

Possible Solutions for Tricky Child Care Situations

There are many tricky situations families may face in securing child care that fits their unique needs. A traditional child care arrangement may not be able to meet all these different needs. In these cases, it often takes some out-of-the-box thinking to find a solution.

For many of these difficult situations, a strong support network can help. Consider these general ways families might rely on those networks:

- See if a friend, neighbor, or family member is willing to care for the child and if they would become registered to receive the child care subsidy payment - <https://dese.mo.gov/become-subsidy-provider>
- Check with local libraries, churches, Community Action Agencies, or other community groups that may be able to offer direct support or connect the family with other resources
- Contact their local school district to ask about resources for families

Below are some specific situations families may face along with alternative solutions if all other traditional child care options have been explored.

You work 2nd or 3rd shift or have a rotating schedule.

- Consider alternating work schedules with a coworker, friend, or family member with whom you can share child care responsibilities
- Have a friend, family, or neighbor drop off or pick up your child to help with the times the program is not open
- Talk to your employer and see if other shifts may be available
- Share a full-time child care spot with another family that works opposite days as you
- See if one of the child's teachers can watch your child after hours

- Explore programs near public transportation in your community
- See if you are able to carpool with any friends, family, or neighbors
- Ask around if any transportation services, like the OATS Bus, are available
- Contact your local school district to see if they operate a preschool program that offers school bus transportation

You need transportation to and from the child care program.

You're having a personal emergency and need someone to care for your child immediately.

- Locate your nearest crisis care facility - <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/child-care/help-for-families/crisis-help-for-families.htm>
- See if the 'Safe Families' program operates in your area - <https://safe-families.org/>

- Understand that licensed programs may not care for sick children with certain symptoms because of state licensing rules
- Explore who in your community may be able to provide back-up care, when necessary, like a friend, family, or neighbor
- Talk to your employer about your need for back-up care and see if they can offer any resources, support, or flexible scheduling options

You need care for a sick child.

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You need child care during a medical appointment.

- Look for programs that offer drop-in or hourly care
- Check eligibility for respite care or disability benefits for caregiving through your insurance or other community resources
- Contact local churches or other places of worship to see if they can offer assistance
- Use a crisis care facility - <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/child-care/help-for-families/crisis-help-for-families.htm>
- See if the 'Safe Families' program operates in your area - <https://safe-families.org/>
- Hire a babysitter or use a friend, family, or neighbor

- Contact United 4 Children at 800-467-2322 to help provide guidance to your current program or help find a new program that may be a better fit
- See if your public school offers a preschool program where your child may receive additional assistance
- Consult your child's pediatrician regarding any concerns
- Reach out to your local Parents as Teachers, First Steps, or other home visitation programs for screening

Your child is expelled from a program or asked to leave.

Your child is too old for a child care program but you are not comfortable leaving them at home alone.

- See if local churches or other places of worship offer a youth program
- Have an open conversation with your current provider about your concerns
- If your child has an IEP, see if you're eligible for respite care
- Explore after school clubs your child could join
- Ask if any classmates' families could help out
- Explore after-school volunteer opportunities for your child

- Look for Head Start programs in your community
- See if your public school offers a preschool program
- Ask programs if they offer any scholarships
- Explore Family Child Care programs, which are often more affordable
- Check if there are other types of assistance you may be eligible for, like food, utilities, or housing, to free up funds to pay for child care
- Consider sharing child care responsibilities with other families

There is a waitlist for subsidy or you are told you are not eligible.

You've been asked to leave a program because of lack of payment.

- Reach out to local churches or other places of worship or local humanitarian groups to see if any emergency funds are available to help you pay off your outstanding balance
- If you are not already receiving Child Care Subsidy, apply at <https://dss.mo.gov/fsd/child-care.htm>

Contact us at 1-866-892-3228 OR email referralcenter@mochildcareaware.org
Visit our website at www.mochildcareaware.org

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