

Continuous Eligibility for Children (CEC)

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BACKGROUND	<p>Continuous Eligibility for Children (CEC) was implemented in 2001 per federal law. CEC ensures that children under age 19 who are determined eligible for free Medi-Cal maintain that eligibility until their next annual redetermination, or until they turn 19, whichever occurs first. All adverse changes in financial eligibility, income, or a change in maintenance need level, are disregarded until the CEC period ends.</p> <p>This means that children under age 19 cannot move to Share of Cost (SOC) Medi-Cal, or a Covered California program, until their next annual redetermination or until they turn 19.</p> <p>NOTE: Children receiving no-SOC Medi-Cal on the basis of their eligibility for a cash program (e.g., SSI/SSP or CalWORKs) are also eligible for protection under CEC.</p> <p>CEC is only applicable at mid-year changes.</p> <p>At renewal, in the situation where certain individuals in a case household are found eligible or conditionally eligible while others remain in a pending eligibility status, if the verification provided would disadvantage the eligible or conditionally eligible, BAs must grant CEC to the child(ren) until their upcoming annual redetermination date. CEC children under age 19 who are approved for MAGI Medi-Cal at any determination are eligible to receive CEC when there is a change that would disadvantage the child or when there is a loss of contact with the family. Please see the EXAMPLES section.</p> <p>CEC also applies to Foster Care children. Please see the Medi-Cal for Discontinued Foster Care Cases Handbook Section in the AFDC-Foster Care Program Handbook for more information.</p> <p>REMINDERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC is not in the Medi-Cal Hierarchy because it is a Consumer Protection Program (CPP), not a coverage group. • The RRR is not reset to allow 12 months on a CEC aid code. CEC is granted until the upcoming annual redetermination date.
CEC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	<p><u>The following eligibility rules apply to CEC:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under age 19 through the month of his/her 19th birthday. • Not receiving Minor Consent services. • Eligible for zero SOC Medi-Cal prior to an adverse change in circumstance resulting in SOC Medi-Cal or Covered CA eligibility. • CEC applies to all mandatory and optional coverage groups, including MAGI Medi-Cal and the Optional Targeted Low Income Children's Program (OTLICP). This includes both premium and non-premium OTLICP aid codes. • CEC continues to apply to children enrolled in the following Non-MAGI Medi-Cal programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SSI/SSP (see the SSI/SSP Discontinuances Handbook Section for CEC eligibility for these children) ◦ CalWORKs ◦ Pickle ◦ Disabled FPL program ◦ 250% Working Disabled program
PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY	<p><u>Guaranteed CEC Period:</u></p> <p><u>Interim Process - Place child on Soft Pause effective immediately</u></p> <p>All children under 19 are entitled to receive 12 months of continuous eligibility from their last eligibility determination of a no-SOC aid code. The Begin and End Date of the CEC Period determine the months that the CEC aid code will be applied to maintain the guaranteed 12 months of continuous eligibility.</p>

NOTE: RRR Dates cannot be moved out/reset to allow 12 months on a CEC aid code.

Begin Date:

The CEC period begins at the first month of Medi-Cal eligibility after being discontinued from MAGI or no-SOC Non-MAGI Medi-Cal, for all categories of no-SOC Medi-Cal, including cash-based categories.

End Date:

The CEC period ends with the earlier of the next annual redetermination date (12 months from when eligibility was established), OR the end of the month in which the child reaches age 19. Even if a Change in Circumstance allows you to reset the family's RRR Date, the child is still protected under CEC until the end of the initial annual redetermination date.

NOTE: CEC also ends if the child dies, requests discontinuance, loss of contact and e-verification failed, or moves out of California.

Example:

- If an annual redetermination is processed in April and impacts May, then the CEC period runs from May to the end of the next April.
- Two children on P5, parents M1. Case RRR date is 12/2016. On 8/2016, parents report an increase in income putting the family into 300% FPL for a family of 4. Once the increase in income is processed on 9/2016 the children should be eligible for CEC until 12/2016 (the original RE date) and once the RE is processed the children will need to enroll in APTC.

AID CODES

The following aid codes are used for CEC:

Aid Code	Description
7J	Provides full-scope benefits to children up to 19 years old who would otherwise lose their no SOC Medi-Cal
7K	<p>Provides emergency and pregnancy-related benefits to children without satisfactory immigration status who are up to 19 years old who would otherwise lose their no SOC Medi-Cal</p> <p>NOTE: Remember that with SB 75 all undocumented children will now be eligible for full-scope benefits. Therefore, if they lose their eligibility and CEC applies, they would be on aid code 7J. If the case has not yet transitioned from Pre-ACA to ACA, BAs must transition the case and then put them on CEC. Under SB 75, undocumented children will go from Full-Scope Medi-Cal to <u>NO</u> eligibility if their income is higher than 266% FPL. This is because they are not eligible for APTC due to their immigration status, even though they are eligible for Medi-Cal. More information on SB 75 will be released in a separate Handbook Section.</p>

**PROCESSING
INSTRUCTIONS FOR
ADVERSE CHANGES
IN CIRCUMSTANCE**

INTERIM PROCESS: Currently, CalHEERS is not programmed with full CEC functionality. CalSAWS is programmed with CEC aid codes and functionality, but only for the Non-MAGI Medi-Cal programs. **Effective immediately and until further notice**, until CalHEERS system functionality is in place to grant CEC to children who are no longer eligible for MAGI, the child(ren) must be placed and remain on Soft Pause until their Medi-Cal renewal (RE) is due.

Any adverse changes in the family's financial eligibility which would cause the child to have a SOC, become newly eligible for OTLCP with a premium, or go to a Covered CA program the following month, are **NOT** to be effected until the end of the CEC eligibility period (12 months from the previous eligibility determination, or until the child's 19th birthday). CEC also protects children from nonfinancial reasons for discontinuance during the 12 month period, even if those changes adversely affect other family members.

In these circumstance the child should be placed on CEC for the remaining months until their next original RRR date **ONLY** after a complete eligibility determination is done to check for all other no-SOC Medi-Cal eligibility (following the renewal processing instructions – e.g., ex parte review and sending out the MC 355 for additional information). When doing this evaluation, RRR dates are NOT reset. A child remains on CEC until their originally scheduled redetermination date.

	<p>Changes from one no-SOC aid code to another no-SOC aid code are allowed. The child would be protected under the new aid code until the next annual redetermination (12 months).</p> <p>NOTE: CEC does not eliminate the beneficiary's 10-day reporting responsibility.</p> <p>If, at annual redetermination or change in circumstance, the family's income now places the child in a no-SOC Medi-Cal program, the child will leave CEC and move to the no-SOC aid code. A new guaranteed 12-month CEC period would then begin.</p>															
LOSS OF CONTACT	<p>If there is a loss of contact when re-determining a child or family's eligibility based on the adverse change in circumstance, the child must remain covered under CEC until his/her next original annual redetermination date.</p>															
CEC VS. DEEMED INFANT ELIGIBILITY	<p>Deemed Infant Eligibility for children under age one takes precedence over CEC. Children under age one not Deemed Infant Eligible (e.g., not born to a mother enrolled in Medi-Cal), and are eligible for no-SOC Medi-Cal, are therefore eligible for CEC.</p>															
EXAMPLES	<p>Examples of when CEC would apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A family with two parents, a 7 year old and a 19 year old all receive no-SOC Medi-Cal. RE is August 2016. The parents have a large increase in income in June 2016. The parents and 19 year old would now be eligible for APTC while the 7 year old is eligible on no-SOC Medi-Cal under the CEC program until the next original RE date, August 2016.• A family's eligibility was granted in July 2016. If a family reports an income change in October 2016 that moves a child from aid code P5 to Covered CA, the child is eligible to remain on aid code 7J until June 30, 2017.• If a family is investigated for fraud, the county may follow procedures to discontinue the parents, but the child will remain eligible on CEC until their next annual redetermination.• Two children on P5, parents on M1. The renewal is December 2016. In August 2016 parents report an increase in income putting the family into 300% FPL for their family of 4. Once the change is processed and effective September 2016, the children are eligible for CEC until their renewal in December 2016. Once the renewal is processed, the children will need to enroll in APTC. <p>Example of CEC at Renewal:</p> <table><tr><th>Scenario:</th><th>Outcome:</th></tr><tr><td rowspan="4">Married couple (M1) with 2 children (T2) completing their annual renewal. The children auto-renewed (income e-verified) and had their RRR pushed out, but the parents eligibility is pending income verification.</td><td>IF the household returns their renewal packet and verifications, and it is determined that the entire household is over the MAGI income limit.</td></tr><tr><td>THEN...</td></tr><tr><td>Since the children were already determined MC eligible at renewal based on individual level eligibility rules¹, this would result in negative action for the children. Since the RRR was pushed out for the children already, this would be considered change in circumstance; therefore, CEC would apply.</td></tr><tr><td>Based on existing aid codes, the parents are not eligible for TMC and must be screened for Non-MAGI. If an ex parte review can establish eligibility (ie: no expenses known to case nor reported on the renewal form), the parents can be moved to Non-MAGI without further contact or information/verification. If eligibility for the parents cannot be determined via ex parte, BAs would follow existing guidance provided in the Temporary Waivers and Post PHE Unwinding Processes or Renewals and Change in Circumstances handbook sections.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>IF the household does not comply with the redetermination process,</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>THEN...</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>The BA must grant CEC for the children until their upcoming annual redetermination date and the pending adults are discontinued allowing a 90-day cure period.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>If the parents provide during the 90-day cure period and it is determined that</td></tr></table>	Scenario:	Outcome:	Married couple (M1) with 2 children (T2) completing their annual renewal. The children auto-renewed (income e-verified) and had their RRR pushed out, but the parents eligibility is pending income verification.	IF the household returns their renewal packet and verifications, and it is determined that the entire household is over the MAGI income limit.	THEN...	Since the children were already determined MC eligible at renewal based on individual level eligibility rules ¹ , this would result in negative action for the children. Since the RRR was pushed out for the children already, this would be considered change in circumstance; therefore, CEC would apply.	Based on existing aid codes, the parents are not eligible for TMC and must be screened for Non-MAGI. If an ex parte review can establish eligibility (ie: no expenses known to case nor reported on the renewal form), the parents can be moved to Non-MAGI without further contact or information/verification. If eligibility for the parents cannot be determined via ex parte, BAs would follow existing guidance provided in the Temporary Waivers and Post PHE Unwinding Processes or Renewals and Change in Circumstances handbook sections.		IF the household does not comply with the redetermination process,		THEN...		The BA must grant CEC for the children until their upcoming annual redetermination date and the pending adults are discontinued allowing a 90-day cure period.		If the parents provide during the 90-day cure period and it is determined that
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the entire household is over the MAGI income limit, the outcome of the above scenario applies.

¹ Individual level eligibility rules means that each person in a MAGI household has their eligibility determined separately. BAs must ensure that individuals determined eligible/conditionally eligible by CalHEERS are authorized in CalSAWS. Eligibility should not be delayed for the individuals found eligible/conditionally eligible while the eligibility of the pending member(s) is/are determined.

Example of CEC/Soft Pause Protection:

- A 14 year old child is determined eligible for MAGI MC (with no premium) in December 2016. The period of CEC for this child begins in December and ends in November 2017. In March 2017, the county receives a report of an increase in income. The BA processes the CIC and determines that the child has eligibility for OTLIP with a premium. In this case the CEC protection will apply, so the child will not be subject to a premium. BA shall follow the interim process to ensure the child's eligibility is placed on Soft Pause and the case is tracked for processing in the month of renewal.

FAQs

FAQs

Question	Answer
Are there any programs which result in a child being determined eligible for no-SOC Medi-Cal, but that do not trigger a CEC Period?	Yes. CEC is a "continuous eligibility" program. It may not follow another continuous eligibility program, such as TMC, or Deemed Eligibility for infants.
Does CEC apply to retroactive months?	Yes. Since an eligibility determination is completed for each retroactive month, CEC can begin in that no-SOC month.
What about a late request for Retro Medi-Cal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A late retroactive request and subsequent CEC eligibility does not change the eligibility already determined in the intervening months. If a child is determined eligible for CEC from the retro month, CEC is applicable for the months remaining in the 12-month CEC period beginning the month <i>after</i> the month in which the family requests retroactive benefits. • For example, assume a family with one child applies in March and has a SOC from March to July. In late July, the family requests Retro Medi-Cal for February. The BA determines they have no SOC in February. The child therefore has a CEC period from February to the following January. The child's CEC is applicable, beginning August.
How are months between the end of the CEC, when based on Retroactive Medi-Cal, and the annual redetermination handled? The CEC period will end before the next annual redetermination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is eligibility for no SOC in the month of application, then the CEC period extends to the annual redetermination because the CEC period based on the month of application is still in effect. • If there is eligibility for SOC Medi-Cal in the month of application, but eligibility for no SOC Medi-Cal in the retro months, then the CEC period runs 12-months from the latest retro month with no SOC Medi-Cal.
Does CEC apply to an increase in an individual's SOC?	No. CEC does not apply to increases in SOC.
If the client requests discontinuance of his/her children's Medi-Cal, does CEC apply?	No. Parents have the right to request that Medi-Cal for themselves and/or their children be discontinued.
Do we still continue the children's benefits based on CEC if the whereabouts of the household are unknown?	No, unless the child was already found eligible or conditionally eligible during the redetermination process.

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CalSAWS AND CalHEERS INSTRUCTIONS	<p>INTERIM PROCESS: Currently, CalHEERS is not programmed with the CEC aid codes or functionality. CalSAWS is programmed with CEC aid codes and functionality, but only for the Non-MAGI Medi-Cal programs. Due to CalHEERS lacking the system functionality to grant CEC to children who are no longer eligible for MAGI MC, children moved out of soft pause and into 7J in CalSAWS <i>may not be fully protected by CalHEERS</i> for the remaining months of CEC. CalHEERS release 25.06 (6/2025) is anticipated to correct this. Effective immediately and until further notice, the child(ren) must be placed and remain on Soft Pause until their MC renewal (RE) is due.</p> <p>BA should follow this interim process when processing CEC as a result of Change in Circumstance (CIC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process the CIC in CalSAWS and send transaction to CalHEERS system. • Upon receipt of the CalHEERS Determination of Eligibility Response (DER), the BA will verify that the child(ren) continue/s to be aided on the prior MAGI aid code and that Soft Pause protection has been applied for the child(ren). <p>Note: If the renewal forms are not returned, BAs should follow existing guidance provided in the Temporary Waivers and Post PHE Unwinding Processes or Renewals and Change in Circumstances handbook sections.</p> <p><u>CalSAWS Journal:</u></p> <p>BAs must leverage the following verbiage in their journal entry:</p> <p><i>Due to system functionality issues in CalHEERS, child determined eligible for CEC therefore on Soft Pause Protection until next renewal. RRR: [MM/YYYY].</i></p> <p>On Hold: See for CEC for how to manually complete CEC eligibility and the CEC Time Clock.</p>										
REFERENCES	<p><u>Federal Regulations:</u></p> <p>Social Security Act - Section 1902(e)(12)</p> <p><u>Policy Letters:</u></p> <p>ACWDL 01-01 - Implementation of Continuous Eligibility for Children</p> <p>ACWDL 01-40 - Clarification and Questions and Answers Regarding Continuous Eligibility for Children</p> <p>ACWDL 02-14 - Questions and Answers Regarding Continuous Eligibility for Children</p> <p>ACWDL 02-20 - Continuous Eligibility for Children (CEC) Losing Foster Care</p>										

[ACWDL 09-15](#) - Suspension of CEC Reduction and Medi-Cal Midyear Status Reporting (MSR)
Requirements for Children

[ACWDL 09-31](#) - Suspension of the 6-Month CEC Program Period and Restoration of 12-Month CEC

[ACWDL 14-05](#) - Continuous Eligibility for Children (CEC)

[ACWDL 16-16](#) - Individual Level Eligibility Determinations

County Ops Support Log - [#5246 and 5137](#) and 5505