

Missouri's Child Care Assistance Program

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What is Child Care Assistance?

The Child Care Assistance Program pays registered child care providers all or part of your child care fees, provided your child is eligible. The purpose of the program is to assist you in obtaining employment, maintaining employment, or participating in job training and obtaining skills necessary for employment by helping you with the cost of child care. Payment for child care services is made directly to the registered or contract provider.

In limited situations, you may be reimbursed for services that you pay for "out of pocket." In these situations you will need to provide a receipt to verify payment for child care services.

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Who is Eligible for Child Care Assistance?

Children under thirteen years old can qualify for Child Care Assistance. Also children between the ages of thirteen and eighteen who have special needs may also qualify for Child Care Assistance. If your child aged 13 to 18 and has special needs, you will need to provide a statement from your child's doctor explaining your child's condition and how many hours of child care are needed.

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What are the Requirements for the Program?

To qualify for Child Care Assistance, your income must be under certain income limits established by the State. The income limit is determined by the number of people in your household. Actual gross income, meaning income before taxes, is used, and only deductions for medical insurance are given.

The Family Support Division (FSD) has certain rules regarding who must be considered as part of the household for determining your eligibility for Child Care Assistance. These requirements are discussed in the [child care section of the Missouri Income Maintenance Manual](#).

There is no resource test for the program. Resources include things like checking and savings accounts, cash on hand, and the cash surrender value of life insurance policies.

The person applying for Child Care Assistance must establish a “relationship” to the child for whom child care is needed. To receive Child Care Assistance, the applicant must be a biological parent, legal guardian, or non-parent caretaker relative, such as a grandparent, uncle, cousin, step parent or other individual who meets state criteria.

To qualify for Child Care Assistance, you must be a Missouri resident, and you must provide or apply for a social security number. This requirement only applies to the person applying for child care assistance, **not** to other members of the household.

You are required to verify your need for assistance, such as your employment or participation in an education and training program.

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Where Do I Apply for Child Care Assistance?

You may apply for Child Care Assistance with your [local Family Support Division office](#). You may request that an application be mailed to you or you may complete the application at the Family Support Division office. The date of your application will be the date that your signed application is received by the Family Support Division office. You do not need to have a face-to-face interview to apply for Child Care Assistance. If you submit an application by mail, the eligibility specialist may conduct an interview over the phone to obtain any necessary information to complete your application.

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How do I Verify my Need for Child Care Assistance?

To verify your need for Child Care Assistance, you must be:

- In an approved education or training program
- Employed
- Incapacitated, or

- Needed in the home to care for a disabled family member

If you are employed, you may be asked to provide check stubs or a statement from your employer. Students/trainees must report the number of course hours and days of actual attendance. Incapacitated persons and those needed in the home to care for a disabled family member must provide a statement from a physician indicating the need for child care and the number of hours needed per week.

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How Do I Get a Child Care Provider?

You may choose your own child care provider. However, you can only receive reimbursement from the State if the person or facility you choose is registered by the Family Support Division or licensed by the Bureau of Child Care of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to provide child care services.

If your provider is not registered or the provider's registration ends, you will be responsible for payment to the provider and will not be reimbursed by the Family Support Division. If you want help locating a child care provider, you may ask your eligibility specialist or contact your local Child Daycare Association, or contact [Child Care Aware of Missouri](#) 1-800-200-9017.

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How Many Hours of Child Care Services Do I Get?

The weekly number of hours for which your Child Care Assistance is authorized is determined by the number of hours that you are at work, school, or training, as well as travel time to and from child care.

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Do I Have to Pay Anything?

The Child Care Assistance Program may require that you pay a sliding scale fee for child care services, unless your child meets the definition of special needs. This sliding scale fee is based on your gross income and the size of your household. If your child care provider charges more than the maximum amount the state will pay, you may also have to pay a co-payment to the provider. The co-payment pays for the difference between what the child care provider charges, and what the State pays.

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How Long Can I Get Child Care Assistance?

As long as your family meets the eligibility requirements, you will be able to receive benefits until your child turns thirteen years old. If your child is disabled, he or she may receive benefits until they turn eighteen years old, or nineteen if still in school.

There is no time limit on receipt of Child Care Assistance needed for employment.

However, there are time limits on the receipt of child care assistance for certain type of education activities. For example, eligibility for Child Care Assistance for education and training is limited to the length of time it will take to attain the educational goal. For post-secondary education, the limit is four years. Post graduate education (after bachelor level) does not qualify you for child care in Missouri's Child Care Assistance Program. These limits are explained in the [child care section of the Missouri Income Maintenance Manual](http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/iman/chldcare/cctoc.html), <http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/iman/chldcare/cctoc.html>

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When Does Child Care Assistance Begin?

Your Child Care Assistance benefits can begin no earlier than the day that you complete your application for Child Care Assistance or the date that your need for child care assistance actually begins, whichever is later.

The time period you are authorized for Child Care Assistance benefits is called an "authorization period." Your authorization period is based on your need for child care. An authorization period can be no longer than one year. If your need for child care continues beyond the authorization period, you must apply to be reauthorized for continued benefits.

Once you are approved for Child Care Assistance benefits you will receive an approval letter. This letter will tell you how long you are approved for child care assistance.

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Do I Need to Re-apply for Child Care Assistance Benefits?

To make sure your benefits continue uninterrupted, you must reapply for benefits during the last month of your authorization period. You should contact your child care eligibility specialist to reapply. Your eligibility specialist will determine whether you continue to be eligible for benefits. You may be asked by your eligibility specialist to provide an update on the information you provided for your original application.

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What if I Disagree with the State's Decision Regarding my Child Care Assistance?

If you disagree with the state's decision regarding your Child Care Assistance benefits, you have the right to a hearing to challenge that decision. For example, you may disagree with a decision by the Family Support Division decision to deny you Child Care Assistance or terminating your Child Care Assistance benefits. You also have the right to a hearing if the Family Support Division says that you received Child Care Assistance for which you were not eligible, and the Family Support Division tries to recover these undue benefits.

If your application for benefits is denied by the Family Support Division, you may request a fair hearing within 90 days of the date on the notice or letter informing you of the denial of benefits. You may contact an attorney to advise you regarding an appeal, however, you are not required to have legal representation in order to receive a fair hearing.

If you are already receiving benefits, and the Family Support Division proposes to terminate your benefits, you must request a fair hearing within 10 days of the date of the proposed termination notice in order to continue receiving the benefits pending the outcome of a fair hearing. If you do not request a hearing within these 10 days, the Family Support Division may take the proposed action and should send you a second notice informing you that your benefits have been terminated. You may still request a fair hearing up to 90 days after the date of the termination notice, but you will not continue to receive benefits during the appeal.

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How Does an Appeal Work?

All hearing requests should be filed with the Family Support Division office in the county where the notice informing you of the denial or termination was sent. You may request a hearing by returning the hearing request form enclosed with the notice informing you of the action being taken, by contacting your local Family Support Division eligibility specialist, or by calling the Family Support Division information line at 1-855-373-4626. A hearing will be scheduled with a hearing officer from the Division of Legal Services, and a Notice of Hearing mailed to you.

- You may represent yourself at the hearing, or may ask another person, including an attorney, to represent you. You have the right to review the evidence submitted by the Family Support Division, present witnesses and evidence of your own, and to question witnesses who appear on behalf of the Family Support Division.
- If additional time is needed to obtain additional information, or to retain an attorney, you may request a continuance of the scheduled hearing, but should make this request as soon as possible and at least 5 days prior to the hearing. Most hearings are done by telephone conference call; however, you may have the right to an in-person hearing in certain circumstances if requested.
- [Contact your regional Legal Services office for the possibility of free assistance.](#)
- A Decision & Order will be issued in writing following a fair hearing, usually within a few weeks.

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More Information on the Web

The Missouri Department of Social Services provides [general information about the Missouri Child Care Assistance program](#).