



Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program Family Guide



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Who should read this guide?

This guide is for families applying for or getting help from the Child Care Assistance Program, commonly known as CCAP. It explains what you need to know to apply for and stay on child care assistance.

What is child care assistance?

The Child Care Assistance Program helps parents with low incomes pay for child care so they can work, go to school or look for a job. It helps make sure children are well cared for and prepared to enter school. The program helps more than 30,000 children access child care every month.

Applying for child care assistance

Apply for child care assistance in the county where you live or with your tribe. If you are not receiving help from the Minnesota Family Investment Program, commonly known as MFIP, you should call your county or tribe before applying to see if there is a waiting list.

Here are some ways to apply:

- Fill out the Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program Application (DHS-3550) (PDF) (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfs/Server/Public/DHS-3550-ENG>) when applying for child care assistance only
- Fill out the Combined Application – Child Care Addendum (DHS-5223D) (PDF) (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfs/Server/Public/DHS-5223D-ENG>) if also applying for cash and/or food assistance
- Apply online at Apply MN (www.applymn.dhs.mn.gov).



You submitted your application – what's next?

If you submit an application, the local agency that provides Child Care Assistance Program services to you will send a notice approving or denying your application within 30 calendar days, or 45 days if needed.

The agency will use the information on your application and the verification you provided to determine your eligibility.

If you did not submit all required verifications with your application, the agency will mail you a notice requesting the verifications.

What do I need to do to be eligible?

You need to:

- Submit a complete application
- Provide required verifications
- Have a child age 12 or younger, or 14 or younger if the child has special needs
- Cooperate with child support services (required for most families)
- Meet income limits
- Participate in authorized activities, such as work, school or job search
- Have a child who meets citizenship and immigration status requirements.

Families experiencing homelessness have three months after they apply to submit verifications and participate in an authorized activity.



Family guide for child care assistance

Do I need to have a child care provider chosen to be eligible for assistance?

No. You can apply for child care assistance before you find a provider. If you are eligible, your case can be suspended for up to 12 months until you find a provider. Notify your case worker as soon as you have chosen a provider.

Your assistance is approved – what's next?

Approval notice

You will get a notice that you are eligible for child care assistance. This eligibility notice will include your case number, copay, reporting requirements, information about choosing a child care provider, and your worker contact information.

A separate notice, called a Service Authorization, is sent once a child care provider is chosen and care is authorized. Child care will not be paid until Service Authorizations are issued and the provider submits billing forms.

If you got an Eligibility Notice but have not received a Service Authorization, contact your case worker.

Copayments

You may have to pay part of the cost of your child care, based on your income and size of your family. This is called a copayment. You must pay your copayment to your provider every two weeks or you could lose eligibility for child care assistance.

How does the program determine my income?

Your income is calculated based on your gross annual income after allowable deductions. Gross



earned income is any income from your employer before any payroll deductions including taxes. Gross earned income includes 401K contributions, all insurance premium payments and pre-tax medical/dental accounts. Some medical, dental and vision insurance premiums are allowed as deductions.

How do I find a child care provider?

Visit the [Parent Aware website](#).

You can use the website to:

- Get help finding a child care provider
- Learn about options for parenting education
- Get information about scholarships, fee subsidies and an estimate of eligibility for tax credits. Go to the Paying for Care and Education page on the Parent Aware website (<http://parentaware.org/learn/paying-for-care-and-education/>).

What types of child care providers can I choose?

You can choose any legal provider who registers with your local child care assistance agency. This includes:

- Child care centers licensed by Minnesota, a Minnesota tribe or another state
- Family child care providers licensed by Minnesota, a Minnesota tribe or another state
- Child care centers that do not need to be licensed and are certified by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, or
- A legal nonlicensed provider, who could be a family, friend or neighbor who cares for only related children or the children from one unrelated family. Talk to your worker if you want a legal nonlicensed provider to care for your child.

Parent Aware guide

Use the Parent Aware guide Finding Child Care: A Guide for Families (<https://www.parentaware.org/learn/finding-child-care-a-guide-for-families/>) to learn more about early care and education programs and steps to select a provider.

Can I use more than one child care provider?

Yes, you can use more than one provider. The Child Care Assistance Program can only authorize one primary and one secondary provider per child. You may choose two providers (one primary and one secondary) for each child. A primary child care provider is usually the provider your child uses the most. A secondary provider is usually the provider your child uses less often. You do not need to select a secondary provider if your child goes to only one provider. The program will limit the amount of care authorized with and paid to the secondary provider.

Legal nonlicensed child care providers, commonly referred to as LNL providers, do not count toward the two-provider limit.

What if I want my provider to care for my child in my home?

The Minnesota Department of Human Services must approve requests for care in a child's home. Requests must meet certain conditions to be approved. Talk to your worker if you want a provider to care for your children in your home.

How does my provider get paid?

If you are eligible for child care assistance, payment is made to your provider unless care is provided in your home.

Your provider will get a billing form from the program every two or four weeks. They must complete the form, sign it and return it to your agency to be paid. You may also be required to sign the form. Once the agency receives the completed billing form, your provider will be paid within 21 days.

The program may not pay your provider's full rate. If your provider charges more than what the program pays, they may charge you the difference. If your child attends care for more hours than the program has approved, you may need to pay for more care. If your child attends two providers, payments to the secondary provider will be limited. **You may need to pay these additional charges AND your copayment.** Talk to your provider about their costs and if there will be additional costs for your family.

How do I know what hours the program will pay?

Your local agency will send you and your provider a Service Authorization with the number of hours approved for each child, the maximum rates paid by the program for each child and your copayment amount. The program pays the maximum rates allowed, up to your provider's charge. Rates vary by county, provider type and age of children.

Will the program pay my provider if my child doesn't attend care?

Providers may be paid for days your child is absent if:

- Care was authorized by the program, and your child was scheduled to be in care but was absent
- The provider's policy is to bill you for absent days
- Care was available
- The provider is licensed by the department, another state, or a tribe or is a certified center.

The program will pay for up to 10 consecutive absent days or 25 absent days in a calendar year. If your child is absent for part of a day, the payment for that day will be for the amount of care that is scheduled for that day and the day will not count toward the 10- or 25- day limit.

The Service Authorization tells you and your provider the number of absent days used by your child. **However, this information is only as current as the last bill submitted by the provider at the time the Service Authorization was issued.** If your child has more than one provider, or if billing forms are not submitted timely, the number of absent days used may be different than what is on the Service Authorization.



What if my child is frequently absent due to medical reasons?

If your child has a documented medical condition, payment may be made for more than 25 absent days per calendar year and for more than 10 consecutive absent days. To see if your child may be exempt from absent day limits, submit the completed Child Care Assistance Program Medical Condition Documentation Form (DHS-4602-ENG) (PDF) (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4602-ENG>) to your local agency.

Will the program pay my provider on holidays when my provider is closed?

The program can pay for 10 holidays per calendar year, per child. If your child has more than one provider, the number of holidays is still limited to 10 days per calendar year.

If the provider is not available on a holiday for which payment is charged, and your family needs care from another provider on that day, the program will only pay one provider. You are responsible for paying the second provider.

Will the program pay my provider for other days they are closed?

The program cannot pay for provider vacation days, provider sick days, or any other days that child care is not available, other than for holidays.

Staying on assistance

To stay eligible for child care assistance, complete Child Care Assistance Program forms at redetermination and return them on time. You also need to tell your child care worker about certain changes your family experiences.

You need to pay your copayment to your child care provider every two weeks, or as required by the provider, or make payment arrangements with the provider if you are not able to pay on time.



Reporting

Reporting types

You must report changes that affect your eligibility. The changes that need to be reported depend on your reporting status. You are a Schedule Reporter if you meet one of the following criteria:

- You are employed by any child care center that is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services
- You have at least one child authorized for care with a legal nonlicensed provider
- You have at least one child authorized for care with more than one provider.

If you do not meet the criteria above, then you are a 12 Month Reporter.

Reporting responsibilities

You must report some changes within 10 calendar days after the changes occur. If not reported, you may be charged an overpayment.

All families (12 Month Reporters and Schedule Reporters) must report:

- Income changes that put your family over the maximum amount allowed for your family size; the income limit for your family will be on notices you get from the program
- Permanent end to your job or education activity
- Address or residency changes
- Family status changes
- Household composition changes
- Citizenship or immigration status changes for any child receiving child care assistance
- Changes to your child's visitation schedule or custody arrangement
- Changes in child care providers (you must report changes to your agency and your child care provider at least 15 days prior to the change).

You must report within 10 days if you start providing child care or working in a child care center.

Families who are Schedule Reporters must also report when their employment, education or training starts, ends or schedule changes.



Problems with your worker

If you are having problems with your case worker, speak to a supervisor at your local county or tribal agency. You can also contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services at 651-431-3809.

Your rights

Appeal rights. If you are charged with an overpayment, unhappy with an action taken by the agency or feel the agency did not act on your request for assistance, you may appeal.

There are two ways you can appeal your case. For cash, child care assistance and health care, you may appeal **within 30 days** from the date you receive the notice by writing to the county agency, or directly to the State Appeals Division at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, P.O. Box 64941, St. Paul, MN 55164-0941.

If you show good cause for not appealing your case **within 30 days**, the department can accept your appeal **for up to 90 days** from the date you receive the notice.

If you want your assistance to continue until the hearing, you must appeal before the date of the proposed action or within 10 days after the date the agency notice was mailed, whichever is later. Ask your worker to explain how the timing of your appeal could affect your present or future assistance.



Redetermination

You will be sent a redetermination packet 45 days before your redetermination due date. Redeterminations are typically due every 12 months. Complete the form and submit all required verifications with your redetermination packet to your agency.

If you do not turn in the completed redetermination form and verifications, you will lose eligibility 15 days after the redetermination due date.

Suggestions for handling problems

Problems with your provider

Providers have responsibilities to child care assistance families. Child Care Assistance Program providers must:

- Communicate with you to determine your child's schedule of care
- Keep accurate daily attendance records.

If you believe that your provider is not fulfilling their responsibilities to the program, contact your worker.

If you believe that a provider is caring for children in a way that is not healthy or safe, you may file a complaint. Complaints are handled by different agencies depending on the type of care:

- **Licensed or certified centers:** Call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at 651-431-6500
- **Licensed family care:** Contact your county licensor or child care office
- **Registered legal nonlicensed providers:** Contact your agency and child protection office in your area.

Civil Rights Notice

Discrimination is against the law. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- marital status
- age
- disability
- sex
- political beliefs

Civil Rights Complaints

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by a social services agency.

Contact **DHS** directly only if you have a discrimination complaint:

Civil Rights Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)

In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the MDHR if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- public assistance status
- disability

Contact the **MDHR** directly to file a complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
540 Fairview Avenue North, Suite 201
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-539-1100 (voice)
800-657-3704 (toll free)
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)
651-296-9042 (fax)
Info.MDHR@state.mn.us

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

You have the right to file a complaint with the OCR, a federal agency, if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion

Contact the **OCR** directly to file a complaint:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Midwest Region
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
Customer Response Center: Toll-Free: 800-368-1019
TDD Toll-Free: 800-537-7697
ocrmail@hhs.gov

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

သတိ။ ဤစာရွက်စာတမ်းအားအခမဲ့ဘာသာပြန်ပေးခြင်း အကူအညီလိုအပ်ပါက၊ အထက်ပါဖုန်းနံပါတ်ကိုခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

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請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請撥打上面的電話號碼。

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

ဟ်သုဉ်ဟ်သးဘဉ်တက့ၢ်. ဖဲနမ့ၢ်လိဉ်ဘဉ်တၢ်မၤစၢၤကလိလၢတၢ်ကကျိးထံဝဲဒၣ်လၢ် တီလၢ်မိတခါအံၤန့ၣ်,ကိးဘဉ်လိတဲစိနီၢ်ဂံၢ်လၢထးအံၤန့ၣ်တက့ၢ်.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

ໂປຣດຊາບ. ຖ້າທາກ ທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປເອກະສານນີ້ຟຣີ, ຈົ່ງໂທໂປຣໂທພາຍເລກຂ້າງເທິງນີ້.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenname bilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda (afcelinta) qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.

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For accessible formats of this information, ask your county worker. For assistance with additional equal access to human services, contact your county's ADA coordinator. ADA4 (2-18)