

Accessing Child Care for Children in Out-of-Home Placement During COVID-19

Most students in Washington resumed remote learning this fall, placing added responsibility on people caring for children in out-of-home placement who would normally return to the classroom. Many families depend on the K-12 system to provide education and care for their children ages 5-12, and to support their participation in the workforce. **Department of Health (DOH) guidance** recommends that families who are able to safely keep children and youth home should continue to do so, but this is not always possible. Caregivers are faced with the challenge of finding safe, stable child care options for children ages 12 and under, so they can return to work.

Who is eligible for child care?

Payment for child care for children in out-of-home care is available during work hours for caregivers with part-time or full-time employment. If the family is a two-parent caregiver family, child care is covered when both parents are employed and working simultaneously, leaving no caregiver at home to care for the child. Hours working remotely from home are considered as hours employed, and caregivers are eligible for child care during that time.

Who do I talk to if I need child care for my foster child?

Discuss your child care needs with the child's caseworker. They can walk you through the eligibility criteria and what you need to do to be approved for state-paid child care.

I'm a kinship caregiver for a child placed with me by DCYF, how do I access child care?

Let the child's caseworker know that you need child care. Once a child care provider that accepts the subsidized rate is identified, the caseworker will arrange payment. If you do not have a child care provider, **Child Care Aware of Washington** can assist you with locating a provider. You do not need to apply for Working Connections Child Care.



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Eligibility and Provider Supports Division

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What if I need to utilize child care from a provider that doesn't accept the state rate? Can the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) pay a higher rate?

DCYF is able to pay more than the subsidized rate for children in care when it is in the child's best interest and subsidized child care is not obtainable or reasonably accessible. Caseworkers need to get their administrator's approval for this rate. Due to COVID-19, child care placement that minimizes exposure by keeping all children in a home with one child care provider may be considered as being in the child's best interest.

Once I've been approved, how do I access care?

Many families already know their preferred child care provider. Families approved for state-paid child care who need help finding care can contact Child Care Aware of Washington, who can help find child care that fits the needs of your family. Child Care Aware can search by geographic area to find a nearby location, choose between settings like a child care center or family home, language spoken and age of the child; some providers accept school-age children up to 12 years old.

What other child care options are there?

There are several options for child care and care-sharing alternatives for children in out-of-home placement. Please see the attached "Allowable Child Care for Children in Out-of-Home Placement" overview and Frequently Asked Questions.

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