closed:

Do you need child care in order to work? ___ YES ___ NO

Where do you work? _____

Start date at job: _____ Rate of pay: \$_____ per _____

Days and hours of employment: _____

Other household income: Child Support: \$ _____ per week SSI: \$ _____

Social Security: \$ _____ Other (specify): \$ _____

Please provide if checked: [] income verification for last four weeks
 [] child care provider enrollment form

Names of children who need child care:

CHILD'S NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	CHILD CARE PROVIDER'S NAME

By signing this form, I agree to any investigation made by the Department of Social Services to verify the information I have given. I agree to inform the Department of Social Services promptly of any change in my needs, income, address or child care provider. I agree to pay the required weekly fee for my child care. I am willing to assist the child support enforcement unit in obtaining child support for my children.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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