



# Child Care Subsidy: Eligibility

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### What is the Child Care Subsidy Program?

The Child Care Subsidy Program helps eligible families pay for child care, allowing parents to work, attend school, or participate in training. The subsidy is paid directly to approved child care providers on behalf of the family.

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### Who is eligible for Child Care Subsidy?

Eligible children are:

- Ages 0-13.
- Ages 13-18 with special needs.
- Ages 18-19, still in school, and with special needs.
- Ages 18-19 and in Protective Services.

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### What reasons for care are allowed?

The applicant must show a valid need for child care due to a qualifying activity, which can include:

- Employment
- Education
- Training
- Job search (up to 90 days)
- Incapacitation/disability
- Homelessness

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### What are the income limits for eligibility?

Eligibility is based on household size and income. Families at or below 150 percent federal poverty limit are eligible for the Traditional Level of child care assistance. Use the [Eligibility Checker Tool](#) to find out if you qualify.

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### What income counts towards eligibility?

Common eligible sources of income may include:

- Income from work
- Unemployment
- Child support
- Military income sent from a family member stationed away from the residence
- Social Security
- SSI, disability, pensions
- Odd jobs or self-employment



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What types of income are excluded from gross income eligibility?

Common types of income that are excluded from eligibility may include:

- Benefits from another agency (Title VII benefits, foster/adoption subsidies, survivor benefits, Veteran's Education assistance, Job Corps benefits, energy assistance, etc.)
- Money from the sale of a property or non-recurring lump sum payments
- Monetary gifts
- Earnings received as a payee/guardian for a non-household member

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How do I apply for Child Care Subsidy?

Families can apply [online](#) or submit a paper application. The process requires providing income verification and other documentation.

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What is the difference between application and authorization?

- The application is how the family submits required information for DESE staff to be able to determine if they are eligible for child care subsidy assistance.
- The authorization is when a child care provider is selected after the application has been approved, connecting the child's subsidy to the selected provider.

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# Child Care Subsidy: Application

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### What documentation do I need to apply for Subsidy?

Residency verification required for all applications (e.g. photo ID, a lease, utility bill, school record)

- I am working: Income verification (pay stubs, written documentation from employer, DESE verification, tax return if self-employed)
- I am in school: Letter from educational program or school schedule
- Job training: Letter from training program or training program schedule
- I am disabled: Medical provider statement that child care is needed
- Homelessness: Statement accepted unless contradicting info in identified (can submit: letter from homeless service provider, shelter, school, case worker; or court order/eviction notice)
- My child has special needs: SSI documentation, documentation of DMH service, letter from medical or mental health professional
- Protective services applications: placement letter, adoption decree

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### What does Eligibility Unit mean?

All people living in the same household.



# Child Care Subsidy: Application

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Is a Social Security Number (SSN) required?

No, you do not need a SSN to apply for Child Care Subsidy. Applications will not be denied or placed in pending status due to refusal to provide an SSN.

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When will my application be processed?

Eligibility determination shall be reviewed by DESE within 15-30 days of receipt of the signed, completed application. Check your application status in the [Child Care Subsidy Portal](#).

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Can I choose any child care provider?

Families can choose any program or provider that is registered with the MO Child Care Subsidy Program. Licensed, license-exempt, and unlicensed six or fewer providers may contract with the Subsidy Program.

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How do I know if my provider accepts subsidy?

Contact your provider directly to confirm if they accept the subsidy. You can also search for approved providers with [Child Care Aware of Missouri's referral search tool](#).

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Are there instructions for how to complete the application?

Review [the Portal Tips on DESE's website](#) for step-by-step directions to completing the application.





# Child Care Subsidy: Payments

## Frequently Asked Questions

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How much assistance will I receive?

The payment to your provider will depend on the age of your child, where your provider is located, the type of provider, and if the provider is eligible for rate enhancements. Providers who are accredited, serving a disproportionate number of children, non-traditional hours, and/or children with special needs may also be eligible for an enhanced rate.

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What is a sliding fee?

Families are responsible for a portion of their child care costs. The sliding fee is based on your monthly income and is the portion that parents are responsible for paying to the child care provider (\$1-\$5 per day), which is deducted from the state's direct payment to child care provider.

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How do I find out my sliding fee?

Your assigned sliding fee can be found on your Authorization Letter or listed in the Child Care Portal.

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What is a co-pay?

If the sliding fee and the subsidy payment do not cover the full tuition cost of the provider, the family is responsible for paying the difference, in the form of a co-pay.

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Do I have to pay fees at my child care program?

The family is responsible for additional fees, such as registration, activity, or transportation fees.

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Can payment be backdated to my provider?

Typically speaking, payments are only made for the date beginning when an approved application was signed and submitted. This is only if the application is approved. If an application is rejected and parent needs to reapply, then the timeframe starts over at the submitted date for the new application.



# Child Care Subsidy: Next Steps

## Frequently Asked Questions

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What if I disagree with the decision of my subsidy application?

You can request a hearing if you believe the Family Support Division (FSD) made an incorrect decision regarding your subsidy application. A hearing gives you the opportunity to explain your side of the story.

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What if my application is denied?

Incomplete applications older than fifteen (15) calendar days will be rejected. All rejected applications may reapply by submitting a new application to DESE.

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What changes do I need to report?

Parents/guardians participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program must report any significant changes within 10 calendar days, including:

- Change in contact information
- Increase in income exceeding 85% of the State Median Income (SMI)
- The need for child care has ended for more than 90 days
- The child moved out of state
- The parent/guardian no longer has custody of the child

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How often do I need to renew my subsidy?

- Reminder Notice: DESE will send you a reminder 30 days before your current benefits.
- Reapply for Benefits: To continue receiving benefits, you must fill out a new application.
- Eligibility Check: Your new application will be reviewed to see if you still qualify for child care assistance (traditional or transitional).
- Missed Deadline: If your new application is not received before your benefits end, your child care assistance will stop.

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What is Transitional Child Care Assistance?

If your income increases, you should reapply for assistance even if you're not sure if you're still eligible. Help may still be available through a Transitional Child Care level of benefit. This benefit helps families ease into paying for child care on their own. To qualify for Transitional Child Care, you must have first been receiving the Traditional level of subsidy benefit.