

Child Care Subsidies

A Guide for Family, Friends and
Neighbors Child Care Providers



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

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Introduction

This guide provides information about Washington state subsidy eligibility, billing and payment for Family, Friends and Neighbors (FFN) child care providers. Refer to this guide when billing for FFN state child care services.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) Program

WCCC helps eligible families pay for child care while they participate in approved activities, such as work, training, educational programs and approved TANF activities. FFN providers may be eligible to provide child care paid by WCCC.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) sets the policies and rules for all child care subsidy programs. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines family eligibility, authorizes child care and pays providers for all child care subsidy programs.

Children’s Administration (CA) Child Care Programs

CA social workers approve child care services for eligible families. Social workers must verify child care is provided by a qualified provider. Payments to providers are authorized by the child’s assigned social worker and paid by DSHS. FFN providers may be eligible to provide child care paid by CA.

Service Employees International Union Local 925 (SEIU 925)

SEIU 925 represents licensed family home (LFH) child care providers and FFN providers receiving subsidy payment under the WCCC program. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), negotiated between SEIU and the state of Washington, outlines the provisions and benefits for SEIU 925 members. [View the CBA contract.](#)

Providers receive the benefits outlined in the CBA. With proper authorization for union membership, as provided in the CBA, members pay dues of 2 percent of the child care services paid by the state. Dues are capped at a maximum of \$50 per month.

Subsidy Billing Training

The state offers Subsidy Billing Training for FFN providers. FFN providers are paid \$10 per child in care at the time you complete the subsidy billing training. The authorization should appear on your invoice within 60 days of completing the training. Keep track of your training on your attendance records to support your billing. If you have questions, call the Provider Line at 1-800-394-4571.

You may be eligible to receive more training benefits as a member of SEIU 925, including:

- Tuition reimbursement for certain classes you complete
- A cash bonus if you become a LFH child care provider
- A cash bonus for taking a specific number of DEL approved training courses

Union members are encouraged to take subsidy billing training described in the CBA. You can learn more about this training and other benefits by calling the SEIU 925 at 1-877-734-8673.



Glossary

CA: Children’s Administration

SCC: Seasonal Child Care

CBA: Collective Bargaining Agreement

SSPS: Social Services Payment System

DEL: Department of Early Learning

WAC: Washington Administrative Code

DSHS: Department of Social and Health Services

WCCC: Working Connections Child Care

Roles and Responsibilities

Your Responsibilities as an FFN Provider

To be an eligible FFN provider, submit a completed background check form to DSHS. If you care for a child in your own home, also submit a completed background check form for anyone 16 years of age or older who lives with you or moves into your home.

- Background checks must be completed at least every two years or more often if DSHS has a valid reason for you to do so.
- Report to DSHS within 24 hours any criminal convictions or pending charges against you or anyone 16 years or older in your home if care is provided in your home.
- Report to DSHS within 10 calendar days if you change your legal name, address or telephone number.



To be eligible as an FFN provider to care for children under the WCCC program:

- You must be 18 years of age or older and a citizen or a legal resident of the United States.
- You cannot be the child's biological, step, or adoptive parent, or the child's legal guardian, adult acting in loco parentis, or the spouse of a legal guardian or adult acting in loco parentis.
- You must be physically and mentally healthy enough to meet the needs of the children in care and, if DSHS requests it, provide written proof that you are physically and mentally healthy enough to be a safe child care provider.
- You must agree to provide care, supervision, and daily activities based on the child's developmental needs, including environmental, physical, nutritional, emotional, cognitive, safety and social needs.
- You must provide care for the child free from physical punishment or mental abuse.
- You must be informed about basic health practices, prevention and control of infectious disease, and immunizations.
- You must maintain personal cleanliness and provide care to the child in a safe home.
- You must be prompt and regular in your child care employment.

As an FFN provider, work with the parent to complete the application form. The completed application must be signed and dated by both you and the parent and include:

- Your legal name, current address and telephone number.
- A copy of your valid photo identification, such as a driver's license.
- A copy of your valid social security card or permanent residence card.
- The signed and dated background check form.

As an FFN provider, you must use the following recordkeeping practices:

- Keep attendance records that show the days and times you cared for each child.
- Keep a written record given to you by each child's parent of names, addresses and telephone numbers for people who can pick up the child in the parent's absence.
- Have parents verify the accuracy of the dates and times the child attended. Have the parent sign and date the attendance records at least weekly.
- Provide copies of attendance records within 14 calendar days if DSHS or DEL asks to see them.
- Keep attendance records for five years.
- Providers may use an electronic attendance system as provided in WAC 170-290-0139 to record attendance in lieu of a paper sign-in record.

The following billing requirements apply to you as an FFN provider:

You will not be paid for child care provided prior to the date the background check is cleared by DSHS. If you provide care before your background check clears, the family is responsible to pay for the care provided.

Bill only for actual hours of care provided. Hours of care must be authorized by DSHS and used by the consumer for DSHS approved activities.

Bill for no more than six children at one time during the same hours of care for approved activities.

Do not bill for more than 16 hours in a day.

Parents' Responsibilities

Parents are responsible to complete the application process and forms required to determine eligibility. Families may apply for subsidies in a number of ways:

- DSHS Contact Center: 1-877-501-2233
- Online at [Washington Connection](#)
- Fax application to the DSHS Contact Center: 1- 888-338-7410
- Deliver or mail a paper application to the Community Services Office (CSO). Applications may be picked up at the local CSO.

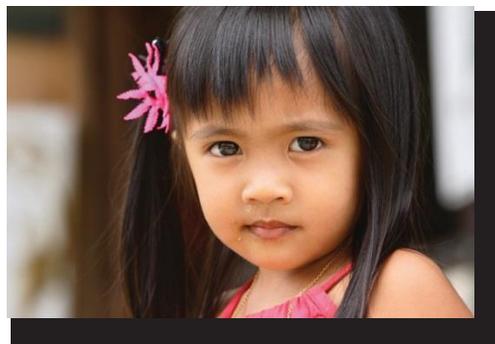


Families must complete the application process and forms required to determine eligibility.

Families must:

- Meet program income guidelines and participate in approved work, training, educational programs, or other family support activities.
- Make payment arrangements for child care provided that is not approved by WCCC.
- Pay the provider the monthly copayment and any additional services the family requests. You may arrange for a third party to pay some or all of the copayment.
- Make sure care is provided in the home that DSHS approved.
- Report to DSHS within five calendar days a change in child care providers.

- Report to DSHS within 10 calendar days changes in:
 - Number of hours care is needed.
 - Family income if the change would cause the family to exceed the maximum income eligibility limit. Families may report a decrease in income which may lower their copayment.
 - Family size, such as someone moving in or out of the home.
 - Work, training or education schedule.
 - Family's address or telephone number.
 - Family's legal obligation to pay child support.
- Make payment arrangements with the provider for care used for personal reasons that is not authorized by DSHS.
- Use child care paid by state child care subsidy only for approved activities outside the family's home.
- Report if they lose their job or other approved activity. They may be eligible for a 28-day gap period. Have the parent contact DSHS within 10 days to find out if they qualify.
- Provide a written list to the provider with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of people who can pick up the child in the parent's absence.
- Monitor the environment and child care services received from the provider.
- Ensure that their children who receive subsidized child care outside of their own home are current on all immunizations required under [WAC 246-105-030](#), except when the parent or guardian provides:
 - A department of health (DOH) medical exemption form signed by a health care professional; or
 - A DOH form or similar statement signed by the child's parent or guardian expressing a religious, philosophical or personal objection to immunization.



DSHS Responsibilities

- Determine a family's eligibility for child care subsidies.
- Authorize child care for approved activities outside the consumer's home.
- Pay eligible providers for authorized and billed child care services provided to an eligible family.
- Give families and providers at least 10 calendar days' notice when subsidy benefits end before the original end date on the SSPS notice. DSHS does not give families a 10 calendar day notice when the family no longer wants child care subsidies or has not given DSHS their new address.
- Assess overpayments and underpayments.
- Answer questions related to eligibility, authorizations and payments.

DEL Responsibilities

- Determine and write policy and eligibility rules for WCCC.
- Administer the CBA for LFH and FFN providers.
- Report to the federal government on Washington child care subsidy programs.

Eligibility Determination and Payments

Step 1: Family Requests Subsidy

The family applies for WCCC by contacting DSHS in one of three ways:

- Call the Contact Center at 1-877-501-2233.
- Online at [Washington Connection](#).
- Local CSO.

Step 2: Complete application and background check

The family completes the application and provides the required documentation to DSHS. You and the parent may complete the application together.

Application Part 2 must be filled out and signed by you and the parent. You will need to provide legible picture ID and a valid social security card. You may also need to provide Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) documentation.

All child care providers must complete and pass a background check. A background check is also required for anyone age 16 or over who lives in your home or moves into your home while you are providing child care in your home. You are required to report to DSHS within 24 hours when someone moves into your home.

Step 3: Family's eligibility is determined

The family completes the application and provides required verification. DSHS gathers information about the household and the parents' activities and income to determine eligibility. If the family is eligible for WCCC, the parent receives an award letter. This letter shows the dates the family is eligible for child care and the monthly copayment amount.

The child care subsidy programs will not pay for child care provided before the start date on the award letter or the approved background check. You may make private pay arrangements with the family during the time that eligibility is being determined. If the family is not determined to be eligible and not authorized for child care subsidy, you may provide child care with private pay arrangements.

Step 4: Child Care is Authorized in the DSHS Social Service Payment System (SSPS)

Call the Provider Line (1-800-394-4571 or providerhelp@dshs.wa.gov) and give them your email address to receive notification by email for WCCC child care authorization(s) start, change or end dates.

Step 5: SSPS Notice

You will receive an SSPS notice in the mail confirming a family's eligibility and authorization.

Step 6: Authorization to Provide Child Care

You are now authorized to receive payments from DSHS for providing subsidized child care.



Step 7: Invoice Arrives

You will receive an invoice, usually before the last day of each month. The first invoice for a new authorization may not arrive until the middle of the following month.

Step 8: Complete the Invoice Using Attendance Records

Review daily attendance record in order to determine the number of hours to bill based on the child's attendance, absent days, and authorization. You must show the days the child is absent on your attendance record. Complete the invoice, sign, and date it. To submit the invoice, you may either call Invoice Express at 1-888-461-8855 or mail it to DSHS at:

State of Washington
Dept. of Social and Health Services
ISSD Data Control
PO BOX 45889
Olympia, WA 98504-5889

Step 9: Payment issued

After DSHS receives the completed invoice, SSPS processes the invoice immediately after the end of the month of service and sends you the payment. Payments distributed through the mail may take up to three business days after processing.

Step 10: Reapplication

Before an eligibility period ends, DSHS sends a re-application packet to families. During the re-application process, DSHS determines if the family is still eligible for child care subsidies.

Families can re-apply:

- By calling DSHS Contact Center at 1-877-501-2233.
- By returning the packet with updated information.
- Online at [Washington Connection](#).

You and the family will receive a re-application reminder about five weeks before the end of the eligibility period. You may want to remind families when their eligibility period is near the ending date so they can re-apply in time.

If a family completes the re-application process after the eligibility period end date and there is not a waiting list for the program, child care may be authorized when the family completes the re-application process.

If a family completes the reapplication process after the eligibility period end date and there is a waiting list for the program, the family may be placed on the waiting list and would not be re-authorized until their name is release for processing.

If you continue to provide care past the eligibility period end date without receiving a re-authorization, DSHS will not pay for the service. The family would be responsible to pay for child care services through private pay. Child care is not backdated when families re-apply after the eligibility period end date.

SSPS Notices

Once child care is authorized and the information is processed, you will receive an SSPS notice about a week after the service is authorized. If you do not receive a notice within two weeks of the family receiving the award letter, call the Provider Line at 1-800-394-4571.

Check the SSPS notice to make sure the following information is correct:

- Your name
- Your provider number
- Services authorized
- Children's names
- Number of units authorized
- Child care rate authorized
- Begin and end date of the authorization
- Family's monthly copayment
- Any changes or termination of services

If the SSPS notice is incorrect, call the Provider Line at 1-800-394-4571. You will receive an SSPS notice when there is a change in the authorization or when child care subsidies end.

Checking Application Status

Working Connections Information Phone (WCIP) is an automated phone system. It is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week in English and Spanish. Because of confidentiality, some family information may not be available to you.

WCIP allows you to check:

- If an application is approved, denied, pending or closed.
- The effective dates of service.
- The authorized child care services.
- The family's monthly copayment amount.
- Any special messages related to subsidy programs.

**Working Connections Information
Phone (WCIP): 1-866-218-3244**

To use WCIP, you will need:

- Your SSPS child care provider number.
- Your Employee Identification Number or the last four digits of your social security number.
- The family's child care application number found on the SSPS notice.

For Families

To use the Answer Phone, a family will need their client ID number and Social Security Number. The Answer Phone allows families to check:

- If their application is approved, denied, or pending.
- The effective dates of service.
- What child care services are authorized.
- The family monthly copayment amount.

Answer Phone: 1-877-980-9220

State Child Care Subsidy Rates

As a provider, you will be paid the authorized payment from DSHS and the monthly copayment from the family. You are responsible for collecting the copayment from the family. DSHS will not pay the family's copayment.

For FFN providers, the state pays a higher rate for the child in the family who needs the most hours of care and a lower rate for the care of each additional child in the family.

[View FFN hourly rates \(refer to CBA Appendix A-2\)](#)

Special Needs Child Care

Child care subsidy programs may pay you an additional rate to care for children up to age 19 who have a verified physical, mental, emotional or behavioral condition requiring a higher level of specialized care. The special needs rate may also be paid for children ages 13 to 19 who are under court supervision. The special needs rate is for care provided above and beyond the daily routine care required. DSHS does not pay for training or equipment to help care for children with special needs.

Special needs child care is authorized at -Level 1 or Level 2. Either rate is in addition to the standard state child care subsidy rate. The parent or provider may call the local CSO to request the special needs rate, though it is the parent's responsibility to apply. Once special needs care is authorized the provider will receive the special needs rate as long as the parent continues to agree that the child needs care above and beyond the daily routing required.

- **Level 1 Special Needs rate:** A Level 1 authorization means you will receive the standard state special needs rate.
- **Level 2 Special Needs rate:** The parent works with you, DSHS, and DEL to determine if their child qualifies for the Level 2 special need's rate.

Before the special need's rate can be authorized, DSHS must have:

- The Special Needs Child Care Rate Request form completed separately and signed by the parent.
- The Special Needs Child Care Rate Request form completed separately and signed by the provider.
- Written verification from a health, mental health, social service, or education professional with at least a master's degree or a registered nurse.
- [View more information about special needs in the CBA, article 10.4.](#)

The verification must describe the additional level of specialized care needed in the child care setting above and beyond what you would provide for children without special needs.

Bill the same number of hours for the special needs authorization as you do for the standard hourly rate.

[View the Special Needs Child Care Rate Request.](#)



Monthly Copayment

Families are required to make a copayment to help pay part of the child care cost. The SSPS notice and the invoice list the amount of the family's monthly copayment. If you do not collect the copayment from the parent, DSHS will not pay that portion. If a family has more than one child care provider, the copayment is usually assigned to only one of the providers but may also be split between several.

Families may make payment arrangements with you for a third party to pay part or all of the monthly copayment. If the family does not pay the copayment, contact the Provider Line. Families may lose child care benefits if they do not pay, or make acceptable arrangements to pay their copayment. You may pursue any available collection effort allowed by law to recoup unpaid copays. If you choose not to collect the copayment, note this in your records and give a copy to the parent. A consumer's responsibilities regarding the payment of copays can be found in [WAC 170-290-0030](#).

Subsidized child care billing rules

As a provider, it is your responsibility to follow WAC 170-290-0134 and 170-290-0038 when billing for payment.

Refer to your attendance records and the rules in this guide to complete your billing.

A child's presence in child care must be verified weekly by the child's parent or guardian or an authorized person. Have the consumer sign and date the attendance records at least weekly. Bill only for actual hours of care provided. Hours of care must be authorized by DSHS, and used by the consumer for DSHS approved activities. Bill for no more than six children at one time during the same hours of care.

- Keep accurate and complete daily attendance records for all children in your care who receive child care subsidies.
- Keep attendance records for each child that is signed by the parent at least once a week for at least five years.
- Keep attendance records from the previous 12 months immediately available for review upon request by DSHS or DEL.
- Submit requested attendance records to DSHS or DEL within 14 calendar days of request.

School holiday hours

School-age children are 5 through 12 years of age by September 1 and attend school. During the school year, most school-aged children only need care before and after school. Sometimes school is closed or children may be released early. The child may need extra hours of care on those days.

To bill for these extra hours, use the "school holiday hours" box on your invoice. Bill hours in this box only if you cared for a school-age child during hours the child normally would be in school and you provided care for more hours than printed in the regular "units" box. School holiday hours are only available September through May. There are no school holiday hours for June, July and August.

Underpayments

Underpayments may occur because you:

- Made a mistake on your invoice that caused you to be underpaid.
- Did not receive payment for everything you claimed on the invoice.
- Were paid the incorrect rates

Follow the steps below if you believe you have been underpaid:

- Check your records to see if the child's name appeared on the invoice within 12 months after the date of service.
- Compare your attendance records to your invoice to see if you were underpaid.
- Call the Provider Line at 1-800-394-4571 to report an underpayment.

To correct an underpayment, providers must submit an invoice for payment to the State for child care services no later than 12 months after the date of service.

For the purposes of correcting errors on payments where the invoice for payment has been submitted on time, the time limit for either party to correct an error on a payment and seek reimbursement is:

- Two years if the error is on rates paid by age and/or region. This two year limit does not apply to federal audits, which could go back three years.
- Up to three years if the error is on any other issue.

Disputes regarding underpayments are grievable.

Overpayments

Overpayments may occur because you:

- Billed for hours of care provided outside of an approved activity
- Do not have any attendance records.
- Do not have attendance records that match your billing record. Refer to [WAC 170-290-0034](#) and [WAC 170-290-0138](#).
- Received payment for incorrect rates.
- Do not have proper receipts to support payments.
- Do not have policies to support fees charged

Call the Provider Line at 1-800-394-4571 to report an overpayment if your attendance records do not match the amount you were paid.

You will receive a Vendor Overpayment Notice if you were overpaid. The Vendor Overpayment Notice will also instruct you on how to repay the overpayment amount. A payment plan may be available.

It is important to follow the timeframes on the back of your overpayment notice to file a hearing. If you have questions about the overpayment, call the telephone number on the notice. Disputes regarding overpayments are not grievable. The administrative hearing process is the method to use to dispute an overpayment.

There are directions on the Vendor Overpayment Notice that outline how to dispute the overpayment. If overpayments are not resolved by talking to the DSHS Provider Line staff or through an administrative hearing, you must repay the money.



Using Invoice Express

- Call Invoice Express: 1-888-461-8855
- [How to Use Invoice Express](#)
- [Invoice Express Brochure](#)



Payment Options

Checks mailed by U.S. Postal Service

You should receive a check by mail approximately 10 business days after DSHS receives your invoice. DSHS cannot guarantee a delivery date for checks sent by the U.S. Postal Service.

Direct deposits

You may choose to have payments deposited into a checking or savings account. Checks are deposited into your account on the fifth business day after the invoice is processed by DSHS.

Learn more about direct deposits:

- [On DSHS' website](#)
- By calling 360-664-6161
- Request information in writing at:
DSHS-SSPS Attn: Direct Deposit Desk
P.O. Box 45812
Olympia, WA 98504-5812
- In your request, include the following information about yourself:
 - Name
 - Written request for direct deposit forms
 - SSPS Provider Number
 - Mailing address including city/state/zip code
 - Phone number with area code

Tax Information

You will be mailed a record of DSHS payments to you. This is called a Remittance Advice and includes a list of deductions that can be used for tax purposes, including any union dues. If a person or company wants to verify your income, you may provide them with the remittance advice. Some of the information on the remittance advice is confidential and should not be disclosed. It is similar to a pay stub.

If you need something in addition to the remittance advice, you can request an “evidence of income” form from DSHS. Send your request in writing to:

SSPS Attn: Evidence of Income
P.O. Box 45812
Olympia, WA 98504-5812

Federal income taxes are not withheld from your DSHS payment. The income you receive from DSHS is reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

You will receive a W-2 form for income tax purposes. If you want federal income tax withheld from your child care payment, you must complete an IRS W-4 form. You may get the form by contacting the IRS at www.irs.gov or 1-800-829-3676. Mail or fax the completed W-4 form to:

DSHS
Provider File Unit –Section Two
P.O. Box 45346
Olympia, WA 98504-5346

If you have tax questions, please contact the IRS.

Resources

Working Connections Information Phone (WCIP) for Child Care Providers:

1-866-218-3244

Available 24 hours a day for WCCC and SCC

Languages spoken: English and Spanish

Information about:

- Family's authorization
- Copayment
- Case status
- Effective dates of coverage

Information is available after the family's case has been processed.

DSHS Programs www.dshs.wa.gov

DSHS Customer Service Center: 1-877-501-2233 Fax 1-888-338-7410

Families may apply for services or report changes

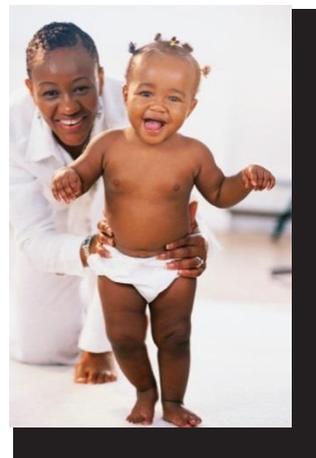
WCCC Provider Line: 1-800-394-

4571 Language assistance available

Email: providerhelp@dshs.wa.gov

Fax: 1-888-338-7410

- Special Needs rate request
- Status of a WCCC or SCC application or review.
- Payment authorization or billing
- Provide information about your rates.
- Report a mistake on a current authorization.
- Ask questions about an authorization or billing.



DSHS Children's Administration

Reporting Abuse and Neglect: 1-866-ENDHARM or 1-866-363-4276

[Report suspected child abuse or neglect online](#)

WCCC and SCC Answer Phone for Families: 1-877-980-9220

Families authorized for WCCC or SCC may check on their case status

DEL: 1-866-482-4325

- www.del.wa.gov
- [Information for child care providers](#)

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

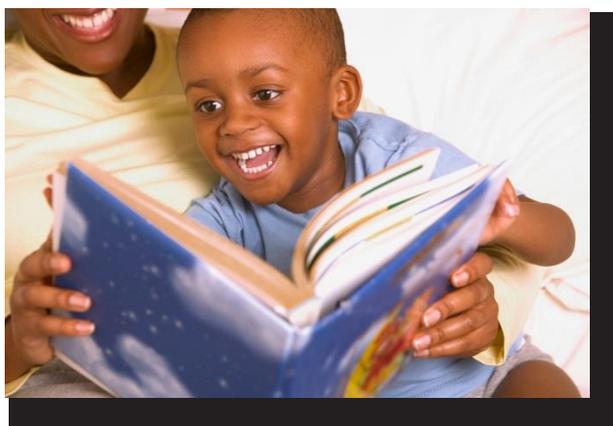
Child Care Food Program: 360-725-6206

Provides federal funds to serve nutritious meals and snacks through the Child Care Food Program

SEIU 925 Member Support: 1-877-734-8673

If you have questions about the SEIU contract, meetings and workshops, or representation in your area:

- [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)
- SEIU 925 Health Care: 1-866-771-7359
- Child Care Provider Grievance Line : 1-888-270-0613



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Online: www.del.wa.gov/publications/subsidy/docs/FFN_subsidy_guide.pdf

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