

# Subsidized Child Care Program

## **The Subsidized Child Care Program helps low-income families pay part of their fees for child care**

Working families in Pennsylvania are often in need of safe, affordable child care. For that reason, the Department of Human Services provides subsidized child care for eligible individuals. This means you may be eligible to have part of the cost for your child care paid by the Department of Human Services.

The state and federal governments fund this program, which is managed by the Early Learning Resource Center, or **ELRC**, located in or near your county.

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/ELRCs.aspx>

To find out if you are eligible to receive a child care subsidy, you must fill out an application at your local Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC).

### **GUIDELINES**

The following are the basic guidelines to qualify for the Subsidized Child Care Program:

- You must live in Pennsylvania
  - Have a child(ren) who need child care while you work or attend an education program
  - Meet the income guidelines for your family size, which is 200% or less of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines
  - Have proof of identification for each parent or caretaker in the home
  - Each adult family member must work at least 20 hours a week
- OR**
- Work at least 10 hours/week *and* participate in an approved training program at least 10 hours a week
  - If you are not already employed at the time you apply for subsidized child care, you must have a promise of a job that will start within 30 days of your application for the subsidy
  - Teen parents must attend an education program
  - The child who needs care must be a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residency

### **IF YOU MEET THE ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:**

- The ELRC will pay part of your child care costs. This is called a *subsidy payment*.
- You will pay part of the cost. This is called the *family co-pay*.
- The subsidy payment and the family co-pay go directly to the child care program.

### **KEEP IN MIND:**

- If your child care subsidy does not pay the full amount that your child care program charges, you will be expected to pay your child care provider the difference between the subsidy payment and their private charges.
- The hours that a child may receive subsidized child care must coincide with your hours of work, education, or training.
- Children are eligible for care from birth until the day prior to the date of the child's 13th birthday. Children with disabilities may be eligible through age 18.
- The parent is responsible to help pay for child care. This is called co-payment. The co-payment may be as little as \$5.00 per week and varies according to your income and the number of people in your family.
- The parent may choose the provider of his or her choice. A parent may choose a child care center, a small family day care home, a group day care home, or even a relative to care for the child.
- The parent who is receiving the subsidy *must* choose an eligible child care provider. Relative providers must complete an agreement with the ELRC, must comply with the participation requirements which are listed in the agreement, and must complete CareCheck in order to be eligible to participate in the Subsidized Child Care Program. CareCheck is the Department of Human Services' program that requires background clearances.
- There can be a waiting list to receive the subsidy if funding is not available at the time that you apply.

**For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' child care subsidies and other child care information, visit their website at**  
**[www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/childcareearlylearning/index.htm](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/childcareearlylearning/index.htm)**



**To apply for Northwestern Legal Services, call:**  
**1-800-665-6957**  
***In Erie County call (814) 452-6957***  
***Or Apply Online at [www.nwls.org](http://www.nwls.org)***  
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