

# Tips for Applying for Child Care Assistance

## Am I Eligible for Assistance?

To be eligible for the IDHS Child Care Assistance program a family must:

- Live in Illinois
- Be engaged in an approved work or school activity
- Be requesting care for children under the age of 13 year of age and
- Have total family income below allowable limits
- Looking for work or enrolling in school (approved for 90 days)

A copy of the current Child Care Income Guidelines is available on this website. If you have questions or need clarification call CCR&R at 1-800-548-5563 and one of our staff will be more than happy to assist you.

## What is Approved Training and Education?

**Child Care assistance may be approved for parents to complete their education and/or training program.**

**These include:**

- **Teen parents enrolled in high school or GED.** To be considered a teen parent, the individual must be between 13 and 19 years of age.
- **Parents receiving TANF cash assistance** and approved for specific educational activity by their IDHS Case Worker.
- **Parents enrolled in classes at a college or university.**

For families not receiving TANF cash assistance, approved education and training must not lead to a second Bachelor's degree, master degree or doctoral degree.

**If you have questions or wonder if you child care can be approved while you are in school contact CCR&R by calling 1-800-548-5563 or emailing us at [ccrr@jalc.edu](mailto:ccrr@jalc.edu).**

## How Do I Apply?

Families must submit an application to receive child care assistance

### Families can apply by completing a written application

- ✓ Applications are available at the CCR&R, the local IDHS offices, and may be available from your child care provider.
- ✓ Applications can also be mailed to your home by using the forms request on our website or by calling the CCR&R office.

Applications can also be downloaded and printed from a link on this website.

## What Support Documentation is Needed?

**It is the parent's responsibility to provide the documentation that supports their child care request.**

- For employment, each parent is required to submit two recent paystubs. The paystubs can be no older than 60 days prior to when we receive the family's paperwork, unless the parent is paid monthly, in which case the stubs can be up to 90 days old. A wage verification form or letter from employer on letterhead can be accepted only for new jobs, less than 30 days.
- For education or training, parents must submit copies of their official school schedules with their name pre-printed on the form. After the first semester of eligibility, copies of the previous semester's grades or transcript are also required.
- TANF recipients must provide a copy of their most recent Responsibility and Service Plan, (also called their RSP plan)

Other documentation that may also be requested from a Case Manager include:

- Documents that help verify family size such as IDHS Family Composition form, divorce or separation decrees, and/ or child support information
- Documentation of a parent's disability resulting in inability to care for child
- Work schedules or time cards for families working variable schedules, or when requesting full time care for school age children. These are needed to assist the case manager in determine eligible days.

All families are different, and the Case Manager will work hard to make decisions that meet the program guidelines and best meet your family's needs. Additional information may be requested to make that happen.

## Who Can Be Paid to Provide Child Care?

To receive payment through the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program, the provider must meet the state's definition of a legal care arrangement. These include licensed centers, license exempt centers, licensed family child care homes and group homes, as well as legally license exempt home providers. To be a legally licensed exempt home, the provider may not care for more than 3 children including their own. There may be some exceptions to this rule, so parents should contact the CCR&R office in advance, to verify their provider is eligible to provide care and receive payments.

## **How Long Does the approval Process Take?**

Once your application is received in the office, it will be scanned into the state's child care management system and sent electronically to the Case Manager. The Case Manager will review the information for completeness and processing. The Information will then be entered into your family's case file.

The Case Manager may need to contact the employer, parent, or provider to get further clarification on the information so that he/she can determine accurate eligibility.

The case Manager has up to 10 business days to take one of the following actions.

- Approve the case
- Deny the case or
- Issue a request for additional information

Requests for Additional Information are time sensitive, and parents should respond as soon as possible. Failure to comply in the required timeframes will result in a denial.

## **What Happens When I am Approved?**

If your child care case is approved you will receive an "Approval of Request for Child Care Payments". Your approval notice includes all the important information about your child care case.

It has:

- Your Child Care Case Number
- Your provider's registration number
- Your family's and provider's current address on file.
- The beginning and ending dates for your eligibility
- Your family's copay and
- The number of days per week each child is approved for care throughout the entire approval period

Make sure to review this information carefully as soon as you receive it in the mail. If you have any questions, concerns, or updates to report, contact the CCR&R office as soon as possible.

## **What should I Know about My Copayment?**

The parent or guardian is required to help pay for the cost of child care. This is called the parent copayment. The copayment is based on the family's gross monthly income. This includes both earned and unearned income, such as child support or social security. Total family size is considered when calculating the copay. The copay amount for each family is listed on the approval form.

The provider is responsible for deciding when and how to collect the parent copayment.

The state will deduct the parent copayment from the total charges up to the maximum child care rate for each type of care.

If the copayment is more than the total charges, the parent pays the lesser amount to the provider and NO payment is made from the state. In the event a copay needs to be changed, it will be changed on the first day of the following month.

### **How/When Should I Report Changes?**

You are responsible for notifying CCR&R when you:

- Change providers
- Change family size
- Change contact information such as address or phone number
- Have maternity or medical leave or have any other changes that affect your eligibility

If you have questions about whether a change is something you need to report, please contact the CCR&R office. All changes must be submitted in writing.

Failure to report changes in a timely manner that effect eligibility or payments may result in payback of overpayments.

### **When will my Provider Get Paid?**

Once approved, your provider will receive a form called a Child Care Certificate. This is the form used to bill the state for care provided. A provider cannot submit the Child Care Certificate for processing until the last business day of the month for which the care was provided.

Unless care is provided in a center, parents are required to review the certificate for accuracy in billing and sign the certificate before it can be submitted.

Once the certificate is received and entered, it can take up to 30 days to receive payment. Providers can elect to enter their own payments over the telephone if they prefer. To be eligible for this option, they must complete a Telephone Billing agreement which is available from CCR&R. This request will be submitted to IDHS who issues a security password and provides entry instructions.

Providers can check on their payments by calling the Payment Information line at 1-800-804-3833.