

Early Care and Education Services

(Child Care, Preschool, and School-Age Payment Supports)



Financial Support for Families in Need of Early Care and Education Services

The State of Ohio assists families that are working, in school or training, or are experiencing homelessness with paying for child care that supports the development and learning of their children in a licensed center or family child care home. There are currently three supports available to families: **1. Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC)**, **2. Child Care Choice Voucher Program (CCVP)** and **3. the Early Childhood Education Grant Program (ECE)**. Families with children ages 3, 4, or 5 (who are not yet in kindergarten) may qualify for the ECE Grant without meeting income requirements if the child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), if the child is in kinship or foster care, or if the child is exiting early intervention.

Step 1:
Applying for Support

Step 2:
Finding a Child Care or
Preschool Program

Step 3:
Attending Your
Program Regularly

Step 1: Applying for Early Care and Education Services

Families must complete an application for their eligibility to be determined through the local County Department of Job and Family Services. Information will be required about the family make-up and income as well as information about the days and hours that are needed for early care and education services. There are several ways for families to apply for services:

- Visit the Self-Service Portal at ssp.benefits.ohio.gov/apspssp/ssp.portal
- Print or download the JFS 07200 “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Cash Assistance, Medical and/or Child Care” and return to the agency in person, or by mail, email or fax.
- Go in person to your local Department of Job and Family Services. Try to schedule an appointment, if available. However, an appointment is not required to submit an application.

Step 2: Finding a Child Care or Preschool Program

DCY maintains information about all licensed programs in the state. Families can visit childcaresearch.ohio.gov to locate programs that provide PFCC/CCVP or ECE services. Families need to contact programs to confirm if space is available, hours the program is open, and services available. There are also **FREE** resources available through regional Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&R) where families can interact with a Parent Engagement Specialist to get tips for choosing a program that best meets the needs of the family. To locate a CCR&R visit ocarra.org/ccrr-membership/ to get local phone numbers and websites.



Ohio has established Step Up To Quality (SUTQ), which helps families to easily identify programs that exceed health and safety standards that are required for licensing. The program search (childcaresearch.ohio.gov) also lists the rating of a program if they are participating in one of the 3 rating levels though SUTQ.

Step 3: Attending the Program Regularly

Regular attendance is very important for your child’s growth and learning.

- Children who miss two or more days each month (that’s about 10%) of preschool or early learning program may start kindergarten not as ready as other children.
- Children who have regular attendance in early care and education programs are more likely to have regular attendance later in school. Frequent absences makes it harder for children to keep up with learning new skills.
- Regular attendance helps your child learn habits, be ready for kindergarten, and keep their spot in the program.
- Programs rely on attendance. If children do not attend regularly, that can impact program funding and availability.

Early Care and Education Support Requirements Chart

This chart is intended to be an overview only. Visit childrenandyouth.ohio.gov for additional program details.

Requirements	PFCC	CCVP	ECE
Income Guidelines	At or below 145% FPL*	Between 146-200% FPL*	At or below 200% FPL*
Categorically Eligible	Homeless and Children Services Protective Care Plan	Not applicable	IEP, EI Exiter, Foster/Kinship Care, and Homeless
Eligible Ages	Children birth-13 years old (0-18 for special needs)	Children birth-13 years old (0-18 for special needs)	Children 3-5 years old & not Kindergarten eligible
Eligible Providers	Programs with a signed Provider Agreement (based on availability)	Programs with a signed Provider Agreement (based on availability)	Highly-rated program awarded the ECE grant and have a signed Provider Agreement (based on availability)
Qualifying Activity	Required for all caretakers	Required for all caretakers	Not required for any caretaker
Citizenship	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowable Hours	Hourly, Part-time or Full-time	Hourly, Part-time or Full-time	2.5-5 hours only
Authorization Span	Through end of eligibility	Through end of eligibility	For the program year until the child is age eligible to enroll in kindergarten.
Co-Payment	Determined by income and family size	DCY does not assign a co-payment (additional costs may be required by the program)	DCY does not assign a co-payment (additional costs may be required by the program)

*Federal Poverty Level