Eligibility for Child Care Assistance

You may be eligible for child care assistance if:

- You are working at least 80 hours per month and are within the Division of Child Care Services' income guidelines.
- You receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and are in an approved work activity or in school.
- You are a college or vocational student and your actual class hours and/or work equal a minimum of 80 hours per month.
- You are a high school or GED student.
- You are a foster care family who works or attends school.

NOTE: *The Division of Child Care Services will not pay for child care for anyone pursuing education beyond a bachelor's degree.*

Locating Child Care Providers

If you need assistance in locating a child care provider, please contact your nearest Early Childhood Enrichment (ECE) program listed below. Your regional ECE program offers resource and referral assistance and can help you find child care that fits your needs.

If you are unsure about what to look for in a quality child care provider, your ECE can also provide information about evaluating various child care options.

- **Aberdeen:** 605-229-8505 or 1-800-982-6404
- **Brookings:** 605-688-5730 or 1-800-354-8238
- **Pierre:** 605-773-4755 or 1-866-206-8206
- **Rapid City:** 605-342-6464 or 1-888-999-7759
- **Sioux Falls:** 605-333-0698 or 1-800-235-5923

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Child Care Assistance Program

Helping Working Families Afford Quality Child Care

DSS

Strong Families - South Dakota's Foundation and Our Future

Child Care Assistance

Depending on your income, you may be eligible for assistance from the Department of Social Services' Division of Child Care Services to help pay child care costs while you work or go to school. If eligible, you can receive child care assistance for children under age 13, up to age 18 if your child has a special need or age 19 if your child has a special need and is enrolled in school. Quality child care that is affordable and accessible is one of the most important elements of balancing work and family. If your child care arrangement is unstable, your child may be at risk and your ability to work or attend school may be affected.

Eligibility

The amount of child care assistance you can receive is determined using a formula based on household size and gross income (before taxes). This amount is paid directly to your provider on a bimonthly or monthly basis. The Division of Child Care Services offers a higher reimbursement rate to providers who care for children with special needs.

Co-Payment

Depending on your family income, you may be responsible for a co-payment or additional expenses not covered by the program, such as registration or transportation fees. This co-payment will remain the same no matter how many children you have in care, the number of hours they are in care, or the amount your provider charges.

Child Care Hours

The number of child care hours covered each month is calculated based on your work and/or school schedules and your child care need. The maximum hours allowed per month is 210 per child. A certificate is issued for the number of hours per month for which your child(ren) are eligible. You are responsible for additional child care costs after you reach the maximum number of hours on your certificate.

Selecting a Provider

If you receive child care assistance, you must select a provider who is at least 18 years old and meets certain other criteria. Several types of providers are allowed under the Division of Child Care Services' guidelines. You can use more than one type of provider, but each must meet the basic requirements listed below.

- **Regulated Providers** are licensed or registered with the Division of Child Care Services. They include family day cares, group family day cares, day care centers and out-of school time programs.

- **In-Process Providers** are in the process of becoming licensed or registered and have submitted a signed application to a Division of Child Care Services' licensing worker.

Selecting a Provider Continued...

- **Relatives** must be an aunt/uncle, grandparent or great-grandparent and can reside in the child's home. A sibling of the child may also provide care, but must maintain a separate residence.

- **In-Home Providers** come into your home and provide care for only your children.
- **Informal Care** is a family friend or neighbor who provides care for only your children. If your child care provider would like to become licensed or registered with the Department of Social Services' Division of Child Care Services, have them contact their local office or call 1-800-227-3020.

Applying for Assistance

To apply for child care assistance, you must submit a completed and signed application to the Division of Child Care Services.

If you are eligible for assistance, the Division of Child Care Services will issue you a certificate for up to six months. In most cases, you will be required to reapply every six months.