

CYFD to increase eligibility for subsidized child care

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Jan. 31 application deadline looming

ALBUQUERQUE – Families with incomes up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level have until Jan. 31 to apply for subsidized child care. The eligibility was restored after a group of parents sued the Children, Youth & Families Department for denying eligible parents access to the service.

Organizers in the Land of Enchantment, a plaintiff in the suit, found the announcement on the CYFD

“Right now, my family is searching for last minute child care because we can only afford \$30 for a day for a babysitter on Sunday because both my husband and I work,” OLÉ member Simone Pinero said. “It would have been nice to know that eligibility for child care was raised and that we could go in and apply.”

CYFD informed the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, which represents families in the lawsuit, that it has notified families that were illegally denied child care assistance and placed on the waitlist that they can receive assistance if they remain eligible.

“Childcare is expensive to pay out of pocket; I can’t even work full time because I can’t afford full-time childcare,” Winifred Whiteman-Jennings, an OLÉ member, said. “It’s appalling that CYFD made no real announcement(s) to the general public about the changes. Hard-working families deserve to know if they have the opportunity to apply for child care assistance again, especially eligible families that were incorrectly turned away.”

Sovereign Hager, from New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty weighed in on the matter.

“CYFD still has a long way to go to comply with the law. They must issue regulations that explain how they calculate the share of child care costs that families must pay and meet basic due process requirements when denying assistance. CYFD cannot reduce eligibility in the

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future without a public hearing,” he said.